

**The Portrayal of Femininity in Women's Magazines,  
A Contrastive Perception Analysis of Males and  
Females**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This study was designed to figure out how members of the sexes make sense of the images of women portrayed in women's magazines published in Addis Ababa.

A qualitative research methodology was adopted wherein textual analysis of the images, focus group interviews as well as individual in-depth interviews were conducted to unearth the necessary data. *Kalkidan*, which was found to be the only women's magazine published in the metropolitan, was used in all cases of the data gathering stages. In textual analysis a description of the portrayal of the images of femininity was provided. This was done to give the reader a glimpse of how the images of women are presented in the genre under consideration. More importantly, however, the images were used to elicit perceptive accounts from the participants of both group and individual interviews.

In the final analysis, the results of the textual analysis revealed that women are portrayed in a sexually titillating ways. The findings of the group and individual interviews were considered in terms of how the participants of the research perceived the images against culture, perception of the impacts the images might have, especially on women, perception of sexual objectification and the need for audience segmentation.

Both males and females had unanimously deemed the images of women in the magazine as transgressing Ethiopian cultural standards. In terms of sexually objectifying portrayal, besides gender, age was found to be a major determinant. Young men showed sharper tendency to point out sexually objectifying representations. In the case of women old ones more readily noticed it than the young ones. This and all other differences appear to be explainable in terms of standpoint theory and the notion of co-cultures in human communication.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Long before the present stage of the media, human beings had passed through a series of stages of development in communication. From grunts, signals, gestures and gesticulations as well as drum beats and the like; it all got more complicated and sophisticated with the passage of time. The development of language and especially the advent of the written word and invention of the printing press marked a quantum leap in the history of human communication. Not only did it mark a turning point, it also gave rise to the print media as a form of mass communication.

Yet, not all people had access to this particular medium. Among other things, illiteracy limited the interaction one could have with the printed word. However, when photography came into the scene, besides the printed word, images could tell tales. This aspect was later adopted by other forms of the print media such as magazines, the visual media and the televisual media. In other words, besides the written word or the spoken word contained in media messages, the audience derives meaning from images that appear as part and parcel of any content.

Magazines aimed at women often carry images of women in larger portraits as compared to those of general interest. In Ethiopia, it was after the year 1999 that many magazines and newspapers came into

the scene. Since then, the private press has actually witnessed a boom save for the closedown of some privately owned newspapers and magazines following the 2005 election-induced turmoil. Nowadays, however, it is commonplace to come across people reading newspapers and magazines especially the former by the roadside. Mostly seen indulged in such an act are more often men than women. Women are rather seen evaluating cover images of magazines. They might as well flick through the contents. I observed that more women than men do that. It, therefore, roused an interest in me and compelled me to go ahead and find out what these images mean to members of the sexes.

*Kalkidan*, the only women's magazine in the entire country, was used in this study. As mentioned above it came into being as part of the boom in the print media in Ethiopia after 1999. Its name in Amharic, as it is an Amharic medium publication, literally means a promise or pledge. According to the owner-cum-editor, Elias Gudisa, it stands for a promise to the media house to be successful in the industry and as well to the public in terms of delivering the right and authentic messages at all times. The first publication dates back to 2001 a circulation of 3000 copies. Currently the circulation of the magazine takes the highest position as compared to all other magazines published in Ethiopia, ranging from 30,000 to 40,000 copies per month. While the contents mainly concentrate on celebrities, fashion and love, initially it was meant to draw attention to issues and problems related to women in society. Although the magazine is thriving well at the present, the ever-growing cost of paper and thus printing is what mainly gets in the way of achieving as much as the media house aspires to. The purpose of using the magazine has nothing to do with analyzing its contents but rather using the images of women portrayed on the copies of this magazine to figure out how males and females make sense of them.

In general terms, interaction with media texts such as images mentioned above could be deciphered differently by different audiences. Besides, though, there are a number of viewpoints regarding whether or not the media impact the audience. If such impacts are assumed to exist, not all audiences would be influenced to the same degree. As their name indicates what the media actually do is mediate our view of reality. In so doing, they may go beyond mirroring reality, as Diana puts it in her article:

Not only the media reflect reality, but they also shape and reconstruct it according to the publics' hopes, fears, or fantasies. Reality itself is not the sum of all objective processes and things but it is socially constructed by the discourses that reflect and produce power. On the other hand, the public doesn't simply accept or reject the media messages, but interprets them according to its social background (2006:1).

Essentially, therefore, what the media do is construction and reconstruction of various aspects of reality such as people, objects, events, cultural and gender identities and other abstract and complex concepts. Such representations may take the form of speech, writing as well as still or moving pictures. It is important to note that these images don't often portray reality in an unbiased way. But rather present 'versions of reality' influenced by cultural, and ideological tendencies which in turn reflect people's habitual thoughts and actions.

If they are not consumed by people, media messages would just wastefully exist out there. But the audience, for whom these media texts are packaged, is likely to decipher and make use of them

differently from others. A hundred people made to decode certain media content might eventually come up with as many as one hundred or even more interpretations of the selfsame material.

In the process of analyzing and interpreting the representations of various aspects of reality people would be affected by, inter alia, their social experiences. Society takes an individual through a number of ranks, orders and classifications. Some of these are temporary while others are more enduring. Gender is one such label that is there to stay and therefore comprises a monumental part of a person's day-to-day exposure in life. There is no possibility of avoiding or even bypassing the binary categories of being a male or a female. It pervades virtually all facts of our lives. Testifying to this fact Cranny-Francis and colleagues (2003:1) say: "...without the birth certificate that records our gender, we could not get a passport, or driver's license." They further go on to argue that even if one might manage to get by without paperwork, each trip to a public toilet would demand that they declare their gender by which door they choose. It seems appropriate to state that we can not drive clear of gender be it in our waking or sleeping life. This in turn means that we would not be able to evade all that accompanies gender such as the differences in perception that are meant to emanate from that particular distinction.

Another reality that has to do with gender here is the way power is socially vested in the masculine gender whereas the feminine is often assigned to subordinate positions and roles. This unfair advantage of one social group over the other has been being challenged by proponents of feminism. The problem appears to be also deep rooted with utter subtlety that it can not be easily done away with. Since mainstream media reflect and construct social reality, this particular state of affairs manifests itself in the way they operate. Such

representations more or less hinge on stereotypes that have long been socially constructed. In his book *Media, Gender and Identity*, Gauntlett points out:

As well as showing men being more active, decisive, courageous, intelligent and resourceful, television and movies also showed a much greater quantity of men, compared to women. There were exceptions, of course – it's not hard to think of the odd clever, brave, or challenging female character ... but these remained exceptions to the norm. Magazines and adverts aimed at women also tended to reinforce the feminine and housewifely stereotypes (2002).

In this age of globalization, media's *modus operandi* has some uniformity. Therefore, the Ethiopian media could be no exception. Studies that aimed at delving into this area are apparently thin on the ground. Few precursory works on gender and media, however, have revealed that there exist both misrepresentation and underrepresentation of women in the country's media (Agaedech, 2002; Abebech, 2005; Messay, 2004).

It goes without saying that magazines comprise a major part of the general media landscape. Besides, compared to other electronic genres, magazines are more affordable and readily available. They are said to have maintained popular appeal even in the era of media convergence where some forms of media have already faced a receding popularity as the result of technological encroachment. According to Gill (2007) the 'Magazinizing' of newspapers and the increasing tendency of businesses of all kind to all kind to publish their own magazines testify to this very fact. Moreover, women's magazines or even so-called family magazines

are believed to be more responsive to changes in the ideals of women's beauty. That seems to be why magazines usually focus on promotion of a cult of femininity whereby cosmetics, slimming diets, exercising, fashion, etc. are aimed at improving women's appearance.

Notably, the construction of femininity sets in during the early days of childhood but the intensity and amount of attention given to feminization get stronger and stronger as time goes by and eventually reach the peak at adolescence. In Angela's view, the construction of femininity is not limited to the domain of young girls but continues to be negotiated throughout the life span; it is the adolescent years which bear the stringency of its dictates (2001). The media, in this general framework, work towards strengthening the values that society deems befitting to women.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Men and women are believed to be equal in all aspects of social, political, and economic spheres these days. This has been given more attention since the dawn of the feminist movements that capitalized on issues of power relation between the two sexes. True, women's situations have changed a lot over the years but whether the developments pertaining to the balancing of power relations have proven to be up to par in practical terms as of today is quite debatable. Some people might contend that we have come a long way and others might put themselves forward that the reality on the ground shows that nothing has improved in practical terms. Unanimity may not be a must to attain here. As the media usually promote dominant ideologies that prevail at a particular period, they are likely to play a monumental role

in maintaining the status quo as far as the subject under consideration is concerned.

Even if we can not totally state that the media have not positively contributed in bringing about the desired results in the overall struggle to reshuffle the power balance between the sexes, one might argue that there still remains a long way to go. Media's cultivation of some stereotypes seems to have bogged women down in mire that makes it difficult to move along in the endeavor to extricate themselves from impediments imposed by patriarchal ideologies. Cranny-Francis et al have it that cultural settings in which the stereotypes occur maybe more successful in making them deep-seated or just temporarily hanging and accepted; yet it could be established as a fact:

One person can not produce and circulate a stereotype alone; stereotypes function within groups of people as knowledge which is shared, kind of cultural databank. Importantly they are usually produced by people who are positioned to circulate their ideas widely, so that even the group stereotyped may then come to take on this simplified bit of visual shorthand as a kind of fact (2003).

Apparently media can be included, amongst those that are positioned to disseminate their ways of thinking across to the society at large. In our case magazines that home in on women capitalize on ideals of femininity and the nurturing nature of motherhood in such a way that it seems likely to divert their attention from other things that could desire most weight and consideration in their lives. It goes without saying that femininity is perceived to be synonymous with beauty in virtually all human societies. The physical pulchritude of a woman

usually outweighs her other qualities. Greer, as quoted in Gauatlett's book *Media, Gender, and Identity*, makes it clear that "Every woman knows that, regardless of her other achievements, she is a failure if she is not beautiful (2002:77)".

Besides what appears to be media's stereotypical representations of women with much emphasis laid on beauty and youth, such beauty ideals and standards expected of women might eventually end up being unattainable for the average woman. The barrages of media messages, visual or otherwise, accentuate youth, thinness, beauty and dieting. They very subtly tell women that they are always in need of adjustment and above all that the female body is an object to be perfected. As a result, women may go to the extent of internalizing the said stereotypes, and judge themselves by such standards usually set up by the beauty industry. Women learn to compare themselves to other women, and compete with them primarily for male attention.

This focus, that has been zeroed in on feminine beauty and desirability in the main may prove to be destructive through stifling any awareness and action that might help to change the general climate. In the women's and general interest magazines published in Addis Ababa, women's images bear portrait's of women that seem to sexually objectify women. In fact such poses are also commonly pinned to the windows of photo studios though concern of this particular work is limited to women's magazines.

Moreover, though it has been somewhat debatable to say that these media images do affect women by way of eroding their sense of self, it can not be said utterly that they wouldn't have effect on how women feel about themselves. It is not that the messages are directly addressed to her but just because she would assess herself by way of comparing

and contrasting herself with the epitome of beauty depicted in the mainstream media. The feelings of less self-worth would be compounded by everyday encounter with other people. The remarks people make about the appearances of a person definitely influence self perception.

In this light wood (2000) talks about three types of people that we encounter when we communicate with others. She names them uppers, downers and vultures. In her words uppers are those people who reflect positive appraisals of our self-worth whereas downers are diametrically the opposite of uppers as one might construe from the very term itself. Yet the third group comprises people who represent the worst case scenario of downers. The people are said to be vultures because they prey on our self-concepts just like actual vultures prey on their victims. In our case, the images of women and girls that appear on women's magazines might be eventually perceived, by other women and girls in such a way that they end up being downers and vultures.

The need to find out the differences of perception of the media images of femininity as they appear in women's magazines between men and women is primarily grounded in Harding and wood's standpoint theory. The central tenet of the theory rests on the notion that in any human society there exist social communities that are accorded different positions in that very society. Gender, therefore, is one such community. Consequently, men and women belong to distinct social groups that have different stand points. Wood (2000) states, "The way we perceive the world and ourselves is shaped by our experiences as members of the particular group to which we belong." Perception of the images of femininity could not be an exception.

In the final analysis, therefore, understanding the ways in which the members of the gender groups perceive the portrayals of femininity in the magazines and how problems in this particular area can be done away with is worth noting. Even though, the standpoints of members of the two sexes would be carefully considered, women's perceptive perspective would be more instrumental in tackling the perceived problems. Supporting this claim Harding, as cited in Griffin (2006) propounds an argument that in any situation, the views of the less advantaged tend to provide a more objective picture than that of the more powerful ones. In general, power relations between the sexes place women in a less favored position.

### **1.3. Objectives of the study**

The forerunning sections of the project might have already made a subtle allusion to the intents and purposes it was designed for. The major objective of the study was to attempt to find out how the images of femininity portrayed in women's magazines published in the metropolitan-Addis Ababa were perceived by men and women. In so doing the primary focus would be placed on people rather than the media products they consume.

The overriding question that underpins this study has to do with what meaning and attributes do women and men assign to images of women as depicted in the women's magazines. In specific terms, however, the following couple of questions have branched out from this main question:

1. How differently do men and women perceive the images of women in the magazines?

2. To what extent are the gendered standpoints of men and women reflected in the way they perceive the portrayal of femininity in the magazines under consideration?
3. Are women's and girls' that appear to have been portrayed in a sexually objectifying manner, as could be deciphered from the way women's images are portrayed in women's magazines, perceived differently / similarly by men and women?
4. Do other factors besides gender such as age, religion, level of education, etc. affect the perception of the portrayal of feminine images in the women's magazines?
5. Is it men or women who deem the portrayal of femininity in the said magazines more problematic?

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Feminist movements and endeavors of democratization have been drawing attention to the question of equality between the sexes. A host of researches, especially in the west, have been conducted in this particular area of interest. It is hoped that the outcomes and findings of such inquires would come in handy in terms of improving women's situation, resulting in amendments made to contemporary media policies, and bringing about fair and realistic presentation and representation of women in the media in general.

In Ethiopia, however, well-organized and documented materials on the issue of the portrayal of women are very few. Most reflections on the issue usually don't get past a personal level. In this light, therefore, this study could make the following contributions:

1. It might help women and organizations that are working on issues that have to do with gender to be aware that the

representation of femininity in women's magazines needs special attention.

2. Whereupon presenting a contrastive analysis of the ways in which men and women perceive the images of women in women's magazines, the study could be useful in terms of understanding the present quandary and designing solutions that would ameliorate the problem.
3. The study may provide editors of women's magazines and other media practitioners with tips and insights of positive and healthy representation of women in all genres of media in general and in magazines in particular thereby making them conscious of all they undertake and adopt more diverse and realistic ways of portrayal of femininity.
4. The study would have particular importance in forming part of precursory research body in the field of media research especially in relation to gender in general and feminism in particular. It might as well prompt further investigation and inquiry in this area of study.

### **1.5. Organization of the Study**

This research paper comprises five chapters. The first chapter thrashes out the background of the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. Contained in the second chapter is the review of related literature. It mainly deals with the theoretical frameworks and conceptions that underlie the study. Issues related to methodology and the general procedure used in collecting research data are presented in the third chapter. The following, chapter four, puts forth the analysis and presentation of the data that have been gathered. The last chapter

consists of summary and conclusion drawn from the discussion and data presented in the forerunning chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In this section an attempt would be made to look into some of the precursory works in the realm of media feminist research with particular emphasis on the portrayal of women across the mainstream media. These would include magazines which are the primary concern of this particular research for this study intends to figure out whether the images of women that appear on women's magazines are perceived similarly by men and women. It seems to be important to note here that perception does not stand for the psychological and cognitive processes that underlie human perception; it is rather used in the mere sense making sense out of something.

At this stage, however, this chapter would be devoted to the review of the theoretical framework and perspectives that underlie the phenomena under consideration.

To this end, the discussion starts off with the provision a general overview of what the representations of femininity like across various genres of the media. Objectification theory which generally posits the treatment of girls and women as objects for sexual pleasure follows. Another important tenet of this theory is that girls and women are acculturated to internalize the observer's perspective on their physical selves. This has to do with the patriarchal gaze which comes up next. After the psychological and experiential repercussion of the overall interplay is dealt with, the standpoint

theory is brought in as another theoretical framework that might serve as a basis of explanation of the general state of affairs. Finally a brief synopsis of how women are represented in the Ethiopian media has been presented.

