

**Depictions of Empowerment?
How Indian Women Are Represented in *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman***

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Monica Singh

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INTRODUCTION

In India, 45 to 56 million women are working in factories that support a garment market worth 1.7 trillion dollars (as of 2012). The garment exports market alone, in 2014, was worth 708 billion dollars (Stotz & Kane, 2015). In a country where the living wage is said to be about 220 dollars a month, these garment workers' monthly income is approximately 58 dollars (Living... Versus Minimum Wage, 2013). Producing textiles, clothes, and garments for worldwide consumers, including many big companies both international and local such as Gap, H&M, and Chanel, these workers are surviving unacceptable working conditions to provide for their families or themselves, pay off a debt, save money for the dowry they need to get their daughters married, and more. Teenage girls are also being roped into these factories to help produce income for their households. These workers, from little girls to the elderly, are expected to work 14-hour days, seven days a week, while standing or sitting in rooms filled with dozens of workers. These workers sew 150 pieces an hour, work even if sick or pregnant, do not receive any type of maternity leave, and have an impending fear of being fired or receiving wage cuts if they can't keep up with the expected production quota (Achanta, 2015). "Female workers who fail to meet impossible targets say they are berated, called 'dogs and donkeys,' and told to 'go and die'" (Chamberlain, 2012). Many workers in these factories are promised 105 dollars a month but only receive portions of that because no written documentation or employment contract exists between the employers and these workers. Discrimination based on caste or gender, corruption in management, worker injuries by machines used, harassment, assault, abuse, and rape are all conditions these women and girls tolerate in order to receive portions of the income promised to them (Tolentino, 2013; Kane, 2015).

Workers themselves hardly ever report abuse, in part because they come from lower class, including the *dalit*, or untouchables. ‘People don't take up these issues with factory management because they are afraid of losing income and afraid of possible retaliation because they are in a vulnerable position in society,’ says Heather White, a fellow at Harvard's center for ethics who has researched global clothing supply chains. In her interviews with factory workers, she says she heard about ‘numerous cases of sexual harassment, which normally in the factory worker context means rape.’ (Liebelson, 2013)

Many of these workers are also trapped in this work environment because they don't have the education or the skill to work elsewhere. For example, a woman who was interviewed about her work history said: “Married at 15 and a mother a year later, I have toiled in exploitative garment factories for two decades, as I need money but lack skills” (as cited in Achanta, 2015). Due to their disadvantaged socioeconomic status and education level, these women, teenagers, and children face cruel conditions while producing textiles, garments and clothing used by top business, consumer markets, and the fashion and entertainment industry. They are producing and giving up a lot for these foreign markets, but what are they receiving in return?

India is a place of long-standing history and culture with a vibrant middle and upper middle class. The current population is 1.252 billion people with 29.8% of the population falling under the poverty line. As one of the fastest growing countries in South Asia, India has a growing market system with industries that transcend, people, societies, and cultures. One of the fast growing industries is fashion. Like many developing countries, fashion has spread widely into the Indian society, influencing its younger generations. With this position, fashion has the strength and influence to change a society. Katherine Hamnett, a top British fashion designer, defined fashion as “a language which tells a story about the person who wears it. It creates a

wordless means of communication that we all understand” (What is fashion, 1999). This definition accurately describes fashion industry and business, but it doesn’t take into account the audience. Is the communication brought through fashion understood by all in a society or only to those who have access to the industry? Who, exactly is creating the language of Fashion for India?

In October, 2014, *Vogue* magazine launched its largest initiative in India in which more than 180 pledges towards women empowerment were collected from leading figures in the film industry, fashion industry, media and the corporate world. *Vogue* stated that “today, the issues surrounding women’s empowerment have taken on a broader meaning in India: they touch and impact the lives of both urban and rural women, and encompass financial, sociological and emotional aspects as well as the issue of safety” (Vogue Empower). This sounds great on paper; the website and marketing campaign were done creatively with heavy emphasis on aesthetic, but what did these actions really do for the rural and working women whom *Vogue* wants to empower? The *Vogue’s* empowerment campaign (2014) did not include the factory workers who are working in unhealthy living conditions. However, these workers definitely helped *Vogue* succeed in its business by providing the fabric, the clothing and much more. How will this particular empowerment initiative, started by a magazine that advertises the companies that use these workers for cheap labor, serve to help these exploited women?

Influencers like companies, media, celebrities have the power, the money, and the voices that can help fight for these women, teenagers, and children who endure these working situations. Although empowerment issues are often raised in their initiatives or in interviews, actual help is rarely provided. India’s fashion industry is in a unique and prime position to change this. Therefore, the focus of my research is to evaluate the roles the fashion magazines

play in women empowerment in India and to start a discussion on why these publications are not doing more for those who help make them successful.