## **2.1. Representations of Femininity across Major Media landscapes**

Be it the audio-Visual media such as television or cinema, print media or even the web where all media streams tend to appear in convergence, images of women are commonly available. The question arises, however, whether these images mirror and betoken the reality or distort it. As Gauntlett has noted:

Men and women are seen working side by side, as equals, in hospitals, schools and police stations of television-land. Movie produces are wary of having women as screaming victims and have realized that kick-ass heroines do better business. Advertisers have now realized that audiences will only laugh at images of the pretty housewife, and have reacted by showing women how to be sexy at work instead (2002:57).

A closer look at the above excerpt would rather create a sort of confusion in that it intends to present unbiased representation of men and women on television but goes on to say how women are degraded and demeaned at the same time. Today, there is virtually no realm of human activity without women. The question, however,

would be whether or not society values both equally and the way the media reflect this particular state of affairs does the same. In line with this, Jacobson (2005) argues that the presentation of female characters with only limited range of attributes, skills and abilities by the media would make the viewers develop equally limited assumptions about the sexes.

There is a tendency to play down the role of women in various areas in the socio-political arena. Their successes, whatsoever, seem to be hardly recognized; rather the focus is directed, to attributes or characterizations that have nothing to do with the reality at hand. An instance that explains such denigration seems to have been shown in Great Britain in 1970 when they [120 women] swept to power under Tony Blair. While the photographer put Blair in the middle, he made the women surround him and the headline read 'Blair's babes' (Gill 2007:18). The act was consequently condemned as sexualizing as well as infantilizing powerful women. The fact that they were made to surround Blair could be construed that these women wouldn't count as much as him. In liberal feminists' view, however, equality between the sexes is directly related and even depends on the equality and accuracy in representation (Shields, 1996).

Srenberny and Zoonen appear to come forth with an argument of a more or less similar tone: Even though many women reported their irritation with media's preoccupation with their appearance, few believed they were especially trivialized or domesticated by the media's treatment of them (1996:93). What is meant by domestication is that in virtually all human societies women are encouraged to remain in the domestic sphere. Instances such as the one discussed by Gill above testify to this very fact. If they happen to

vie with men in the public sphere, which is believed to be men's domain, they would be construed as taking up wrong roles and therefore consequently trivialized.

What the realm of media representation signifies, therefore, is what Brewer labels as the constant struggle between women and a male dominated society (1999). Irrespective of whether the medium is, visual or one that just appeals to the aural sense such as the radio, this particular reality seems to run through it. Baehr points out how this works in radio stations which have apparently been called into question with respect to questions of media and feminist research paradigm:

While virtually all of the mass media have come under feminist scrutiny in the past few years radio has got off scot-free. Academics and women's groups have been diligently monitoring television, cinema, and the press: decoding signs of sexism, uncovering masculist ideology, and promoting feminist alternatives. Yet, radio, the medium which permeates women's lives more than any other, has been largely ignored (1982: 41).

Apart from drawing attention to how the medium has been neglected, Baehr goes on to show how women are subtly disregarded in the radio. She cites the case of the BBC and says women spasmodically host phone-ins but never quizzes or chat shows, or programs where the chairperson airs conflicting opinions. According to her such state of affairs was indicative of the perception by the society that women didn't count as much as men did (Ibid). There

seem to be no local studies that tally with the existence of this type of assignment of tasks in radio stations that are primary based on gender.

In fact it is now decades since Baehr made such observations. The times have changed a lot and the situation of women in this particular medium doesn't have the same shape as it did back then. Women are given prominent positions in the radio as reporters, newscasters, and hosts of various shows where there are no signs and symptoms that indicate the existence of sexism in the assignment of tasks in this regard. In fact the situation in Ethiopia might illuminate the case even better. Currently there are two popular FM radio stations co-owned and run by women who are veteran radio journalists. These are Mimi Sibhatu's Zami 90.7 and Meaza Biru's Sheger 102.1 local FM radio stations. While Mimi had worked at VOA, Amharic division, Meaza was in Radio Ethiopia. Both of them host well-liked shows where they entertain a host of critical issues including politics. This, however, is not a refutation of Baehr's argument and the situation might still need an independent study.

In the entertainment industry which would include film, drama and other genres of literature, the representations of women, as Strinati puts it, have a tendency to highlight beauty and physique, (with narrow conventions) sexual and emotional dealings as opposed to intellectual ones (1995:64).

Another point that is closely related to the notation is discussed by Brown in an online article is that women are often represented as part of a team and more specifically placed as part of a context in which case they appear as members of a family, friends or

colleagues. Brown, says the roles they assume are more often than not passive-a passivity that might extend to victimhood (pp.5). Pornography which is a type of audiovisual media according to Alison also depicts women in a way that apparently degrades women and signifies the patriarchal drive to maintain the status quo, i.e. social relations in which men dominate women (1991).

Yet another form of mass communication that falls into the audio visual as well as print category but needs a distinct attention as far as the issue under discussion is concerned is advertising. It is so because advertising is typically what goes from the seller of a product or service to the person at the other end. Therefore, there is a business aspect involved. All the same, advertising can not simply be taken as a tool of communication between the seller and the buyer. Leiss et al (1990) quoted in Uray and Burnaz (2003:1) explicitly point out how advertising assumes the role of a social actor, "Advertising stages a powerful social drama that transforms symbols and ideas and bonds together images of individuals and products." On the screen women's images are portrayed as easily yielding and weak and meek types rather taken up overwhelmingly by common family emotions and affections and undertakings; the frequent and commonplace ones being childcare and taking care of the family (Gandhi, 2004:2). With regard to adverts in magazines, Gauntlett argues that all they do is 'buttress the feminine and housewifely stereotypes' (2003:36).

Now that an attempt has been made to shed light on how femininity is represented in major genres of media, let us turn to theoretical frameworks that will serve as a backdrop for all arguments.

## **2.2. Objectification Theory**

While the core argument in objectification theory is the fact that girls and women are represented in the media as objects from 'which' the viewer, especially the heterosexual male gains pleasure, it also brings forward that, as a result of being objectified, "girls and women and women become acculturated to internalize" an observers perspective of their physical selves" (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997:173).

In reality if we are to draw a distinction between the sexes or assign someone to this or that gender group, our primary determinant would unquestionably be the body; the phrase 'biology is destiny' might best fit here. Feminists as well as other socioculturalists oftentimes disregard the body in their discussion of gender differences; they rather tend to ascribe them more profoundly to the distinct ways in which boys and girls under go socialization (ibid, 174).

All the same, theorists from various fields of study have recognized that bodies are part of social and cultural contexts and are therefore shaped in terms of social and cultural practices and discourses. The experts who have already undertaken the task of exploring how the body communicates social meanings and how such meanings consequently form part of gendered experiences include Bordo (1993) and Foucault (1980) in philosophy, as well as E. Martin(1987) in cultural anthropology.

Even though sexual objectification serves as one of the many ways in which patriarchy oppresses women, it manifests in and can be said to enable a number of other types of oppression that women face. They range from employment discrimination and sexual violence to

degrading and belittling women's work and achievements. As gender exploitation more generally, sexual objectification takes place with both "endless variety and monotonous similarity" (Rubin, 1975, cited in Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p.28). Whatever form it assumes, however, the fact that it encompasses the act or intention of being treated as a body held in high regard predominantly for its use by others remains to be the major driving factor. Minas presents the following argument to show how this happens in pornography:

Pornography participates in its audience's eroticism through creating an accessible sexual object, the possession and consumption of which is male sexuality, as socially constructed; to be consumed and possessed as which, is female sexuality, as socially constructed; pornography is a process that constructs it that way (1993:393).

With heterogeneity evident among women, not all women experience and respond to sexual objectification in the same way. Factors such as class, age, and other physical and personal attributes result in individual and unique experiences. Even so, having a reproductively mature female body may make such women share a common experience in terms of sexual objectification (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997).

As has been pointed out earlier, sexual objectification exists in many forms of which the most ubiquitous is said to be the gaze. Let us turn to the discussion of what this might be and how it works.

### **2.2.1. The Gaze**

The notion of ‘the gaze’ or otherwise known as ‘the look’ emanates from Mulvey’s analysis of the way in which the cinema incites scopophilia, the pleasure of looking. Honey indicates the direction of this phenomenon and points out there is a socially sanctioned right of the males to sexualize all females, regardless of age or status.(Westkott, 1986; Cranny-Francis et al, 2003).

Whenever a male spectator is directing a sexualized gaze at the females’ body in any context, there is a potential that this be accompanied by sexual objectification. This is likely to take place whenever a female’s body or it could be just a part of that or sexual functions separated out from her person, reduced to the level of mere instruments or considered as though they were capable of representing her (Barkty, 1990). What this means is that when women are objectified, they are looked at as bodies and primarily bodies that exist for the consumption and consequent gratification of others.

There are three arenas in which the objectifying gaze occurs. The first one is in real life situations such as interpersonal and social encounters. Various scholars have found out that women are gazed at more than men (Hall, 1984); as a result they are more likely to feel “looked at” than their male counterparts in similar circumstance. Moreover, in public places, men are said to direct more non-reciprocated gaze toward women and vice versa (Fromme & Beam, 1974; Henley, 1977). Worth mentioning here is the fact that the gazing is not a plain and blank one, but often involves evaluative commentary. Henley (1977) says that verbs such as ogle and leer underscore and underlie the sexualized gazing.

The second arena where the sexually objectifying gaze permeates is the visual media. Different interpersonal and social encounters and settings depicted here are more often than not fraught with aspects of the gaze. In analyses of various commercials it has been found out that males are pictured directing their look at female partners – not the reverse happens oftentimes (Goffman, 1979; Umiker-Sebeok, 1981). The depiction of a man leering at a woman who is looking away into a distance, mentally drifting from the main scene is common. Goffman (1979) refers to such portrayals as the “anchored drift”.

The third way in which a sexually objectifying gaze occurs seems to be rather more subtle than the preceding ones. It exists in the form of people’s encounter with the visual media that spotlight female bodies or body parties in a manner that would elicit a sexually objectifying gaze in the viewer (Mulvey, 1975). Even though stark sexually objectifying treatment of women explicitly presents itself in pornography, it rather seems to be also dominant in other forms of visual media. Various studies of mainstream films (Kuhn, 1985; Mulvey, 1975, Van Zoonen, 1984), visual arts (Berger, 1972), and advertisements (Goffman, 1979; Solely & Kurzbard, 1986), television programming (Copeland, 1989), music videos (Sommers-Flangan & Davis, 1993), Women’s magazines (Ferguson, 1978), and sports photography (Duncan, 1990), proved the fact that women’s bodies are exploited in terms of sexual objectification more often than those of men.

The visual media’s representations of women also appear to be one that has a different face than the one that can be easily noticed. While the print media and visual arts usually contain portrayals of men with focus on the head and face, women’s case is different than this. Such an emphasis is placed on the body in their case. It is not unusual to

come across dismembered women, so to speak, where one can't see their heads; they are totally without heads. The focus is rather on the body. This is referred to as "face-ism" bias (Archer et al, 1983).

Another aspect of the gaze that is particularly related to recorded texts that include the print media reflects something of voyeurism. If we consider photographs or films, the object of the gaze, i.e. the person in the photograph or motion picture is not aware of the current viewer though they may have thought that their images could sometimes be accessible to the sights of strangers. In relation to this Schroeder argues, to gaze implies more than to look at – it signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze' (Schroeder 1998, 208).

By and large, with the advent of globalization that led to more or less similar modus operandi of the mass media, sexualized images of the female body and consequent confrontation with such images now seems to be a somewhat commonplace phenomenon. In other words, the sexual objectification of the female body has pervasively got into virtually most cultural milieus of human societies. Consequently, it is believed that the whole thing would have impacts on girls and women. These could be observed in the form of psychological as well as experiential consequences.

### **2.2.2. Psychological Consequences**

In his book, ways of seeing, Berger presents his observation that according to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but by no means been overcome-men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at (Berger, 1972).

Here the objectifying treatment of girls and women appears to be coaxing them to adopt and even internalize an observer's perspective on their physical selves. According to objectification theory the cultural milieu of sexual objectification serves a purpose of socializing girls and women to the extent of treating themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated (Barkty, 1990; de Beauvoir, 1952; Berger, 1972; young, 1990). In an online article, 'Body image and the Media' Kilbourne argues:

The overwhelming presence of media images of painfully thin women means that real women's bodies have become invisible in the mass media. The real tragedy is that many women internalize these stereotypes, and judge themselves by the beauty industry's standards. Women learn to compare themselves to other women, and to compete with them for male attention. This focus on beauty and desirability "effectively destroys any awareness and action that might help to change that climate." [The Canadian Women's Health Network (Body Image and the Media)]

As pointed out in Kilbourne's argument above, ideal images of femininity ubiquitous in mass media and popular culture overemphasize physical appearance as being an important aspect and therefore a key to success in social and personal endeavors. It is customary to hear women and girls competing among themselves; beauty contests are held at institutional levels. With regard to this phenomenon, Wolf (2002) states the beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power. She further goes on to argue that such a myth has resulted in exposing women to external approval of their identity thereby leaving the vital sensitive organ of self-esteem vulnerably in the air.

While what is deemed 'beautiful' might differ from culture to culture and even time to time, rewarding those who possess the quality and ignoring those who don't encourage women's preoccupation with their own physical appearance. Apparently, thinness constitutes beauty as the result of which women who are overweight are likely to suffer negative consequences. A study in the US indicated that overweight girls are less likely to be accepted to college compared to average-weight to thin girls (Wooley & Wooley, 1980). Instances of job discrimination and facing hostile work environments are said to be experienced to a greater degree by women who are obese than by their male counterparts.

Studies indicate that positive self concept for women depends on their physical attractiveness, whereas for men, it hinges on physical effectiveness. This shows how the body, as the result of external evaluations in terms of how it is attractive primarily to men, contributes differently to the sense of self for women than men (R.M.Lerner, Orlos & Knapp, 1976). From this the notion of the 'looking-glass self' seems to be apt for a more literal application to women's situation. Mead, cited in Griffin (2006), claims that 'we paint our self-portrait with brush strokes that come from taking the role of the other - imagining how we look to another person'. It would, therefore, be sound to say that as the result of being viewed by others in sexually objectifying ways, girls and women might suffer critical repercussions over time (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). They call this phenomenon self-objectification, that is, girls and women end up viewing themselves as objects or 'sights' to be appreciated. Fredrickson & Roberts go on to argue, 'this peculiar perspective on self, one that can lead to a form of self-consciousness characterized by habitual monitoring of the body's outward appearance.'

Women and girls, in an attempt to emulate the slim figures that are portrayed in the media, may resort to dieting. Jacobson (2005) discusses forms of eating disorders that might result from over-cautions of dieting practice-anorexia nervosa and bulimia – thereby making the subjects angst-ridden all the time. However, David Gauntlett argues:

Media influences could not be said to directly cause eating disorders. Eating disorders are caused by a complex interplay between genetics, family history, and the cultural environment. The point remains that, for those who are psychologically predisposed to anxiety about the body or control of the self, media images can play an unhelpful role (2002:195).

It can be inferred, therefore, from Gauntlett's point of view that not all women are equally affected by encounter with media images that implicitly or otherwise highlight femininity in terms of body. However, such images play the role of adding fuel to the flames, so to speak. They might worsen an already established psychological trauma that has resulted from being overly concerned with how the body should look-a result of internalizing the onlooker's perspective (Silberstein, Striegel-Moore & Rodin, 19887). This exposure to the host of such subtle forms of external pressure to enrich physical pulchritude frequently eventually leads girls and women to perceive their efforts as not happening owing to expectations of other, or even as normal (costanazo). Magazines, which are the major concern of this, study are said to provide women with the recipes of looks. Magazines play a crucial role in furnishing information about 'what is not' and about the significance of very small details of appearance (which could be used to

mark inclusion/ exclusion/social status) (Gill 2007:198). If a girl or woman does not possess physical attributes that would categorize here as 'beautiful,' 'gorgeous' 'appealing' 'comely' and the like, it is likely that she could suffer psychological repercussion due to such exclusion. The labeling could be based on body size where slim girls and women are deemed desirable and those who have extra pounds could be covertly counted out as in media images.

### **2.2.3. Experiential Consequences**

Various scholars have indicated that as the result of the objectification of the female body, girls and women could go through some psychological experiences that might affect the way they feel about themselves or overshadowed by the thought or sight of others that appear to possess features that are considered to outshine their own. Such experiential consequences include, among others, the emotion of shame and the emotion of anxiety (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Let us closely look at what each one of these represents.

### **2.2.4. The Emotion of Shame**

Shame, which is a negative emotion, arises when a person comes up short whereupon evaluating themselves in terms of some internalized or cultural ideals (Darwin, 1965; M. Lewis, 1992). And when an individual experiences shame, they exhibit the tendency to attribute the underlying shortcomings to the self (H. Lewis, 1971). Discussing this issue Darwin also attempts to point out how the internalization of the onlooker's gaze amounts to the experience of shame: "It is not the simple act of reflecting on our own appearance, but the thinking of what others think of us, which excites a blush" (Darwin, 1965:325).

Apparently, therefore, the emotion of shame emanates from not only the negative appraisal of the self but also social exposure-potential or otherwise.

According to empirical studies carried out in this realm in which gender has been the basis for analysis, women experience more shame than men (Stapely & Haviland, 1989). Messages women receive and continual exposure to images of ideal femininity in the media and popular culture contribute to the reality (Wolf, 1991). The fact that the media are disseminating such idealized images of femininity has resulted in an almost universalized adoption of female beauty yardsticks.

In general terms, slimness and youthfulness constitute the leading parameters. Even if women have been reported to show eagerness to approximate the cultural ideals for returns of attractiveness in heterosexual relationships and work settings, 1 in 40,000 women actually fulfills the requirements (Wolf, 1991). As a woman keeps comparing her own body to that of the ideal feminine figure, she might plunge herself into shame. Another manifestation is that in which the majority of women feel fat and therefore ashamed of this failure whereas in reality the overweight ones only constitute the minority (Fallon & Rozin, 1985; Silberstein et al., 1987).

Shame gives rise to a series of other traumas such as an intense desire to hide, to keep out of the way of the painful gaze of others, or to disappear. Accompanying such disturbances are the feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness (M. Lewis, 1992; Tangney et al., 1996). When the emotion of shame becomes profound, it interferes with the state of consciousness. "Shame disrupts ongoing activity as the self focuses completely on itself, and the result is a state of confusion:

inability to think clearly, inability to act” (M. Lewis, 1992:34). Lewis goes on to argue that the disruption is “adaptive” and that its purpose is to inhibit or change that which fails to emulate the standards that have been derived from internal or external yardsticks. Actually shame could somehow be adaptive but bodies are not that easy to change. Fredrickson and Roberts contend:

Bodies are harder to change than actions. Viewed in this light, women’s ongoing efforts to change body through diet, exercise, fashion, beauty products, and perhaps most dangerously, surgery and eating disorders, reveal what may be a perpetual and hardly adaptive body-based shame. The extent to which body “correction” is motivated by shame elevates the task of meeting societal standards of beauty to moral obligation (1997:182).

As indicated above, when women fall under social pressure that initially sets in in the form of shame, they begin to painstakingly monitor their bodies. The condition could further prove to be a recurrent, an inescapable experience primarily constructed as a matter of morality.

### **2.2.5. The Emotion of Anxiety**

Another trauma that apparently results from cultural settings of sexual objectification is the feeling of anxiety, often accompanied by vigilance. Empirical studies assert that women undergo more appearance anxiety than do men (Dion, Dion & Keelan, 1990). According to evidence from such studies, anxiety arises from the uncertainty about how and when one’s body would be looked at and evaluated in any instance of

exposure. While early life social experiences including histories of receiving negatively charged comments about appearance may happen to be the root cause of appearance anxiety, media images could cause flashbacks to the earlier situations. In line with this point Gauntlett(2000) argues, "... for those who are psychologically disposed to anxiety about the body, or control of the self, media images can play unhelpful role" (2002:195). He also indicated that serious eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia don't result from exposure to slim and underweight media images as has been claimed. However, appearance anxiety could in fact be manifested through concerns for checking and adjusting one's appearance (Keelan, Dion, & Dion, 1992).

Among opportunities that essentially intensify the occurrence of anxiety are women's fashion designs. The designs may be made in such a way that the necklines or hemlines need regular and vigilant monitoring of the exposure of the body. This in turn leads to women's concerns about safety. The revealing and scanty clothing that women wear can be titillating to the on-looking man. In an instance of a sexual assault against such a woman, some people might suggest that the female victim 'asked for it', often in reference to their physical appearance and the way she is clad. Consistent with this view, Beneke (1982) argues that women whose appearance is considered 'striking' or 'provocative' are thought to provoke their own rape. Empirical studies attest to this fact by demonstrating that the more attractive rape victims are assigned greater blame for their own rape than less attractive ones (Jacobson & Popovich,1993).

The abovementioned arguments and research findings amount to the notion that sexual objectification comprises a major part of sexual violence. Owing to the fact that practically all women face the possibility sexual assault and victimization to certain extent, it

behooves them to be as attentive as possible to the potential for a sexually motivated bodily harm (Beneke, 1982; Brownmiller; Griffin, 1979; Pollitt, 1985). Other studies also make it clear that such attentiveness in turn results in a chronic and daily anxiety for women; it affects their personal as well as work lives (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Rozee, 1988). This can be extended to what Csikszentmihalyi(1990) calls flow, a state that occurs “when a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.” It is a peak motivational state in which a person is fully absorbed in mental or physical activity and can be rewarding and enjoyable to a great extent. According to Csikszentmihalyi flow is the most important source of optimal experience, materialized through the rare moments during which people feel that they are truly living, free from external control imposed by others, creative and joyful. He further goes on to argue that such experiences improve the quality of life.

To sum up, when women live in cultural and media settings in which their bodies are sexually objectified, they might be made to go through a host of continuous and recurrent anxiety provoking experiences thereby compelling them to maintain an almost persistent circumspection both to their physical appearance and their physical safety. All the same, the existence of the problem in particular reference to the framing of women’s images in women’s magazines could be differently construed in the light of standpoint theory, the next item to take up.

### **2.3. Standpoint Theory**

Sandra Harding and Julia T. Wood propounded the standpoint theory in which they argue, “ the social groups within which we are located powerfully shape what we experience and know as well as how we understand and communicate with ourselves, others and the world”(Griffin 2006: 482). Obviously, one such group is gender. It brings up a dichotomy of men and women. Our membership to one or the other gender group provides us with a peculiar vantage point from the one occupied by members of a group deemed opposite to ours. Pearson et al. talk about the existence of co-cultures. They identify a co-culture as, “a group whose beliefs or behaviors distinguish it from the larger culture of which it is a part and with which it shares numerous similarities” (2003:43). They further state that women and men show the tendency to see the world differently, communicate about it differently and exhibit notable differences in the way they perceive and practice communication itself.

Field (2003), in line with this point, takes it one step further and makes mention of the average number of words each of the members of the two sexes speak per day distinctly to highlight the differences in the way they communicate. In her words, on average men speak 12,000 words per day whereas women speak about 23,000 words a day.

Another point presented here has to do with the way men and women handle their emotions. Field states, “While women can automatically direct their emotions to that part of their brain that lets them talk about their feelings, men can’t do this” (2003:77).

Griffin (2006) also discusses Tannen’s theory of genderlect styles. The term stands for the assumption that men and women, even if they

speak the same language, speak different dialects, thus genderlect. Although this point is not directly related to the standpoint theory, it adds more evidence for the endeavor to point out the differences between men and women, especially with reference to communication.

Now that we have seen the major tenets of the theories discussed above, we can use them as a springboard to assume that images of femininity as they appear in women's magazines published in Addis Ababa mean different things to men and women. In any case let us have a brief look at women and media in the Ethiopian context.

#### **2.4. Women in the Media: The Ethiopian Context**

Human beings are characterized by differences in their ways of life depending on their social settings and natural environments. Each group and social community possesses distinct sets of culture, tradition, mores, etc. All the same there exist certain common socio-cultural practices that have universal facets. Gender bias seems to be one such reality. It holds across humanity that the male gender is favored in many ways than the female gender. Ethiopia can be no exception.

The inequality between the sexes manifests itself in many areas of human life. In fact it may be very hard to think of a situation in which this does not occur. The way women are represented in the media is said to be a reflection of how the patriarchal society actually perceives women. In her article entitled '*Media and Its Perception of women*', Agaredech(2002), discusses that women's images that appear on the Ethiopian Television portray women as seductresses. Focusing on advertisements for her analysis, Agaredech talks about advertising

scene in which women clad in miniskirts in advertise a water tank posed in sexually titillating ways.

In his analysis of how women are depicted in an Ethiopian drama written by the Ethiopian playwright and poet, Tsegaye Gebremedhin, Alemayehu argues that women are regarded as “disgrace to the dignity of man”(2000:40-41). He further extends his arguments and claims that the fact that women’s images in the Ethiopian media appear to be “misconstructed” and “mispresented” emanates from the gloomy feelings and unhealthy attitude the society has towards women.

Another analysis of the portrayal of women in Amharic secular songs undertaken by Tsion (2007) found out that women are highlighted as beauties in men’s world in such a way that the highest value is assigned to her physical attributes. In her view, in those songs women are less frequently positively represented and their portrayal more often comes in negative forms and shapes. Kenaw (2006) also puts forward that the advertisements that are broadcasted by the Ethiopian Television emphasize women’s physical pulchritude, making one think that a woman’s outward appearance carries more weight than her intellectual self.

Besides being negatively represented, Ethiopian women are said to have hardly got coverage or been underrepresented. Abebech (2005) states that in majority of the cases women are hardly given attention in the media, but when they are, they assume their traditional roles such as those of a wife or as mother.

By and large the above pieces of literature generally make the impression that the somehow global stereotypical problem of considering women as beauties in men’s world and not much more also

exists in the way the Ethiopian media portray images of women. The question, however, is whether the images of women as they appear in the media and particularly in women's magazines published in Addis Ababa, are construed in the same manner by men and women. The next chapter takes up the issue further and discusses the research arsenal used to gather the data necessary in an attempt to answer the question asked at the outset.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, an attempt is made to discuss the research paradigms and data collection tools that had been adopted in order to generate the vital data input for this particular study. The apposite research methodology, sampling techniques, and data collection procedure are presented below.

#### **3.1. Qualitative Research Method**

As far as the underpinning questions of this study were concerned, employing a qualitative research approach seemed more appropriate than using its counterpart, the quantitative approach. The philosophical tenets that underlie the qualitative researching archetype assert that it is concerned with the interpretation and understanding of the social world, in the main, and how it is 'experienced, produced or constituted' (Mason 2004:3). The major question the research set out to answer was whether the images of femininity as they appeared in women's magazines would be similarly interpreted by males and females. Hence, the qualitative approach was more appropriate than any other ones.

Scholars who wish to undertake various forms of inquiry in the social sciences as well as humanities might make use of quantitative research methods in order to come up with precise measurements of numerical scales and frequency counts. However, if they happen to aim at delving into how humans perceive different phenomena, an interpretive paradigm would rather be more becoming. According to Griffin such

scholars think that ‘statistical averaging lops off important differences between people (2006:15).

In his discussion where he juxtaposes quantitative and qualitative methods, Thomas makes a distinction between the two approaches; he characterizes the latter as follows:

Qualitative research is a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic, approach to its subject matter. This means the qualitative researches study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of meaning people bring to them(2003:1).

From what has been pointed out in the above lines, it could be inferred that what is termed as qualitative method does not stand for a single method but it is rather an umbrella term that subsumes sundry philosophical orientations to interpretive researching. Thus there exist a range of methods with a common thread running through all of them being the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm. According to Wimmer & Dominick (2006) what is aimed at in the interpretive paradigm is the attempt to comprehend the way people create meaning and interpret the events of their world in their day-to-day encounters.

Apparently people could go through an assortment of social experiences in their everyday natural settings. These experiences, apart from encounters and interactions with fellow human beings, would include coming upon media products. Dines and Humez contend that media texts such as images play a monumental role in our view of the world and our deepest values: ‘what we consider good or bad, positive or

negative, moral or evil (2003:9). The question here, at this stage, however, is not to address the ways in which people make sense of such media images, but to select the most appropriate approach that would enable the scrutiny of how members of the two sexes make out those images.

In light of the above mentioned proposition, Deacon et al. (1999) suggest the use of what the interpretive tradition has to offer and argue that in exploring the ways in which people make sense of their social settings and the ways in which they express their understanding by way of 'language, sound, imagery, personal style, and social rituals' can be best-handled if one brings the interpretive research paradigm in to play.

As has been pointed out in the first chapter, this study essentially aims at attempting to figure out what, images of femininity as portrayed in women's magazines, mean to males as compared to females. An interaction with media products falls into what constitute a range of social phenomena. Hence qualitative research methods, as underpinned by the interpretive paradigm appears to be more handy in addressing and resolving the research questions this particular study has set out to answer.

Whereas some scholars opt for a blend in which quantitative and qualitative research methods are used side by side, others go against such undertakings and contend that social and cultural matters that need further investigation through research should be dealt with by purely applying qualitative research methods. In his book *'Blending Qualitative & Quantitative Research Methods in Theses and Dissertations'*, Thomas (2003) declares that a student researcher at the

graduate level would benefit if they mix the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Contrary to this, Deacon et al. virtually call the blending an adulteration. In their view a good qualitative researcher would not want to 'soil their hands' by using any form of quantification (1999:8). They further go on to state what is commonly held by proponents of the interpretive paradigm: 'boiling people's thoughts and activities down to numbers ignores exactly the complexity and creativity of social and cultural life which research should be illuminating (Ibid).

Needless to say, the fact that the researcher subscribes to the interpretive school of thought, does not mean that he deems it impeccable. There is always a downside to employing this or that method in any research. The task of the researcher would be to see to it that whatever research tools and methods they pick, their positive aspects in the research context they are applied in should not be outweighed by the negative ones. In other words, the researcher should be careful that the research tools and paraphernalia do not end up looking like a square peg in a round hole.

As far as the validity and credibility of the data generated by way of applying qualitative methods is concerned, Wimmer & Dominick (2006) warn researchers to take heed so that the reliability of their research would not be called into question. According to these scholars, it is important to ensure the completeness of the data. This means that analysis and interpretation should not be based on inadequate information concerning the matter at hand or any of the generated data should not be recklessly left out. Another point Wimmer & Dominick tip off is that the qualitative researcher has to do with selective perception. In their view any data can not be dropped for the simple reason that they don't tally with an already established interpretation framework. These are some of the points that need special attention and can be

said to constitute the shortcomings of the qualitative researching if mishandled or totally overlooked.

On the basis of the philosophical underpinnings vis-à-vis the research questions, this particular study strives to answer, textual analysis, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews had been used to unearth the necessary data.

### **3.1.1. Textual Analysis**

Text in textual analysis does not stand for the commonplace everyday sense of the word which could be taken to mean the printed or written word. In the realm of media and communication research, the term embodies a much wider sense and thus meant to include cultural or media products of any sort whose meaning is to be carefully deciphered. In textual analysis the exploration might include 'the ways language is deployed, how images, sounds and statistics are organized and presented, and, where relevant, how these various elements are combined' (Deacon et al. 1999:17). They also point out that the central concern in carrying out a textual analysis is to eventually come up with a plausible interpretive account of any cultural text.

Although the main objective of this study was to find out gendered responses to the women's images as portrayed in magazines, a brief account of how the images were depicted would be utterly invaluable in providing a little backdrop of the overall state of affairs. This was particularly so because the images would also be used as a supplementary tool in order to gain rich data in focus group interview sessions. In short, the purpose of the purpose of the textual analysis

was, in the main, to give the reader how women's images appeared on the women's magazines under discussion.

For the particular domain for scrutiny had been predefined, the major task remained was that of selecting a magazine or two. With regard to the issue of selection, however, the researcher faced a slight challenge worth mentioning here. Only one magazine named '*kalkidan*' had an official declaration of being a women's magazine, the first of its kind in the country.

Be that as it may, no major differences could be drawn between this particular breed and other magazines that claim to fall in the general interest category. The latter ones attempt to make it clear that they cover a variety of social issues. Many of them, however, bear a name that would simply mislead one to take them for women's magazines. All the same, the one which was in the sought-for domain without any contention, *Kalkidan*, had been singled out for the purpose of analysis. This was believed to suffice because in textual analysis, unlike the case of content analysis where plenty of materials are used to produce statistical maps of basic concepts, small materials, often single cases, are usually picked for analysis (Deacon et al., 1999).

In order to gain the best out of the intended analysis, the publications of the recent year, i.e. 2009 G.C./2001 E.C., were taken as the total population. Since the magazine was published on monthly basis and according to the Ethiopian calendar, the population and the sample were nominated and selected accordingly. Consequently, the population was made to comprise copies from the first month of the Ethiopian calendar to the tenth. A sample of six copies had been selected as a sample for analysis through convenience sampling technique.