The aim of this project is to discuss the fashion industry and its relationship with the Indian society by looking at the example of *Vogue* magazine and its footprint in India, discussing the Indian society and culture, and comparing what is found in *Vogue* to *India Today Woman*, a women-centered magazine (branching out from the popular magazine *India Today*). This study seeks to answer the following questions: *What identities of empowerment for Indian women are being suggested by Vogue India and India Today Woman and what implications do each have? Are these magazines empowering growth or displaying what seems to be glamorous and more of a 'dream'?* In this study I will argue that *the representation of empowerment in Vogue is more glamour-oriented and Americanized than the representation of empowerment in India Today Woman. Vogue* is representing the American company that owns the magazine, whereas *India Today Woman* is incorporating a different format more relatable to Indian women.

For the purposes of my research, I first complete a photograph analysis to decipher what *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* are depicting of the Indian fashion industry and the innate societies their magazine covers. This analysis is followed by a comparison between *Vogue India* and *Vogue USA* to see if there are similarities across the magazines. Then a comparison between *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* is done to see how the two magazines sold in India compare and what each is showing. Lastly, the *Social Comparison Theory*, the *Social Identity Theory*, and the *Elaboration Likelihood Model* are applied to the research data collected from the magazine covers. Together, all of this will generate a discussion on empowerment for Indian women through the fashion industry.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

The Fashion Industry and *Vogue*

Vogue, a world-renowned fashion and lifestyle magazine, was developed in 1892 by Arthur Turnure. Starting as a weekly newspaper in the United States, Turnure targeted “aristocratic New Yorkers concerned about social events, athletic events, and fashion” (Schuster, 2013). He wanted to “celebrate the ceremonial side of life” (Little Bits of History, 2014). In 1905, Condé Montrose Nast bought *Vogue* and changed it to a biweekly publication (Figure 1).



Figure-1: Condé Montrose Nast buys Vogue and establishes the Condé Nast Publications

Nast appointed Edna Woolman Chase as *Vogue*'s editor-in-chief in 1914; she held this position until 1952. During her 38 years of dedication to the magazine she worked diligently alongside Nast to build the fashion empire of *Vogue*. Under Nast and Chase, the magazine grew and spread overseas, starting with Britain in 1916. From there, Nast took the magazine to Spain, Italy, and France. Throughout this period, the target audience remained the elite class of each country. With a change in leadership (1914), however, *Vogue* saw many transformations.

They began covering weddings in 1911. The number of subscriptions rose during the Great Depression and again during World War II. They began to use photography

rather than illustrations on their covers, bringing down the fashion illustration industry. By the 1960s, with Diana Vreeland as editor-in-chief, the magazine began to target the young men and women of the sexual revolution and focused on contemporary fashion and openly discussed sexuality in editorial features. (Little Bits of History, 2014)

In 1973, *Vogue* became a monthly magazine and made many models' careers by featuring them on the magazine's spreads. The setup for the magazine was further pushed forward with the addition of a new editor-in-chief, Anna Wintour, who was hired in 1988. Before joining *Vogue*, Wintour had served as the editor of fashion magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar*, *Viva* and *Savvy*. With a new vision for the magazine, Wintour came in with a fresh perspective and a work hard attitude. Still active today, she changed the targeted readers of the magazine to include a broader audience and appealed to younger women. Wintour has been seen as a changing and motivating factor for *Vogue*. Amanda Fortini, a contributor to the fashion and style sections of *Slate* (another fashion magazine), states:

When Wintour was appointed head of *Vogue*, Grace Mirabella had been editor in chief for 17 years, and the magazine had grown complacent, coasting along in what one journalist derisively called "its beige years". The magazine had become boring. So Condé Nast publisher Si Newhouse brought in the 38-year-old Wintour, who through editor-in-chief positions at British *Vogue* and *House & Garden*, had become known not only for her cutting-edge visual sense, but also for her ability to radically revamp a magazine to shake things up. (Fortini, 2005)

The argument above was Fortini's reasoning on how necessary and important Anna Wintour was for *Vogue*. It also displays the change in attitude towards the new editor-in-chief and her work in remodeling the magazine. Wintour also launched *Teen Vogue* in 2001 staying as its editorial

director, *Men's Vogue* in 2005 and *Vogue Living* in 2006. In 2013, Anna Wintour became the artistic director of the Condé Nast publishing house (Condé Nast).

Today, *Vogue* is published monthly in 23 countries including Australia, Brazil, China, India, The Netherlands, Russia, Thailand, and many others. Currently, the total average circulation for print *Vogue* magazines is 1,237,939 and the total audience count is 11,909,000. Its readers are a median age of 38 and have a median household income of \$62,000; 87% are women and 13% are male, 66% have some higher education, and 63% are employed full time or part time (Vogue – Media Kit Print). The web audience demographics are at an average monthly view of 203,436,776, a median age of 32, and have a median household income of \$81,000. Here, 65% are women and 35% are men, 75% have had some form of higher education, and 70% are employed full time or part time (Vogue – Media Kit Web). With such impressive statistics, book critic, Caroline Weber in *The New York Times* described *Vogue* as “the world’s most influential fashion magazine” (Weber, 2006). *Vogue*’s mission statement is:

For 118 years, *Vogue* has been America’s cultural barometer, putting fashion in the context of the larger world we live in- how we dress, live, socialize; what we eat, listen to, watch; who leads and inspires us. From its beginnings to today, three central principles have set *Vogue* apart: a commitment to visual genius, investment in storytelling that puts women at the center of the culture, and a selective, optimistic editorial eye. (Vogue’s Mission Statement, 2010)

Along with this mission statement, an online essay titled “Magazine Analysis of Vogue Media Essay” (Essays, UK, 2015) states that even though *Vogue* seems to be intended for the wealthy woman, editors of the magazine state that high fashion can be accessible to all, which in turn increases its audience. These two quotes describing *Vogue*’s mission and intent are important to

know when addressing *Vogue* in the international market and social sphere because it gives context when trying to understand its position in the international market. Before discussing *Vogue* specifically in India, it is important to understand the society and culture of India.