### **3.1.2. Focus Group Discussions**

Focus group discussion, otherwise known as group interviewing, is a qualitative research strategy that is believed to enable a researcher to probe into deep-seated attitudes, opinions, and behavior of an audience. It is particularly deemed useful for exploring people's knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way.

Krueger & Casey refer to focus group as a method 'typically used to find the range of opinions of people across several groups' (2000:11). They further extend their argument and expound that such method is preferable to interview conducted with individuals in that focus groups provide real life settings in which the participant members influence others as much as they are influenced.

In an almost similar tone, Deacon et al. point out how focus groups have gained popularity in the realm of media research and particularly in audience reception analysis. Moreover, they also indicate that focus groups are highly instrumental in terms of the amount of data they yield in relation to interpretation:

Focus groups are seen to produce rich qualitative material well suited to detailed interpretive analysis (transcripts of people discussing their views and actions in their own words and to some degree, on their own terms). Furthermore, their group basis is claimed to provide insight into the interactional dynamics of small groups and to mimic the way that everyday media interpretations tend to be collectively

constructed by people in social, familial and professional networks (1999:55).

As stated in the above argument, focus groups are well known to produce a wealth of vital data in a way that quite approximates what one might really experience in a natural social environment. Be that as it may, this doesn't mean that this particular research strategy is free from shortcomings. In fact there is a popular saying about how people could be bad if they are put together in a group to undertake certain activities and make decisions: 'A camel is a horse put together by a committee.' A focus group might end up being what has been claimed in the maxim if certain factors are not taken into consideration.

Setbacks to reliable results in a focus group discussion are likely to include a case where some group members happen to be less active in taking part in the mutual discussions because they are shy and especially so when it comes to discussing some sensitive issues. In cases like this, a self-appointed leader would mostly tend to dominate the rest of the group and do all the talking.

However, it should not be assumed that groups are, by definition, inhibiting relative to the supposed privacy of an interview situation or that focus groups are inappropriate when researching sensitive topics. Quite the opposite may be true. Group work can actively facilitate the discussion of taboo topics because the less inhibited members of the group break the ice for shyer participants. Participants can also provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider to deviate from mainstream culture (or the assumed culture of the researcher).

### **3.1.2.1. Sampling and Group Composition**

The size of the group could be another factor that might limit the productivity of focus group discussions. The higher the number of the discussants in a group, the lesser the manageability would be. In groups that consist of large number of people, participants might start to lean over to whisper and form cliques eventually. This would disrupt the order and would end up resulting in total chaos. Thus, in order to drive clear of this impediment each group was made to consist of five people. Moreover, while maintaining homogeneity of the group in terms of gender, i.e. each group either consisted of males or females, diversity was also deemed important.

To this end, in each of these groups besides sex, age and religious background were taken into consideration. This was done in line with what Hansen speculates: 'sampling of groups in a focus group takes careful note of any particular demographic, occupational or other dimensions which the researcher is expecting or hypothesizing that differences will occur' (1998:264). In terms of striking a balance between homogeneity and diversity, Krueger & Casey (2000) suggest that while variation in a group is important it should not go to the extent that would stifle some participants. Furthermore, they refer to what they call the "peacock effect" where mingling men with women might end up being frustrating and inhibiting to women as men usually tend to speak with more frequency and authority than women.

The sampling techniques involved in picking up participants included snowball sampling and convenience sampling for there were no readymade list of individuals or institutions that could serve as a starting point for sampling as far this particular study was concerned (Deacon et

al.,1999). All together there were three pairs of groups which constitute six focus groups in toto. In each of the pairs the first half consisted of females while the remaining half contained male participants. In other words, we might as well talk about them as three pairs of groups as for every group of five males there was a corresponding group that had their counterparts. The first such group contained first year undergraduate students, the second working men and women, and the third women taken from women's beauty salon and men from a barber's. The last pair was selected on the assumption that these individuals would have access to the images under discussion as they wait in their respective service centers and could render rich insights.

The focus group discussions were conducted in venues believed to be of relative tranquility that would not disrupt the overall process. In all the discussions, participants were asked questions prior to which they were made to look at photographs of women, especially those on the magazine covers. This was done to elicit perceptions and interpretations of the images. In this way the necessary data was generated in the form of how the discussants responded to the questions and the accompanying images.

For ease of later access of the data obtained from these discussions, audio recording devices and note-taking were used for the storing the raw data. Later the data from the audio equipments were gingerly transcribed and notes and doodles reorganized for analysis. Two moderators who possessed enormous interpersonal skills helped the researcher with carrying out the focus group discussions all along.

### **3.1.3. Individual In-depth Interviews**

An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that allows person to person discussion. It can lead to increased insight into people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior on important issues. This type of interview is often unstructured and therefore permits the interviewer to encourage an informant (respondent) to talk at length about the topic of interest.

The in-depth interview uses a flexible interview approach. It aims to ask questions to explain the reasons underlying a problem or practice in a target group. In this study, this strategy had been employed as a follow-up to the focus group discussions carried out prior to it. It is often argued that when focus groups are used along with other methods, the reliability of the data is enhanced. It was in this light that lively and fervent participants were selected from each group for one-on-one interview sessions. For each interviewee an interview guide was prepared, but the interviewer did not strictly hold onto those as a map but rather saw to it that the informant had not gone astray much from the overall course and occasionally put them back on track when such things actually happened or were about to happen. Utmost care was also taken to choose a venue as convenient as possible in all aspects.

In addition, to delve into the other side of the issue, the editor-in-chief of the magazine was also interviewed.

Generally, therefore, the research involved three junctures, namely textual analysis, focus group discussions, and individual in-depth interviews in an attempt to find what images that are portrayed mean to women as compared to men and what implications this might have for

media-houses and practitioners engaged in this particular line of business. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The central objective that set off this study was to figure out how men and women make sense of various images of femininity as they were portrayed in women's magazines published in the metropolitan, Addis Ababa. In order to achieve this objective and other accompanying research questions, focus group interviews as well as in-depth individual interviews were carried out. While the focus group discussions and individual interviews conducted subsequent to the group discussions served to provide an insight into the decoders' perspective, an in-depth individual interview was also conducted with the editor-in-chief of *Kalkidan*, the first and one of a kind women's magazine in town to get the taste of what the encoder has to say on the subject under scrutiny.

All the same, through the employment of both of these research techniques what could be obtained would be limited in expression if the material the research subjects had been asked to make sense of has not been presented. Thus, in an endeavor to come up with the full picture of the general state of affairs, a textual analysis that brings forth a succinct description of the magazine images of femininity in as much objective way as possible was brought into play.

In other words, the textual analysis would not be analysis per se, but a mere overview of what had been used to draw out perceptive accounts

from discussants during the course of the group as well as individual interviews. Even though the primary focus of this study was to figure out how women's images in women's magazines were perceived by men and women, the discussion below would entertain both images of men and women in a contrastive fashion for both images appear in the magazines and an attempt to give the reader a general feel of what these look like would actually be essential.

## **4.2. A Brief Overview of Images of Men and Women**

### **4.2.1. Images of Men**

In the copies of the magazine, *Kalkidan*, selected for this study both images of men and women occupied the front cover pages as well as the inner pages. If there was one thing that anyone who came across any copy of the magazine could easily notice was the ways in which the photos of men were presented vis-à-vis those of women. Men took the margins of the cover pages and came in much smaller sizes as compared to a cover girl that usually assumed the middle position on the front cover page and takes the lion's share of the available space. Not a single image of a man had taken such a space in any of the copies selected for the study.

Another noticeable point was the part of the body focused in the photos. Most images of men seemed to have been portrayed in such a way that it had always been the face, the torso alone, or the torso and the arms were visible. This goes in line with the argument that there are actually tendencies of 'face-ism' and 'body-ism' in the way media represents masculinity and femininity respectively (Archer et al., 1983).

The basic argument here is that men are portrayed with their faces being the center of attention whereas representations of women tend to tip that women's body parts in addition to their faces are made to characterize them. One could come across instances where women's images appear with the part above the waist clipped out. In the case of men's images, however, what happens seems to be rather the opposite of this. Their faces are spotlighted more often than not.

Yet another aspect of the photos that would probably draw the attention of any onlooker was the way men were clad as contrasted to the way women were. As indicated above, no image of man was in full display; most of the photos focused on the face and the torso. In all of the cases men appeared either in a suit and tie or other outfits that do not expose any body part. This seems to be a trend in other visual media in Ethiopia as well as a precursory study that had scrutinized the portrayal of femininity in billboard advertisements in Addis Ababa revealed. Hawariat, who carried out the study, pointed out that in the advertisements she examined, 'all the men were fully dressed' (2008:48). In the same vein, a study conducted to figure out how women were portrayed in the advertisements broadcast by the Ethiopian Television (ETV) indicated that men were hardly dressed in exposing attire (Kenaw, 2006).

In virtually all of the cases, men either appear alone or with their marriage partners. When they are represented along with their wives, there seem to be a feature that is worth-mentioning. Mostly they are depicted like caregivers to their wives. The women either seem to be leaning against the men or being caressed by them.

### **4.2.2. Images of Women**

There is a common characteristic that all copies of the magazine share when it comes to photos of women. All of them bear the image of a young beautiful girl who is a model, an artiste, or a local movie actress. What is more distinct about such a figure is that often more than half of the front cover page space is dedicated to her. Apparently the way such girls are posed is so much so that it is actually this photo that would jump at anyone who happens to rest their eyes on any issue of the magazine.

As touched upon, *en passant*, in the previous subsection, the images of women present them in a manner which brings to light their body as opposed to images of men with the center of attention being the face, and not much more. A man's image never included part of the body below the waist unless he is shown standing by a woman. This, therefore, reflects the 'body-ism' of women.

Further, an attribute that can also be taken as a more explicit manifestation of women lies in the way they are clad. They are either suggestively clad or dressed up in slink clothing that fits skin-tight to their bodies. If they are not in something that reveals the thighs or at least the navel, they expose their cleavage, and even the breasts can be seen save the nipples. Notably there appears to be a difference in the way older women are dressed as compared to that of younger ones. Older women, who are usually shown in the scene with their men, are almost fully dressed very much like their men.

Peculiar to the images of women again is the way they are posed. This particularly applies to the younger ones again. Let us consider a picture that epitomizes the point. It is the photo of young girl, labeled as Miss

World Ethiopia, appeared on the front cover page of the December 2009 issue. She has a tall and slim figure. Though her bosom and the midriff were not exposed, her dress seems to be topless from the back. With her buttocks protruding, she was bending over but again somehow looking back with a smile and way looking that makes it look like she is expecting someone from behind her. Moreover, she is also caressing her hair. It would not be much wrong if one construed this image as a sexually titillating one from the way she has been portrayed. Davis(1995), quoted in Dines et al, argues, ' Images that express hegemonic femininity present women in sexualized and demeaning poses' (2003:315).

By and large, the above synopsis of what the copies of magazines used to elicit interpretations from the participants in this research carried would suffice in terms of offering a general feel. Now let us turn to the findings of the group as well as individual interviews in order to see how these images have been interpreted.

### **4.3. Findings of the Focus Group Discussions**

In the previous section, a general impression of the images of femininity and those of masculinity [for the sake of a contrastive consideration] has been put forth just to show the other side of the issue under consideration. To the possible extent, the researcher believes that the forerunning analysis provides the reader with an objective synopsis of what the images of both men and women look like in the copies of the magazine singled out for further scrutiny. It was the images that are epigrammatically described above that were used for the elicitation of interpretive responses from the participants of the study.

Mainly the analysis, discussion and interpretation have to do with the objectives of the study. The theoretical concepts and frameworks that have been touched upon in the literature review section are also used to augment the overall task of analysis and interpretation. It does not mean, however, the study is pegged to specific theoretical approaches; rather, it attempts to make use of them as torchlight for making sense of the raw data.

The analysis will assume a form in which the findings of the group as well as individual interviews are discussed and carefully considered. This will be done by way of substantiating arguments by appropriate quotations taken from the focus group discussions and individual interviews. Pertinent insights of the editor-in-chief will also be incorporated.

Demographically the number of research subjects who took part in the focus group discussions and individual interviews totted up to 31 people. The lower and upper age limits were 18 and 50 respectively. In terms of religious diversity only four of the focus groups had one Muslim participant each. Most of the discussants came from various sects and denominations of Christianity in the main. Education wise, the lowest level had high school graduates while a would-be PhD holder occupies the uppermost rung of the ladder. For the sake of simplicity, information related to focus groups and individual interview would be presented in the analysis as:

FGD	Focus group discussion
II	Individual interview
FGD 1	First year college students (males)
FGD 2	First year college students (females)
FGD 3	Working men

FGD 4	Working women
FGD 5	Beauty salon customers (females)
FGD 6	Barber shop customers (males)
Numerals i, ii,...	used in place of names of interviewees

In line with the objectives of the study, the findings of this section will be thematically categorized. Again, most of the points are actually similar and may overlap in practical terms, but such categorization is adopted only for systematic reasons. Generally, the discussion will be based on the four thematic concepts of evaluation of the images of women against culture, perception of impacts of the images, the need for audience segmentation and perception of sexually objectifying portrayal. Each one of these will be considered one by one as follows.

#### **4.3.1. Evaluation of Images of Women against Culture**

Before talking about how the images of women portrayed in the copies of the women's magazine were interpreted in terms of cultural values, it would be logical to start with the definition of culture. Defining culture, however, can be a very difficult task. This is especially so because different people define culture differently. The commonest and simplest definition of culture puts it as the totality of way of life. For our purpose, let us consider a couple of definitions provided by some authors.

Edward Hall illustrates culture as those experiences that are deep, common and unstated as well as shared by members of that particular community; they communicate them without knowing and they form the backdrop against which all other events are evaluated (Iris & Beamer, 2005). The fact that culture is used as a benchmark against

which all things are judged makes the definition more appropriate to the point under consideration in the sense that this was what the participants of group as well as individual interviews did. In Hofstede's words, "culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (1991:5). Conceptually this point can relate back to the idea of co-cultures discussed in the literature review.

After going through the images of women on the front cover pages as well as the inner pages, most of the discussants of the FGDs pointed out that the photos were culturally unacceptable. In a discussion about what aspects of a photo of a young model bending over with her buttocks protruding they liked and disliked, different discussants voiced their stands as shown below. Their evaluations were based on the cultural dimension of how the girl was portrayed:

FGD 1(iii): I am glad you have tabled an issue I have always been pondering over. It always annoys me when I see women posed in coquettish ways usually wearing clothes exposing parts of their body. On the contrary, men appear fully dressed. Besides being outlandish culture, I really find it enigmatic why this should be done. Some people call this modernization, but aren't the Arab women modernized because they observe purdah (grinning), their age-old cultural and traditional attire?

FGD 2 (i): These days it is so trendy to see our sisters in clothes that show the belly-button, the small of the back or their cleavages or even the breasts save the nipples. The question that immediately comes to my mind is whether this is an Ethiopian culture or an imported one?

FGD 3 (iv): We should not expect our girls to hold fast to the way things had been a century before. I don't expect my sister to be dressed the way my foremothers were. Things change, the whole world changes, and the same is true with culture. What is wrong with being dressed up in clothing that pronounces one's inner beauty? Nothing, as far as I am concerned.

FGD 4 (i): The way the girls are dressed is nothing like our culture. Mostly they appear nearly nude.

FGD 5 (v): We cover our bodies with clothes not only to cocoon ourselves against cold weather. If that were the case, we would see people throwing them away in sizzling seasons. It is a universal culture of humanity in general to cover our bodies, especially our private parts. I don't know whose culture this nudity is (frowning).

FGD 6 (iii): I don't think it is that easy to say the images of women and girls we have seen are against our culture. Which culture are we referring to when we say 'our culture'? In a country which is a melting pot of over 80 ethnic groups, which one is 'our culture'? I have been to parts of Ethiopia where women wear nothing above the waist. Isn't this our culture then? We need to reconsider things.

From the above points of view forwarded by individuals who took part in the group discussions, one can easily notice that the ways the images have been interpreted has a lot to do with how the discussants understood what is meant by culture. All the points of view can be boiled down to cultural dynamism, conservatism, and multiculturalism.

Cultural dynamism is reflected in the argument forwarded by a discussant from FGD 3. He talks about the fact that what

grandmothers and great-grandmothers wore in the times of yore can not be expected to be worn today. The central line of argument advocated by this participant was that culture in general and ways of dressing, as cultural *modus operandi*, in particular are subject to change. And therefore nothing can be said to be wrong with the ways women are portrayed in the magazines with clothes that expose parts of their body.

In relation to this point, Wood (2000) states that cultures are dynamic and that they change and evolve over time. She further goes on to discuss that such changes can be usually ascribed to invention, diffusion, cultural calamity and communication. The type of dynamism being referred to in the discussion appears to be one that could be put down to diffusion and rather than invention and cultural calamity. This is in the sense that the culture of wearing the types of clothes being referred to could be said to have been diffused from the Western world through different forms of communication among which the media are one.

Contrary to the concept of cultural dynamism was posed a stand that bears a conservatist cultural undertone. The discussant goes up against the idea that the ways of dressing being discussed are part of modernization. He shores up his stance by citing the *pardah* tradition in the Arab world as an example of how the Arab women remained recalcitrant in terms of sticking to their traditionally prescribed way of dressing irrespective of modernization.

Another interesting point of view on the matter has to do with the fact that Ethiopia is a country consisting of various ethnic groups and it, therefore, is difficult to speak of an Ethiopian culture. Because the magazines are meant for urban women, even if the argument that refers

to Ethiopian culture in its broader sense seems quite sound, one might appraise it according to what could be taken as normal for the Ethiopian urban standards.

Yet another point, somehow related to the multiculturalist view is the fact that covering the body is a universal human culture and no culture in the world would allow 'inappropriate' dressing. In fact, what is inappropriate would be determined by the mainstream culture in any human community. Thus, the claim in here is that wearing clothes has a virtually universal application to the human race irrespective of cultural differences. In this discussant's view, no culture encourages nudity, especially when it comes to the genital area. Opposing this view, FGD 3 (iv), who apparently bolsters cultural dynamism says there is nothing wrong with nudity. He says he remembers what he claims had once been said by a female model, 'Nudity is beauty.' In his view it is alright if women wear anything or portrayed wearing anything in the media and would not matter if their images are suggestive.

Apparently there is unanimity amongst men and women that the portrayal of women in the copies of the women's magazine they viewed was against Ethiopian cultural and normative standards. Even if there were certain points of view that did not quite fit well into the overall pattern of this general consensus, they did not have much leverage in terms of swaying away from what could be considered as a virtually unanimous interpretation by the two groups.

From the perspective of the editor-in-chief of the magazine, however, the images have been so meticulously selected to make sure that they are against cultural standards or sexually suggestive:

We don't even simply take any photos brought to us by the girls themselves. The selection is done with utmost care because underage children might happen to see these images. They mustn't pick up something bad. We see to it that nude and sexually titillating photos don't appear in our magazines; it is against our culture.

The words of the editor-in-chief shed a different light on the matter. He claimed that the images in various editions of their magazine do not transgress the cultural standards nor are they the types that are sexually provocative. This showed that there was a discrepancy of perception between the encoder on one hand and the decoders on the other.

According to Hall, a media producer may encode a certain meaning based on certain social context and understanding to be decoded by the audience; however, the audiences decipher that particular media text based on their socio-cultural context and assumptions which is likely to be somewhat different from the originally intended meaning (William, 2003).

#### **4.3.2. Perception of the Impacts of the Images**

It is quite debatable whether media images would affect the behavior of the audience who happen to be exposed to them. There have been concerns about media effects that brought about the undertaking of a great deal of media effects research. Dines et al. stipulate that the findings of the vast body of such research have been found to be 'inconclusive and hotly contested' (2003:406). Here the focus of the study is not quite to see whether there are impacts that are tangible on

the ground, but rather whether or not men and women perceived the images of femininity in terms of whether or not they would have impacts on the audience.

The questions that pertain to the impact of the images might have, especially on women included three aspects. In the first case women discussants were asked if they would do anything to try to be like the models they had seen on the front cover pages as well as the inner pages of the copies of the women's magazine they viewed. The question was put to men discussants differently because logically thinking no man, under normal circumstances, would strive to emulate the looks of a woman. So, they were asked if they thought women would attempt to emulate the looks of the women portrayed on the magazines.

When asked if they would strive to emulate the images of women that appear on women's magazines, the women responded in almost similar ways. Looking at the responses of some of the participants from FGD 2, FGD 4 and FGD 5 would be essential in terms of making the point clearer:

FGD 2(iii): I never think that I should look like someone else. But when you look at women who are portrayed as beauty epitomes, you may be tempted to pick her hairdo, or the way she is dressed or anything you happen to like.

FGD 4 (v): When I look at images of slim models like the ones we have seen on the magazines, I feel like I should go to some gym center to lose some weight and look as slimmer as possible.

FGD 5 (iii): The clothes she is wearing are quite exquisite. Looking at them, I get the feeling that I would also look beautiful in those; but I wouldn't definitely do anything to look like her.

As could be inferred from the responses of the discussants shown above, the images of women could have some effects on the women looking at them. All the same, it would not be totally right to stipulate that when women look at the images they might work hard to look like models that are deemed beauty archetypes. Even so, it seems they at least pick something they find interesting and try to possess that themselves. Women do the things mentioned above in a seemingly subtle ways. When exposed to covert external pressures to enhance physical beauty, girls and women come to experience their efforts to experience as natural (Costanzo, 1992). The point is that such efforts are simply taken for granted. Nevertheless, women and girls who took part in the FGDs stated they never try anything to look like the images they had seen.

When men discussants responded to a question slightly phrased in a different way, that is, whether or not they think women would attempt to emulate the images of models they see in the magazines, they had similar views. Let us look at what respondents from FGD1, FGD 3, and FGD 6 had to say.

FGD 1(iv): It seems to me that girls who are coevals of the model would do more copying to emulate the way the models look than women past the age. That is why we see our girls clad in sexually titillating ways these days.

(i): Besides the fact that women always strain themselves a lot to look physically appealing to men, nowadays beauty means money, it

sells. Therefore, it is unquestionable that when women see such images, they will do anything to look like them.

FGD 3(ii): If you carefully follow the images of girls that appear on the magazines, each publication introduces a new girl. This tells us that all girls are following suit. After some time nudity will be condoned as a norm.

FGD 6(v): There are evidences that humans in general copy things that others of their own kind do. This is especially more common a phenomenon during the years of childhood. It might as well continue during adulthood. Therefore, after being exposed to the images we have just seen, those who are overweight might think of going to the gym to slough off some pounds; others might go for the purchase of cosmetics, clothes and some other beauty products to enhance their physical appearance.

From the responses of the two sides, it seemed that men mostly thought women would attempt to emulate the images of women they encounter virtually wholly while women's responses indicated that women don't try to imitate the appearance of those images to that extent. Nonetheless, it can be construed from their words that they actually pick stuffs they like from what they see but the process could be somehow unconscious. It is the efforts to be like the beauty ideals that might not be conscious but the monitoring of the physical self is unlikely to be so, as comparison with the visual images would utterly be inevitable.

According to Featherstone, "images invite comparisons: they are constant reminders of what we are and might with effort yet become" (1982: 178). It is commonsensical that such comparison be done only if

the images are of one's kind. That is to say women would compare themselves to images of women and men would do the same. Thus, images would make individuals more aware of their looks.

In responses given to a question closely related to the previous one, the views and opinions forwarded by the discussants from the two sides appeared to have a fascinating character. The question goes: How do you think would a woman feel about herself if she tried to compare herself with the images of women considered 'beautiful' and fell short? Almost all men except one, a PhD student in Clinical Psychology, were of the opinion that whatever the case might be the woman or girl who found her looks below par after comparison with the beauty prototype should be worried and though not much would happen to her.

On the contrary, the majority of the FGD participants from the females' side had similar views about what effects the comparison and consequent awareness of inability to look as beautiful or even close would bring about. A closer contrastive look at the reactions of both sides would help us understand the issue more clearly. First let us take up what the males' side had to say.

FGD 1(iv): In my view whether a woman doesn't look like some other women doesn't matter much. What matters is whether she finds herself appealing, and that is what she always works on. I don't think she would feel badly if she doesn't look like a beauty ideal.

FGD 3(v): If the beauty yardsticks are like those we have just seen, she should rather feel proud that she is not like them. No one, I believe, in their right mind should be worried about whether they look like a beauty ideal or not. Every person is unique and has appealing looks in their own ways.

FGD 6(i): Maybe she would feel bad for a while but I don't think that the impacts could be deep-seated.

(v): There is a sort of cultural and normative expectation that women should appear physically attractive. Men seem to be exempted here. So women would certainly feel down when they think they fail to look as beautiful as a beauty ideal. I am not saying men never feel that. They do but compared to that of women, it is almost negligible. Haven't you ever heard them say 'it is ok for a man if he has looks a little better than that of a rhino' (bursting into laughter).

Later in an individual interview pursuant to the FGD session, the Psychologist dwelt on the issue in greater depth. With respect to the effects of inability to have the same looks as that of a beauty ideal, he said he had not said all there was to be said and therefore added the following points:

There is what is known as an ideal physical self or more technically known as the 'mannequin' which everyone works hard to attain. This is more so with women because the simple fact that women spend much more time in front of the mirror when they get up in the morning seems to be a good indicator.

She might wear as much make-up as possible in order to get closer to the mannequin, if not totally attain it-and it is usually unattainable. Even if she is beautiful, she might think that she is not and therefore plunge herself into a psychological trauma known as inferiority complex. As a result she might feel less confident, become an easy touch, going out with all men who happen to ask her out, or stay aloof from other people, develop self despise, etc. Women will always wish to

look attractive and younger to men. Let me tell you my recent experience that is quite related to this.

I have a virtual friend with whom we often chat when we both get online. Once she sent me a couple of photos and wanted me to give her my impression of how old she looks in the picture. Prior to this, she had told me that she was in her early thirties. I thought I got to be honest and told her that she looked as old as someone in their mid forties. The next minute she cut me dead; she did not want to talk to me. We have fallen out for some time. It took me quite a while to fix the problem. If you ask me, she got upset because it is believed that the younger a woman is the more beautiful she is or at least looks. The magazines actually promote youth and beauty-how important they are for women. This point sits comfortably with Gauntlett's argument that women's magazines today aim at young women and emphasize beauty as well (2002).

The experience of the psychologist and Gauntlett's view that the media in general and women's magazines in particular, lay greater emphasis on youth and physical looks may indicate to a degree that this could affect women in certain ways. If women see images of beautiful and young women all over various genres of media and women's magazines in particular, they could interpret them in such a way that focus on looks plays a great role in their lives.

To have a solid picture of how the impacts of the images are interpreted by both sides, it will be of great import to look at the thoughts and reflections put forth by the female participants as well:

FGD 2(iv): The photos would make you think of femininity in general and what it means to be a woman. Surely such images would make me reflect on my attractiveness as a woman.

(iii): I love to stroll around with my friend in the evening breeze. By the roadside, there are rows and rows of magazines everywhere. They all carry images of beautiful girls. We while away some minutes looking at the images with my friend. He does not like them much. Whenever I get the feeling that she seems more beautiful and appealing than I am, I get envious and try some things. Gosh! Some are so slim. I may even go on diet for some time. You know, such things might affect your self-confidence.

FGD 4(ii): I have a friend who has fallen in love with this magazine. She copies the way the models are dressed. Always she goes for fashionable dresses. Once she told me that she decided to look as slim as a model she had seen on the cover page and skipped main courses of meal for quite some time. She also took a lot of lemon juice. I do not think I take care of my physical self as much as she does.

FGD 5 (iv): What always makes me wonder is whether those who publish these magazines know that there is much more to being a woman than just look beautiful. There is no care taken when it comes to the images of men if you look at these magazines. There is nothing wrong with looking beautiful but they are really overemphasizing just one aspect of femininity. Many women may feel badly about themselves if they are not as beautiful as those portrayed as perfectly beautiful. Not me, though; because I know I am beautiful (laughing).

(ii): Let me tell you; women don't approve of such images especially if they believe they are not as beautiful. One day I was in a

pharmacy to buy medicine. I overheard a group of girls commenting on the photo of Hayat, a beauty icon advertising *Sensation Condoms*. I heard them say, “Look at her, her mouth is as wide as a bowl, what makes her so beautiful? One of them retorted, ‘Forget her! Do you think she has something special we cannot offer in bed?’(Chuckling) ”. I am not sure but not many women would appreciate these photos. Honestly speaking I don’t know why but we don’t like those pretty well.

In a similar vein, Jacobson (2005) discusses how exposure to media content that presents idealized images and the ways these could influence girls. The two significant findings he points out here include a decrease in satisfaction with their body thereby encouraging disorders such as the ones referred to above.

The words of the research subjects shown above appear to give us an idea that the impacts of the images under consideration are construed differently when viewed from contrasting vantage points on the basis of gender. The extent to which women understand the impacts of exposure to the ways femininity is portrayed in women’s magazines seems to be a little deeper than that of men. This difference in perception and interpretation can be put down to what has been propounded by the standpoint theory. Wood (2000) stipulates that men and women come from two social groups as the result of which they differ in their standpoints. This, however, does not mean that there never exists a difference between members of a social community such as the ones being discussed in the way they view the world and interpret various social and cultural phenomena that take place in their immediate environments.

The editor-in-chief argued that the images would not have impacts on women at all. Rather he was of the opinion that what might have influence on women are the stories of women they publish. Below is what he said in this respect:

We are not all after publishing images of beautiful women as people might think. Our duty is to encourage women in the entertainment industry. The stories of success of some women who appear in our magazines could actually influence women to join this industry-not the images.

The position of the decoder as indicated above puts a totally different complexion on the matter. A look at the encoder's vantage point as well as the decoders' perspective points in the direction of a gap between the two sides. Whereas there exists some sort of similarity of perception amongst the audience, the decoder had an utterly different understanding of the matter. He believed the images of women would not negatively impact women but may rather attract women into the entertainment industry. According to a popular argument commonly held in dealing with the meaning and significance of popular culture in a given society, however, it is necessary to understand them as exactly as they are understood by audiences. This, thus, somehow shows a solid discrepancy between the decoder and the encoders in that the images were not construed in the same way as the decoder thought they would be.

The next point which is the perception of sexual objectification appears to be quite related with the preceding arguments but only needs to be considered for a deeper understanding.

### **4.3.3. Perception of Sexually Objectifying Portrayal**

In the second chapter, it has been pointed out that sexual objectification refers to the socio-cultural phenomenon where a person is looked upon as a sex object. It has also been indicated that women are portrayed across various genres of media and the visual arts in such a way that they are shown in modes of this sort more frequently than are men. The main concern here is to see whether men and women perceive sexual objectification of women and girls which is presumed to exist in the copies of the magazine under inquiry. The question put to the members of male as well as female discussants was whether or not the fact that the images of women portrayed on the magazines appear in clothes that reveal some of their body parts could be construed that women are sexually objectified. First, let us look at the responses of the male participants:

FGD 1(i): I think these images can serve as Viagra in the sense that they easily put a lead in your pencil (laughing) even if your virility is affected by say old age or some other things.

(iii): For me this is utter pornography. Pornography does not refer to only sexually explicit materials. The women are no different from commercial sex workers. Go to night clubs and look at the way the women are dressed...the sole purpose is to sexually turn men on.

FGD 3(iv): The images do not appear to me as sexually titillating, but young men might find them irresistible.

FGD 6(iii): We do not know the original intention of the editor, but I think there is some kind of sexually objectifying portrayal of women.

Believe me there could be people who would buy the magazines just for these pictures.

(v): I don't agree with the idea that these pictures are meant for sex. Naturally, women are beautiful and that is the message the images are trying to disseminate.

Most discussants from the male groups seem to perceive that sexual objectification prevails in the way the images of women are represented in the magazines. Age appears to set them apart, though. The younger ones say that they would classify the photos as sexually objectifying women whereas their seniors do not approve of the fact that the images should be construed as expressions of sexual objectification of women.

One might draw a conclusion that younger men noticed that the photos showed women's sexual objectification more readily than did their seniors owing to the fact that the younger ones were in the age of more active sexuality as opposed to their seniors. It goes without saying that sexual libido dwindles as a person ages, and therefore this reality could be said to have affected the interpretation of the images.

To see if there is disparity in interpretation between the two sides, it behooves us to turn to the points of view brought forth by participants of the female groups.

FGD 2(v): I think the point is that our foremothers did not have the conducive environment that would let them show their beauty. Now the times have changed so much so that women really reveal their hitherto concealed magnificence. Should we call that sexual objectification? I do not think so.

(ii): With the fashion industry focusing a lot on women's clothes more than ever before, women seem to get more and more striking in those outfits. So, it is rather highlighting beauty than sexually suggestive portrayal.

FGD 4(iii): The boobs, the navel, and the rear...I think these are spots that magnify feminine splendor. The fashion industry in general and the media in particular are using this reality to grab people's attention.

FGD 5(i): It is funny that they claim these magazines are meant for women. We have all this body. We don't need to see her topless nor do we want to see her cleavages or her midriff. Obviously, though, men will drool over these images. Sexual portrayal? Crystal clear!

The discussions from the focus groups suggest that sexual objectification in the portrayal of femininity in the magazine was not fathomed in the same manner or at least to the same depth by men and women. The former tend to have a more unswerving and lucid understanding of the matter than do the latter group.

As it can be noted in the case of men above, there was also something of a similar pattern that had to do with the age of the participants. Here, too, younger women tend to interpret the pictures as bringing women's beauty to the fore. On the other hand, senior women have a propensity to perceive sexual objectification in the portrayal of femininity in the magazines. Dines et al. (2003) argues that women in different generations are at variance when it comes to understanding their feminine identity. They further note that younger women might view images such as the ones being discussed here as marking feminine hegemony compared to older women (Ibid).

The pattern of points of view indicated above does not mean that there was utter unanimity in interpretation and perception of the images be it among the young women or the older ones. It represents what can be generally made out of the series of discussions and debates. There were young women who viewed the images as potentially harmful in that they encourage women to be dressed in ways sexually provocative to men. In fact one discussant, a young college student in her early twenties, mentioned an instance where a woman was victimized simply because of the way she had been clad.

FGD 2 (iii): It was before six months. I went to Nazareth for a vacation. The sun was about to set. There was a lot of commotion. The woman was dressed in a scanty mini-skirt which hardly covered her thighs. A man who had been known to be mentally unsound was following her from behind until he jumped at her and raped her right in the middle of the road. She was so hurt that she breathed her last soon though many people came to her rescue. So, this was not just wrong but fatally dangerous.

The above account could be taken as a justification in the debate of how the portrayal of femininity in the media and the visual arts in general can bring about severe consequences to women who may wish to imitate the particular ways in which women are displayed. Another young lady, in her early twenties, from the group of working women had a similar view of what sexually objectifying media portrayals could mean to women:

FGD 4(iv): They show us photos of women showing off their cleavages, navels, or wearing topless wears. What would this mean to the on-looking woman? Go ahead, get dressed like these women and you would

be liked. And in this country people really trust anything they happen to get from the media pretty well. It is common to hear people arguing over a certain matter and then the other saying, 'it is true; I heard it on the radio, television or read it in magazine or newspaper'.

Apart from perception of the images of femininity in the copies of the magazine as promotion of beauty icons by many of the younger research subjects, the views of the discussants given above would also mean that young women could also label those images as sexually objectifying ones.

All the same, the findings of the group discussions indicate that older women as compared to their juniors have a more vivid understanding of sexually objectifying portrayal of femininity; the opposite is true in the case of men for younger men seemed to exhibit a clearer construal of sexual objectification in comparison to their seniors.

#### **4.3.4. The Need for Audience Segmentation**

The fact that a certain media genre might have an assortment of audience who differ in their socio-cultural backgrounds or are set apart by demographic realities such as age could call for the need to divide them into assemblages of more or less homogeneous composition. It is likely to enable that particular breed of media to cater to the needs of its respective audiences with greater degree of ease and commitment. Based on this point of view, some of the discussants pointed out that the media-house should rather start thinking in terms of whom their messages are packaged for and thus needs segmentation of its audiences.

Since the magazine is solely meant for female audience, the comments of the discussants that the media-house should come up with audience segmentation had the age of the audience as the basis for the proposed grouping. In a way the viewpoint forwarded by those who proposed this particular measure be taken by the publishers of the magazine carried an undertone that it rather needs to be 'x-rated'. The PhD student in clinical psychology, in the II session, said the following in relation to this point.

FGD 6(v): The whole thing would make more sense if they had different publications for different age groups. It is not a good idea that underage children should be allowed to look at images of women clad in sexually suggestive ways. They have to have publications for children, for teenagers as well as for adults.

In a similar vein, one of the girls from the group of working women favored this idea of coming up with segments of audience rather than assuming that the contents would be apt across the board. Here is what she said:

FGD 4(i): The specialization of this publication, it seems to me, bases itself only on the gender of the audience. Children, especially girls, would be better off not looking at some of the images we have seen.

The words of the discussant above do not actually directly express the need for segmentation compared to those of the PhD student. However, there is a subtle allusion to the very need of this phenomenon when one closely looks at her words. She seems to share the same fear as the other informant that underage audience may take on the way they dress.

On the whole in this chapter, the major findings of the research along with the discussion of the interpretation of the images by the sexes have been put forward. The next chapter will summarize the findings pointed out here in a somewhat squeezed fashion and also provide an extensive conclusion of the study as a whole.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

As stated at the very outset of this study, the underlying questions that set the whole thing in motion had to do with delving into how women and men perceived the images of women as they were portrayed in women's magazines in Ethiopia. It is commonplace to encounter studies that stipulate women's portrayal in the media and visual arts does not appear to be a healthy one. It is as an attempt to see if this is the case in Ethiopia or if there are any indicators of such state of play that this study has been undertaken. Besides, more importantly, the meaning attached to such portrayal constitutes the core of the research as a whole.

Of studies that deal with the issues of the portrayal of women in the media and the visual arts, there are not many that quite attempted to show what these images mean to the audience. They only make subjective analysis of those images. What sets apart this particular study, therefore, was the fact that it had tried to look at what the images meant to women, who were the primary target of the genre, as well as to men-hence providing a contrastive look at the matter.

The use of a qualitative research methodology to inquire into this phenomenon has been found to be utterly practical as it helped to arrive at the interpretation of the images under consideration in concrete terms. While the textual analysis was supposed to provide the

reader with the material the research subjects used for interpretation, the focus group discussions and the individual interviews played a vital role in obtaining the necessary data to understand the difference or similarity of interpretation amongst the groups based primarily on gender.

Given the scope of the study, the findings of this research may not be generalized to the larger population. All the same, it is believed that the findings would have a great significance in offering some nuances of what images of women in the media in general and those in women's magazines in particular mean to different groups in society, gender being used as a point of departure.

The research concluded that in broader terms the images of women in *Kalkidan* magazine have been interpreted differently but there were certain spheres where the two sides had virtually similar perceptions.

In the case of the evaluation of the images against the cultural standards, the findings were somewhat inconclusive in the sense that culture itself had been found to be difficult, in the first place, to agree upon. This was especially based on the view that there are a number of cultures in the country and it is difficult to state that the images of women are against Ethiopian culture. In any case, both men as well as women, the majority from both groups, did not have complimentary views in their evaluation of the images of women in the magazine against culture.

As has been pointed out in the preceding chapter there was a heated debate amongst the participants in this research that in a multicultural society such as ours, it is hard to pin down what is actually against an Ethiopian culture. In fact we cannot talk about Ethiopian culture but we can talk about Ethiopian cultures. What is culturally acceptable for one social group may end up being a grave taboo in the other. In this light, therefore, the argument is perfectly sound. All the same, there are striking similarities amongst all the cultures despite the said differences. It could at times be not that easy to see discreteness taking into account certain cultural strands.

There is another side to this line of reasoning. When the informants were asked to look at the photos from the perspective of whom they were primarily meant for, the case was somehow settled. They pointed out that it maybe customary to look at scantily dressed women in Afar or South Omo and not be surprised but not in Addis Ababa. In view of Ethiopian urban middle class, mainstream cultural standards, especially pertaining to feminine demeanor the images were, thus, deemed culturally unacceptable. There seems to be a great propensity amongst members of this class to conform to Western tastes. Apparently this is what technically led to the suggestion of audience segmentation for the media house.

The editor-in-chief pointed out that the media-house has always been so sensitive and sees to it that the images of women put out on the copies of their magazine do not transgress cultural demeanor and this was especially so in the case of women's photos. This didn't seem to tally with what was found to be on the other side of the reality. There appeared to be a rift between the producer and the end users. The implication this had for the encoder was that there was a need to reassess a hitherto taken for granted *modus operandi*.

Noticeably, women could compare themselves to the images of women issued on the magazine. They may serve as ideal mannequins of self appraisal in terms of look. In other words women could try to emulate looking like these images. Here the findings indicate that women didn't think they would do much in terms of emulating the beauty ideals. Conversely, it was men who thought that women would pattern themselves after the images they encountered.

On the other hand, women discussants pointed out that what happens is not copying something as a whole but maybe just picking one aspect or another. This may entail two things. The first one is that women are unaware that they are modeling themselves on those images because of the phenomenon known as the internalization of the observer's perspective.

In other words, girls grow up with external pressures to look beautiful through socialization and personal identification so much so that it totally seems to be quite normal. As a result all attempts of prettification might go unnoticed. The second one could be that women are really not trying to emulate the images but rather go for picking and choosing qualities they like while ignoring the things they do not find appealing. Of the two, however, the first one appears to be more likely.

Taking into account the responses of men, there is a general pattern that shows men think women would emulate images of ideal femininity. Again this could be put down to the above explanation of internalization of the observer's perspective. More specifically, men are the observers to whose perspective the adjustment is made. Obviously, that is why men are more apt to notice this state of affairs than do women.

Another point had to do with the interpretation of the images of women in the magazine in terms of sexual objectification. Here too, men viewed the images as sexually objectifying more readily than their female counterparts. Yet it was younger men rather than their seniors who labeled the photos as sexually objectifying. It can be concluded that as sexual virility dwindles with age, the younger ones construe sexually objectifying photos and poses more promptly than their seniors. This could continue to encourage evaluation of women in a sexually objectifying manner as the images are likely to be mostly consumed by the youth, both males and females.

Young women, on the other hand, view images labeled by men as sexually objectifying as pronouncing feminine hegemony. Nevertheless, senior women tended to recognize sexually objectifying images. The reverse was true in the case of men, i.e. younger men viewed images of women in the magazine as sexually objectifying more than older men did. Once more, this can also be explained in terms of human sexuality in the sense that human libido in general and male sexual virility particular wanes down with age. In the case of women, however, though youth is the time when they are also sexually active, this can be related to the fact that they are likely to treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated at a later age. Therefore, they seemed to be unlikely to notice the other side of the situation. Again with ages, looks wear off as the result of which women would start to notice that they are treated as objects of scopophilia.

As the result of overemphasis on physical pulchritude, and encouraging sexual objectification of women, at least implicitly, the magazine can be considered as one of the media genres that causes women's oppression to an extent and in a subtle manner.

Of course, there could be other forms of media that could have the same influence on women, but for this one is specially meant for women and women are generally said to be fond of magazines, it might have far reaching effects. It is also claimed that women get most ideas from the visual images rather than the readings of texts. Therefore, taking a look at the visual images could serve as a substitute for reading. This shows how images could be more frequently consumed and thus can have fervent impacts.

In sum, from the findings of this study, it can be generally concluded that there is a need for diversification in the portrayal of women's images, rather than just focusing on beauty. Sexually objectifying portrayal should also be avoided as it might have impacts on women as well as contravene the mainstream cultural standards. It can as well be said that there was a discrepancy between certain perspectives of the editor-in-chief, who is a man and those of the target audience who are women. Such a gap tallies with the argument propounded by the proponents of the standpoint theory and the notion of co-cultures. With the inclusion of these points by way of readjusting more harmony can be created between the producer and the target end users, especially women in our case.

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# **Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussions, Individual In-depth Interviews and Individual Interview**

## **1. Demography**

- Age
- occupation
- Level of education
- Marital status

2. What aspects of this photograph do you like? And what aspects do you not like?
3. Would you like, as a woman, to emulate the way this girl looks [for women]? Do you think woman would attempt to emulate the way this girl looks [for men]?
4. What meanings do you think the way the girl is clad conveys?
5. How do you evaluate the photos you have seen in terms of conformity to Ethiopian traditional norms of feminine demeanour?
6. Could these images be construed as demeaning or empowering to women? Why?
7. What kind of influence do you think these photos would have on the on-looking/viewing woman?
8. What do you like most about the images of women as depicted on the covers and inner pages of the copies of this magazine?
9. How do you think would a woman feel about herself if she tried to compare herself with the images of women considered 'beautiful' and fell short? Do you think this may commonly happen to women?
10. What meanings have you made out of the images of women you have just seen?
11. To whom do you think are these images intended?
12. Would the fact that the women in the photos are clad in a sexually revealing way mean that the women are sexually objectified?
13. How do these images make you think about your identity?
14. From the images you have seen, what can you say about what they suggest to women?
15. In general terms do you see any problem in the way the images of women are portrayed in the magazine?

## **In-Depth Individual Interview**

1. Is there anything you did not say during the group discussion that you want to say now?
2. If you were to talk to the editor about their selection and presentation of images of women, what would you have to say?
3. To what extent do you think the images of women you have seen as portrayed in the copies of the magazine you saw reflect the conditions and lives of Ethiopian women?
4. Comparing the photos of men and women, do you think the magazine highlights similarity or difference between the two sexes?
5. What aspects of women do the images you saw highlight? And how would that influence women?

## **Interview with the Editor-in-chief**

1. What features do you take into account when you select images of women for you front cover or inner pages? Who makes the decisions?
2. How do you know whether your pictures, especially those of women, are liked by the public or not? Have you ever received comments about them?
3. Have you ever thought that the photos of women and girls you select might have influence on women?
4. The fact that your magazine is a women's magazine makes it clear that your target audience would be women. Yet it is possible that men also read your magazines and eventually view the images. Have you ever wondered how differently/similarly men and women could interpret these images?
5. What kind of suggestions do you make to women readers through the photographs that appear on the front cover page as well as the inner pages?
6. Does the type image you choose, especially for the front cover play in decisive role in selling your magazine?
7. Harkening back, do you remember any instance where you disagreed with your photographer or any staff member about an image of a girl that was picked for a cover page or an inner page?
8. How do you decide whether a particular image of a woman or girl should appear on the front cover or inner pages?
9. Why do most copies of your magazine carry photos of models?

የቡድን ቃለ መጠይቅ መመሪያ

1. የግል መረጃ

- ዕድሜ
- የሥራ ሁኔታ
- የትምህርት ደረጃ
- የጋብቻ ሁኔታ

2. ከዚህ ፎቶግራፍ ገፅታዎች የተደሰቱበትን ይግለፁ:: ያልወደዱትን ገገኖች አሉ?

3. ሴት እንደመሆንም መጠን በፎቶ ላይ ያዩትን ልጅ በመልክ ለመስተካከል ጥረት ሊያደርጉ ይችላሉ? «ለሴቶች» ሴቶች ይህንን ልጅ በመልካቸው ለመስተካከል ጥረት ሊያደርጉ ይችላሉ ብለው ያስባሉ? «ለወንዶች»

4. በእርስዎ አመለካከት የልጅቷ አለባበስ ምን ፍቺ ሊኖረው ይችላል?

5. ያዩትን የሴቶች ፎቶግራፎች ከኢትዮጵያዊ የሴት ልጅ ወግና የጨዋነት መስፈርቶች አኳያ እንዴት ይገመግሙአቸዋል?

6. ያዩትን የሴቶች ፎቶግራፎች ከሴት ልጅ ማንነት አኳያ የሴት ልጅን ክብር ዝቅ የሚያደርጉ ናቸው ወይንስ የሚያጎለብቱ ናቸው? ለምን?

7. ፎቶግራፎቹ በሚመለከቷቸው ሴቶች ላይ ምን ምን ተፅዕኖ ሊያሳድሩ ይችላሉ?

8. በፊት ሽፋን ገጾች ላይም ሆነ በውስጥ ገጾች ስለተመለከቷቸው ፎቶዎች በጣም የወደዱት ምንድን ነው?

9. አንዲት ሴት የውብ ሴት ፎቶ ከተባሉት ጋር ራሷን ስታወዳድር ባትስተካል አልያም ባትቀራረብ ምን ስሜት የሚሰማት ይመስልዋል? የዚህ ዓይነቱ ክስተት ለሴቶች አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የሚያጋጥም ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

10. ከተመለከቷቸው ፎቶዎች ምን ምን ፍቺዎችን አግኝቻለሁ ይላሉ?

11. እነዚህ ፎቶዎች ሲመረጡ ለማን እንዲሆኑ ተብለው የተመረጡ ይመስልዎታል?

12. በፎቶዎቹ ላይ የአንዳንዶቹ ሴቶች አለባበስ ሰውነታቸውን በሚያጋልጥ መልኩ መሆኑ የወሲብ መጠቀሚያነትን እንደሚያሳይ ተደርጎ ሊታሰብ ይችላል ብለው ያስባሉ?

13. ፎቶዎቹን ካዩ በኋላ ስለራስዎ ማንነት ሲያስቡ ምን ተሰማዎት?

14. የተመለከቷቸው ፎቶዎች ሴቶች ምን እንዲሆኑ ፍንጭ ይሰጣሉ ብለው ያስባሉ?

15. ባጠቃላይ ከተመለከቷቸው ፎቶዎች በመነሳት በመጽሔቶቹ ላይ በሴት ምስሎች አቀራረብ ያስተዋሉት ችግር ይኖራል?

**ጠለቅ ያለ ነፍስወከፋዊ ቃለመጠይቅ**

1. በቡድን ውይይቱ ወቅት ያላነሱት አሁን ሊያነሱት የሚፈልጉት ሐሳብ አለ?
2. የመጽሔቶቹን አዘጋጅ የማናገር ዕድል ቢያጋጥምዎት ስለ ሴቶች ምስል አመራረጥና አቀራረብ ምን የሚሏቸው ነገር ይኖራል?
3. የተመለከቷቸው የሴቶች ምስሎች የኢትዮጵያን ሴቶች ሁኔታ ምን ያህል ያንጸባርቃሉ ብለው ያምናሉ?
4. በመጽሔቶቹ ላይ ያዩአቸው የወንዶችና የሴቶች ፎቶዎች የሁለቱን ጾታዎች አንድነት ነው ወይንስ ልዩነት የሚያሳሉ ይመስልዎታል?
5. የተመለከቱአቸው ፎቶዎች የትኞቹን የሴቶች ገጽታዎች ያሳሉ ይላሉ? ይህስ በምን ዓይነት መልኩ ሴቶች ላይ ተጽዕኖ ያሳድራል ብለው ያምናሉ?

**ከቃልኪዳን መጽሐት ዋና አዘጋጅ ጋር የተደረገ ቃለ ምልልስ**

1. ለፊት ሽፋን አልያም ለውስጥ ገጾች የሚሆኑትን የሴቶች ፎቶ ስትመርጡ መስፈርቶቻችሁ ምን ምንድን ናቸው? የትኞቹ ፎቶዎች መመረጥ እንዳለባቸው የሚወስነው ማን ነው?
2. የምትመርጧቸው ፎቶዎች፣ በተለይ ደግሞ የሴት ፎቶዎች፣ በተጠቃሚው ዘንድ መወደዳቸውን የሚታረጋግጡበት መንገድ አለ? ስለፎቶዎቹስ አስተያየት ደርሶአችሁ ያውቃል?
3. ለመጽሐቶቻችሁ የምትምርጧቸው ፎቶዎች በሴቶች ላይ አንዳች ተጽዕኖ ሊኖሩላቸው ይችላል ብላችሁ አስባችሁ ታውቃላችሁ?
4. መጽሐታችሁ የሴቶች መጽሐት እንደመሆኑ መጠን ተተኳሪ ደንበኞቻችሁ ሴቶች ናቸው ብሎ ለመደምደም አያዳግትም። ይሁንና ወንዶችም መጽሐቶቻችሁን ሊያነቡ፣ ፎቶዎቹንም ሊመለከቱ ይችላሉ። ለመሆኑ ሁለቱ ጾታዎች ፎቶዎቹን እንዴት በተለያዩ አልያም በተመሳሳይ መልኩ ሊተረጎሟቸው እንደሚችሉ አስባችሁት ታውቃላችሁ?
5. በፊት ሽፋን ገጾችም ሆነ በውስጥ ገጾች በምታኖሯቸው ምስሎች ሴቶች ምን መሆን እንዳለባቸው ፍንጭ እንሰጣለን ይላሉ?
6. የምትመርጧቸው ፎቶዎች፣ በተለይም ለፊት ሽፋን፣ ለመጽሐቱ ሽያጭ ወሳኝ ሚና የሚጫወት ይመስልዎታል?
7. ለውስጥ ገጾች ወይም ለፊት ሽፋን መዋል ያለበትን ፎቶ በተመለከተ ከፎቶ አንሽያችሁም ጋር ሊሆን ይችላል ወይም ከሌላ የሥራ ባልደረባ ጋር ሳትስማሙ የቀራችሁበት የሚያስተውሉት አጋጣሚ ይኖራል?
8. አንድ የሴት ልጅ ምስል የፊት ሽፋን አልያም በውስጥ ገጾች ላይ እንዲሆን የምትወስኑት እንዴት ነው?
9. አብዛኛዎቹ መጽሐቶቻችሁ በፊት ሽፋን ገጾቻቸው ላይ የሞዴል ፎቶ ይዘው የሚወጡት ለምንድን ነው?



Appendix-B Some of Images Used for the Study

ቀጽ 1 ቁጥር 6 መጋቢት 2001 ዓ.ም. ገጽ 499

“በምስራቅ ፊልሞች ላይ ግንት እውዳሰሁ”  
ዮናስ ብርሃነ መዋ

“እንዲህ ይመስሉኝ የአካል ብቃት ስለምንሰራ ነው”  
የአዲስ አበባ ስልጠና ላይ ለሰዓት ስራ ለማግኘት ወሰደች

የእንግሊዝ ልዑል ጎሪ “የፍቅር ስደወት”

“እስከሁኔታው ያለም ስለገናኝ በገንገር ይሰውም”  
ቀዳሚያ ስልጠና ላይ ነው

ራክስ ጉንዛቤዝ

“ወንድ የሴት ስጅ ራስ ነው... በሚሰው እስማማሰሁ”

ሚስት ወርልድ ቱሪዝም ናርደስ ታራሰ

“የደብዳቤ ምን ይገኛል”  
አርቲስት ገብረመስቀል ተሸጦ

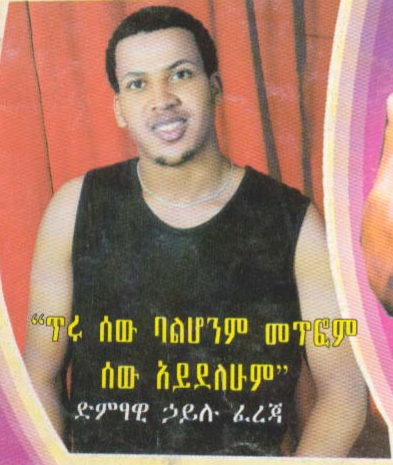




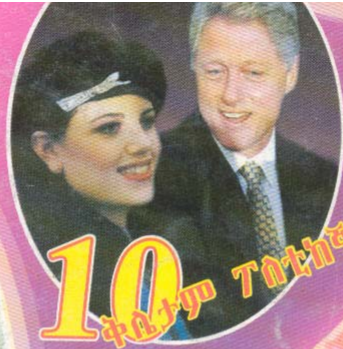
**የጥላይን ገሠሠ**  
ተለዋዋጭ የትዳር  
ህይወት ከምን መነጨ?



**“እኔ የኪዳነ-ምህረት ስፎ ነኝ”**  
ድምፃዊ ገረመው አሰፋ

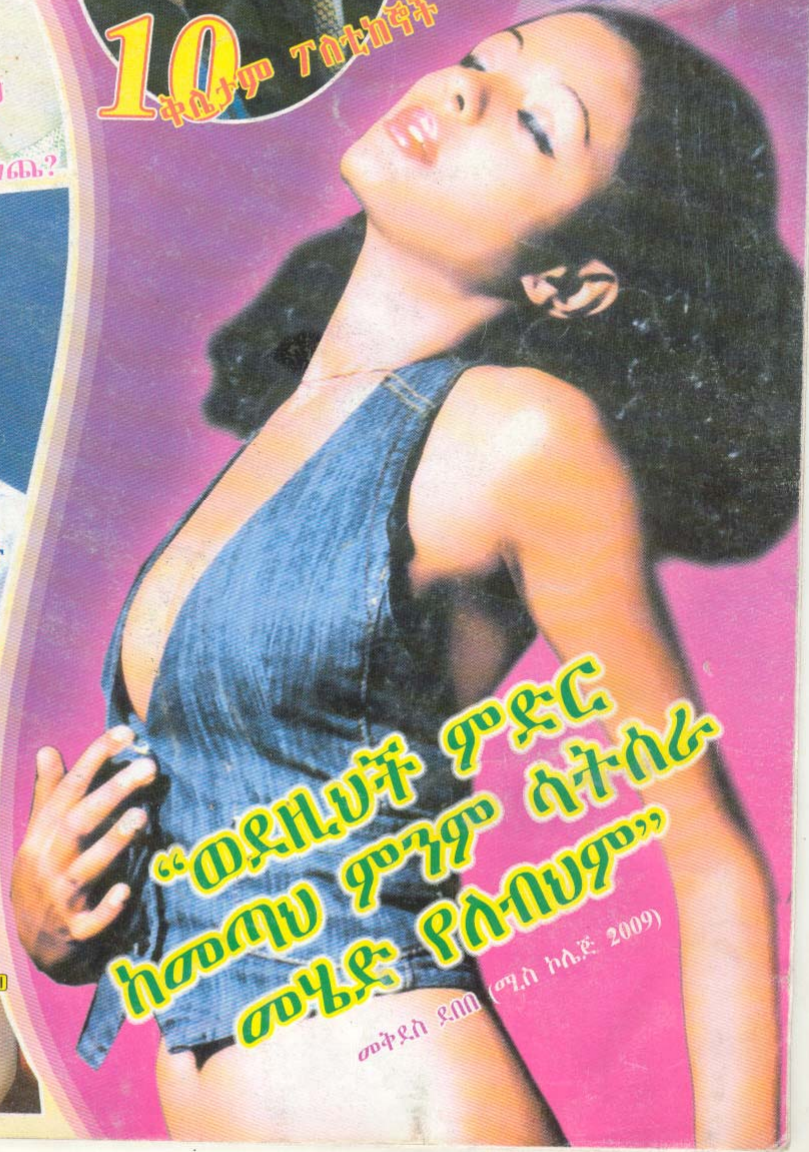


**“ጥሩ ሰው ባልሆንም መጥፎም ሰው አይደለሁም”**  
ድምፃዊ ኃይሉ ፈረጃ



**“የማይረቅ ሰው ካላየኝ የማይሞት ሰው ስላያችኋለሁ”**  
ሳምራዊት አበበየሁ  
(የግንኙነት 2009 ፎቶ ጀኔቭ)

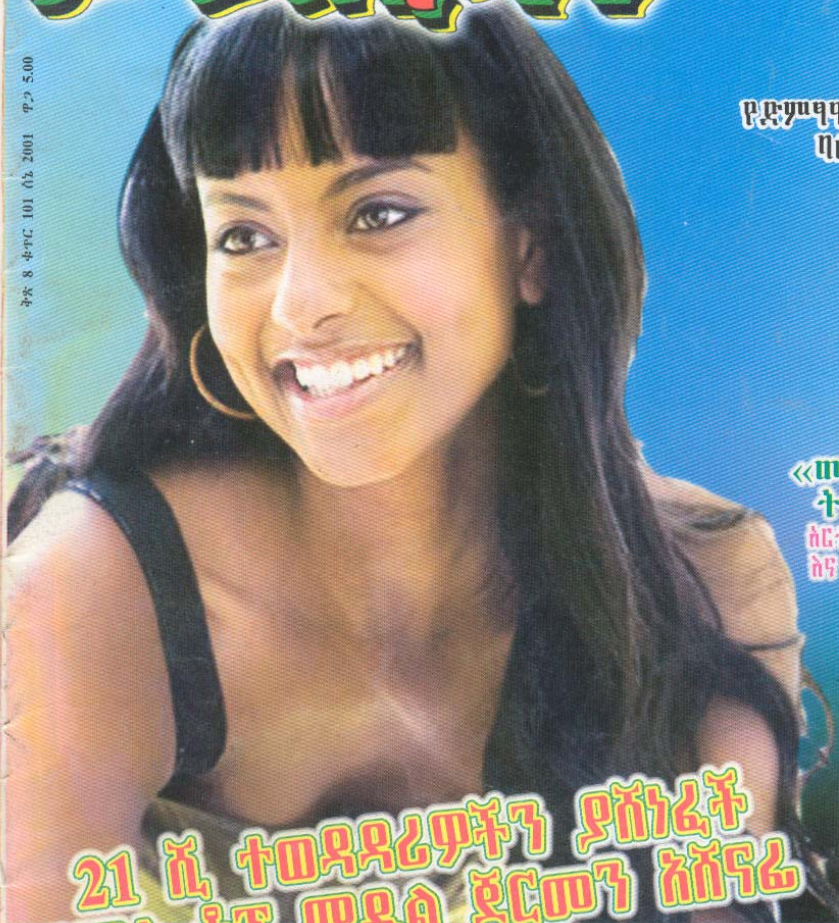
# 10 ቅሬታዎ ፕሰኑካዎች



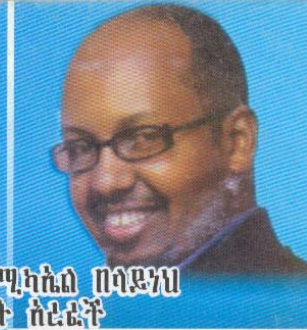
**“ወደዚህች ምድር አመጣህ ምንም ሳትሰራ መሄድ የለብህም”**  
መቅደስ ደበበ (ግንኙነት 2009)

# ቃልኪዳን

ቁጽ 8 ቆይቶ 101 ሰኔ 2001 ዋጋ 5.00



**21 ሺ ተወዳዳሪዎችን ያሸነፈች የሚስት ጥፋት ሞዴል ጀርመን አሸናፊ ሞዴል ሳራ ነፍ**



**የጅምግጫ ሚካኤል በሰዳኒህ ባሰቡት ስረደቶች**



**«መከባበር ያሰበት ትዳር ይጸናል»**

ስርዓተ-ሚካኤል ሚሲዮን ስኛ ስርዓተ-መጻዕ ታክስ



**የዘራቱ አዲስ ነገሮች**



**ለማናልሞሽ ሕክምና 35ሺ ብር ወጪ ሆኖ ሳለ 85ሺ ብር ማለት ለምን አስፈለገ?**

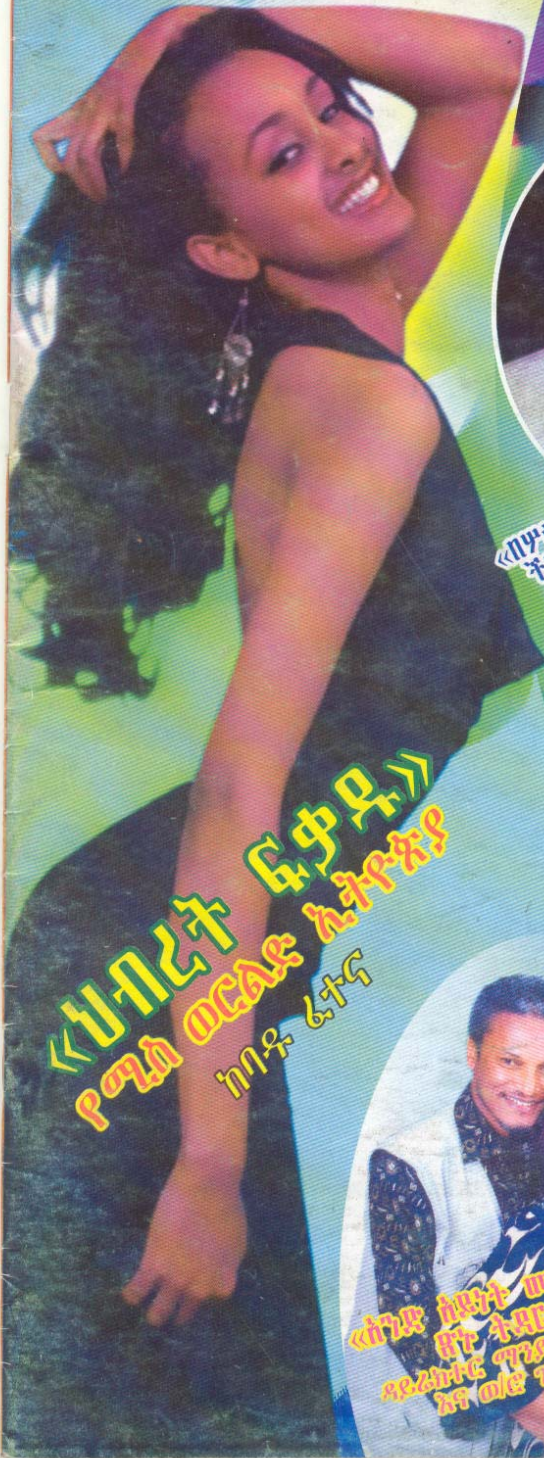
**«የፍቅር መሠረቱ በሰሚካ ያገኘች ሲትዮጽዖ ናት» የሰገርተ ጋዜጠኛ ወንጀወሰን ከበዳ ስኛ ወ/ር ሲትዮጽዖ ኃይሉ**



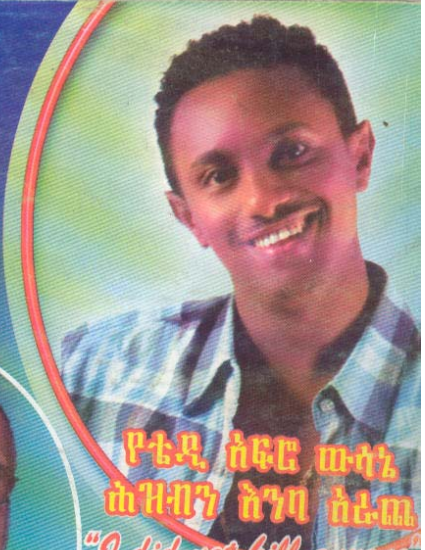
**«ከቴዲ ስፍሪ ጋር መመዳደር የምትችሉ ስድዳሳቸውም» ጅምግጫ ስለከዳር ስምሳሌ**

# ቃልኪዳን

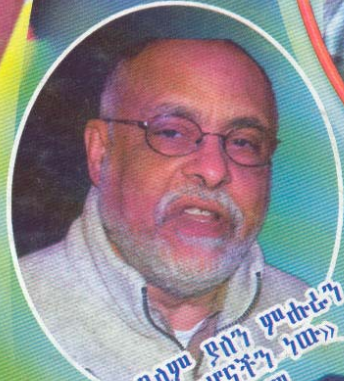
ቅጽ 7 ቁጥር 95 ታህሳስ 2001 ዋጋ 5.00



**«ህብረት ፍቃዱ»**  
**የግዛዝ ወርሃዊ ኢትዮጵያ**  
 ከጣዱ ፊትና



**የቴ.ዲ. ስፍራ ውሳኔ**  
**ሕዝብን ስንጣ ስራጩ**  
*"I did not kill anyone"*  
 «ጣንንም አልገደልኩም»  
 ቴ.ዲ ስፍራ በቸሉት



«በሦስተኛው ዓለም ደብን ምሁራን  
 ትግር ፊትዎች ለሰዎችን ነው»  
 ገርጌሰሮ ጋደሴ ገረማ



**ከአደጋ ያመለጠች ብልህተኛ**  
 ድምፃዊ ሀብት ጥፋኔ



**«የበደሉንን እር ተበቅሎልኛል»**  
 እርግጠኛ አንመት ክንዴ



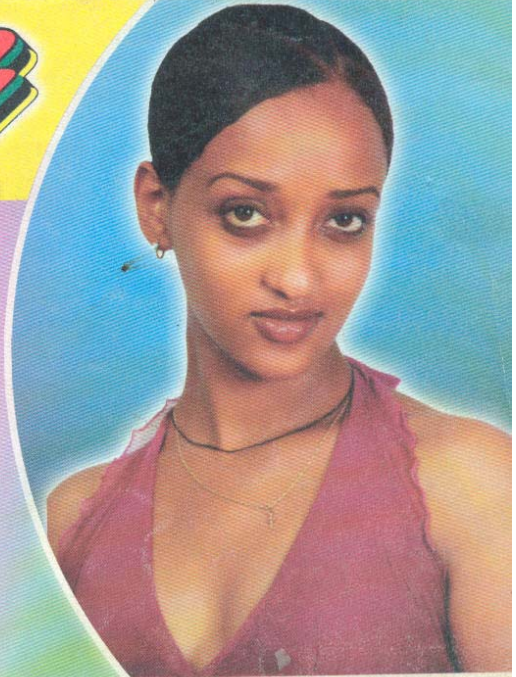
**«ሰንደቅ ስደት ለደግሞ ማመራት»**  
 ለደግሞ ማመራት ስደት  
 እና ለደግሞ ማመራት ስደት



**«ጣፋጭ የትዳር ስደት ስምደታ ነው»**  
 አሰልጣኝ የሆነው ማመራት  
 እና ለደግሞ ማመራት ስደት

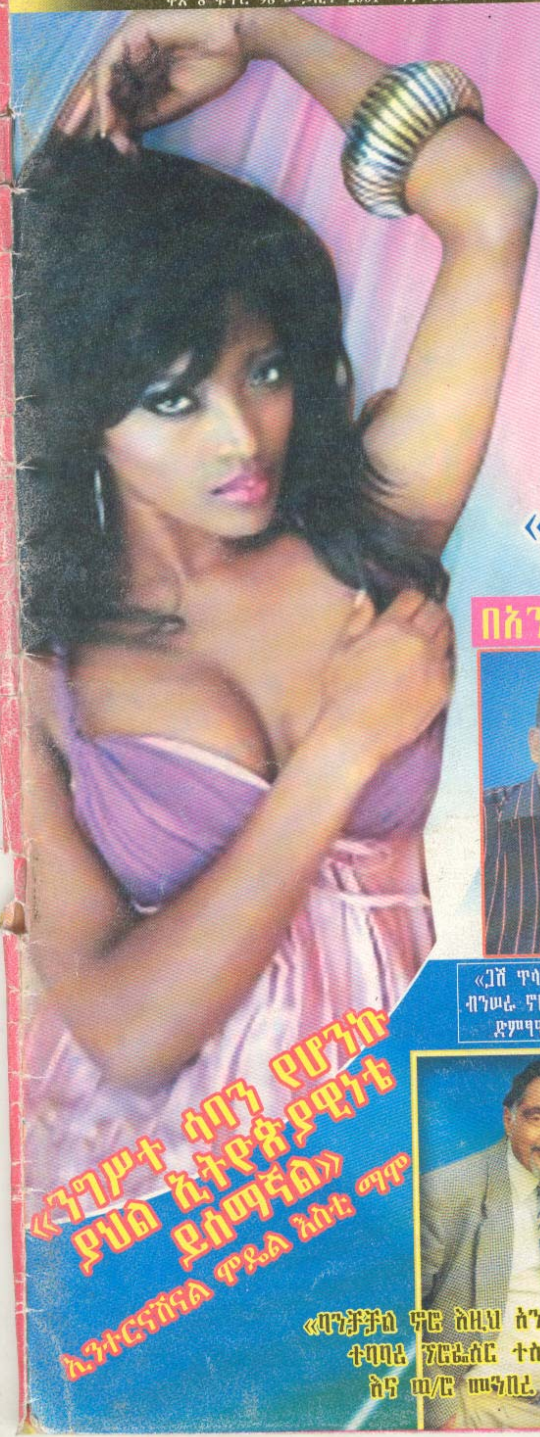
# ቃልኪዳን

ቅጽ 8 ቁጥር 98 መጋቢት 2001 ዋጋ 5.00



## «ለኔ ጆግና ፍቅር ብቻ ነው»

ተዋናይ ቤተልሔም ጌታቸው



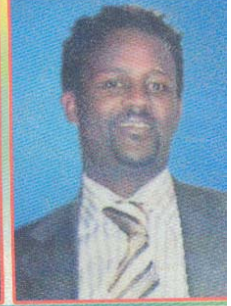
### በአንድ ሳምንት የተሰቀቀት ካሴቶች ምሥጢር



«ጋሽ ጥባቡንን አስፈቀደነው ብንሠራ ፍሮ ደስ ያሰኝ ነበር» ድምፃዊ ሰለሞን አበበ



«ሐብረን ሰነፍጥን አድገሁም ድምፃዊ ጥባቡን ገሠጠ



«ጋሽ ጥባቡን ያክሰው አዳክሰው የሚውቀው ነገር የሰማ ድምፃዊ አንተንህ ወርቀ (ሚሞዩ)

«ንግሥተ ሳባን የሆንኩ ያህል ሴትዎቼ ያሰማኛል»  
ኢንተርኔሽናል ሞዴል ጌታት ማሞ



«ጣንቻቸው ሆይ ስዚህ አንዳይሰም ነበር» ተባባሪ ንግድአድ ተስፋዬ ገሠጠ ስዳ ወ/ሮ መዳከሚ ገሮማ



«በትዳራ አት»

ሆነ ለሁን ግን እያንዳንዱን ነገር ነው የምትመለከት።  
ሕግ መሣሪያ በውስጡ ጥሩ ነገር አላድርገዋል። በጣም ጥሩ መቶ ነው። ሀገር በምን ዓይነት ሂደት ውስጥ እንዳለች ታውቃለህ፤ እያንዳንዱን እርምጃ ታይታለህ። ሕግን ስታውቅ የራሱን መብትና ግዴታ ጠንቅቀህ ትረጋለህ፤ ለምትን በማይገዳና ራሱን መጥፎ ደረጃ ላይ በማይጥል መልኩ እንድትገባላለህ የግንኙነት። በአጠቃላይ፤ ሕግ በማጥናቱ በጣም ደስተኛ ነኝ።  
እኔ፤- ሕግ መግባቱ የደመርከው በፊት ሆኖ ለሰጠው... እኛ ለሰጠውም? ስምደታ፤- ለሰጠውም? በራሱም የገብረተለሁ ሳይንስ ተማሪ ነበርኩ። እንደም ሆኖ ማጥናት የሚገባኩት ጋዜጠኝነት ነበር። አንዳንድ ሁኔታዎች አልተመዘኑም። ስለ ዚህም፤ ከቀሩት የትምህርት መስኮች የሕግ ሆኖ ያገኘኩትን የሕግ ትምህርት መረጥኩኝ። ከመረጥኩት በኋላ ደግሞ፤ በጣም ወደድ ኩት። እንዲያውም፤ ሕግ ባልማር ጥር ይቆጩኝ ነበር።  
እኔ፤- በትምህርት ቤት ቆይታዎን ለምን ከሚላዩ የሌሎችም የተለየ አገራዎች የፈጠረዎት የሮር ዓይነት ነበር? ስምደታ፤- ገጠመኝ ሳይ ሆነ፤ ለሰተማ ሪፖርት እያለ ተማሪን እያለ የነበረ ነገር ነው። በጣም ደስተኛ ነኝ።



አንድ ሺህ ብር ይከፈላል የማል ነገር አለ። ይቺ አንድ ሺህ ብር በፊት ምናልባት ትልቅ ጥጋ ነበራት። አሁን ግን ከሰው የተረዳ ደረጃ ጋር የማመጣጠን አይደለም። አንድ ሰው ምራሱ በነፃ በአንድ ሺህ ብር አይካሄድም። ስለዚህም፤ ሕግ መሻሻል አለበት፤ ወይም በቀር ይሻላል፤ አንድ ሺህ ብር መጣች አልመጣች ጥቅም የላትም።  
እኔ፤- አልተደገሽ ምን ይመስላል? ስምደታ፤- ተወልዶ ያደግኩት አስመራ ውስጥ ነው። በ1983 ዓ.ም. የተፈጠረውን የመንግሥት ለውጥ ተከትሎ ከሀገሪቱ ጋር ተፈናቅሎ ወደ መቀላ መጣሁ። ትምህርቴን የተማርኩት መቀላ ውስጥ ነው።  
እርፍ ነገር አለኝ የምለው በውጭ ስርዓት ውስጥ መሥራቱ ነው። ስርዓት አሁን የነበረውም ከአካል ጉዳ ተኛ ልጆች ጋር ነበር፤ ሊደነቁ የሚገባቸው ልጆች ናቸው። የስርዓት ቡድን አሁን ተበትኗል፤ ብዙዎቹ ለሕክምና ውጭ ሀገር ሄደው ጠይቀው ቀርተዋል። በወጭት የተከሰተ አንድ የሚገርመኝ ነበር። በስርዓት ውስጥ ሁሉን ብሆንም፤ ሰውነቱ በተላላ ስለሚተጣጠፍ ይህን በሚጠይቁ እንስሳዎች ላይ እሳተፍ ነበር። አብራራ ከአኔ ጋር የምትሠራ እንዲት ልጅ ነበረች። ስርዓት ውስጥ ስትገባ መስማትም ሆነ መናገር አትችልም ነበር። ዓመት ባልሞላ ጊዜ ውስጥ ከልጅቷ ጋር መግባባት ቻልን። ቀደም ሲል የምልክት ቋንቋ ተምረን ነበር፤ የሆነ ጊዜ ላይ በምልክት ቋንቋ ሳይሆን በአፋችን እንድናናግራለን ራቸው ተነገረን። ቀደም ሲል አንድ ውዝ ሞክሮ የመሰሉ ትርጓሜዎችን ስንሠራ በዓይን እንገባ ነበር። በአፋችን ስናናግራት በሚገርም ሁኔታ ለውጥ እየላየች መጣች፤ ምንም ዓይነት ድምፅ ማውጣት የማትችለው ልጅ ድምፅ ማለጣት ይመረቅ። ይህን ጊዜ ለሰጠ ስምችን እንዲህ መለሰሃት ይቻላል የሚል ሐሳብ መጠለፍ። የሰው ልጅ መሥራት የማይችለው ነገር የለም፤ የማይቻል ነገር የለም። ልጅቷ እኩቷ ተቀምጣ ብትቀር ጥር ዕድሜዋ አየገፋ ሲሄድ

ከቆምኩኝ ከሁለት ዓመት በኋላ በአለፈ ሀሰጥታል ተገኝቼ ስሠራ በጣም ነቢ የገረመኝ፤ ስለሚረጋገጡ በጣም ይከፈላል ብዬ አስቤ ነበር።  
እኔ፤- ቆይ ጊዜ ስርዓት የምትሠራ ወይ ማርክስ ደርትን ትገባላችሁ። አንድ ስምደታ፤- ብዙ ነገሮችን ሞክራለሁ ስርዓት ውስጥ እያለሁ በጣም ጥንቃቄ ማርክስ አርትስ፤ ዋናና ብስክሊት የመሳሰሉ ስፖርት ነፃ እንቅስቃሴዎች ያሠራን ነበር። ባልተጠበቅንም፤ የስፖርት ዓይነቶችን ሞክራለሁ።  
እኔ፤- የትኛውን ነበር የምትሠራው? ስምደታ፤- በማርክስ አርትስ... ያህ የተለመደውን ዓይነት እንቅስቃሴ ነቢ የምሠራው።  
እኔ፤- ታዲያ የሕግ ባለሙያና ስፐርት ሕግን ወንጠራሽ እንችላለን። ለማንኛውም ራዕይ ምን ይገባል? ነገ ምን ዓይነት ማዕዘን እንገኛለን?  
ስምደታ፤- ከትምህርቴ ስመረቅ ጥንቃቄ እየሠራሁ ብዬ አስባለሁ፤ በተጠቃሚ መቶ ጠቅላይ ጥሩ ነው።  
እኔ፤- ከገቢ አንጻር ነው? ስምደታ፤- (ለጥር ሳቅ) አይደለም፤ ከገቢው ሳይሆን ከሥራው አንጻር ነው። ጥንቃቄ ማለት አንቅልፍ የማይለጥ መሰሉ ጊዜህን ለውጥ የምትሠራህ የመቶ መስክ ነው። ዐቃቤ ሕግ ከሆነ አብዛኛውን ጊዜ የሚመለከታቸው ጉዳዮች ከወንጠራ ጋር የተያያዙ ናቸው። ጠቢ ከሆነ ግን፤ ብዙ ነገሮችን ትቆጠራለህ። አንድ ውርስና ኑዛቤ በመሳሰሉ ነገሮች ውስጥ ትገባለህ። ብዙ ነገሮች ይመስሉህ። የቤት ክርክርና የውርስ ጉዳይ ለጉን ማስኬድ ትችላለህ። የጥንቃቄ መቶ የመረጥኩት ከዚህ አንጻር ነው።  
እኔ፤- ስፐርት ቆይታ ማለት ነው? ስምደታ፤- በአርግጥ፤ ስፖርት አቀራረብህ። ሰውነቱ ቀላል ሲሆን ግን አንዳንድ ጊዜ እሠራለሁ። መተግበሪያ እነርሱ የተፈጠረ ነገር ነው። አርግጦት ሲሞላኝም፤ በፊት የሚጠቀሱ አይመስሉኝም። በፊት በጣም ለምደታህ እኔ፤- ሳይንሳ ግን፤ ካዕተለማመደን እኔ

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