Indian Society & Culture

India is a land of almost 1.252 billion people consisting of 28 states and 7 union territories, each with their distinct language and culture (Figure 2). That being said, the Indian society and culture is characterized by plurality and multiplicity. Although the Gujarat High Court ruling in 2010 nullified the concept of an official language, Hindi is regarded as the official language of India by most people. In fact, it is a misconception that the majority of people in India speak Hindi. India is a linguistically diverse country: nearly 60% of Indians speak Hindi, while the remaining population speaks English, Bengali, Telugu or one of the country's many other languages.

India is also the land of many religions and the birthplace of Hinduism and Buddhism, the third and fourth most practiced religions in the world. About 84% of the population identify as Hindu, 13% as Muslim (second largest Muslim country in the world) and the remaining 3% include Christians, Sikhs and others. Culturally, the country celebrates Republic Day (Jan. 26), Independence Day (Aug. 15) and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday (Oct. 2). Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas and many other festivals are celebrated enthusiastically.



Figure-2: A visual of the various states and cultures represented in India

Although India has accommodated and assimilated various foreign elements into its growing culture, it has never been a “melting pot” in which all differences get dissolved and a uniform identity is created. India is an example of a “salad bowl” in which various elements retain their individual identities and yet, together, they form a distinct recipe. In general, India is a unity in diversity, guided by the principle of tolerance and mutual respect. However, occasionally the tolerance and mutual respect is compromised, resulting in intolerance and disrespect.

India is also divided into two subsets of populations, the urban and rural populations. Although about 40% of the land area is rural, it supports 75% of the total population (Figure 3). There are many differences between the two subsets. People living in urban India have better

living conditions (Figure 3) than those living in the rural parts of India. Almost everyone has a television, car, high-speed internet, and cable TV with Western channels. The houses in rural India are built of mud and raw bricks that lack electricity and sanitation. Rural India is mostly agricultural and very poor, lacking in schools, resulting in parents seldom educating their children and these children working in the fields. Urban India has excellent schools and universities and young people have access to western magazines. With regard to health care, rural India lacks good hospitals when compared to urban India.

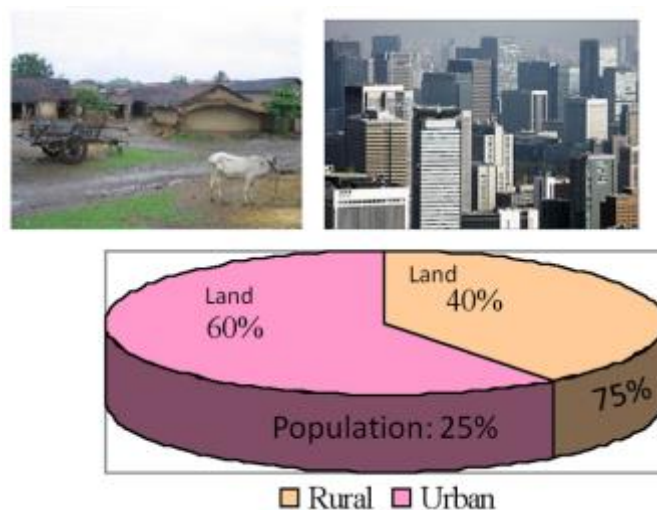


Figure-3: Population and land division in India

India, I've discovered, is a country split into two: rural and urban. Mind you, this is a bit simplistic, but it's a division everyone – tuk tuk drivers, teachers, hotel clerks— talks about. Literacy in the cities is impressively high. Literacy in the countryside is abysmal. (Split in Two: The great rural/urban divide).

Therefore, becoming familiar with the country's stratifications and divisions is essential. This will tie into the further discussion of *Vogue* and its mission of empowerment to Indian women spread across India.

To understand the culture of India, it is important to understand the difference between society and culture. In general, society refers to the population or the group in which an individual lives and interacts. In terms of "nations," people of the United States are part of the American society, while people of Japan are part of the Japanese society. Culture, on the other hand, refers to the behavioral traits such as the total of beliefs, values, and practices that are common in any population or society. Culture makes up boundaries for socially acceptable behaviors in any society. Culture reflects all demeanors such as art, music, teaching, structures, religion, food, sense of dressing, literature, poetry, and so forth. Society, on the other hand, is regulated by laws, government structures, constitutions, family, labor, and, in general, all things social (Culture definition).

In the case of India, studying culture with the "nation" as the unit of analysis can be misleading because the Indian society, as previously described, is highly diverse and stratified (Figure 4) in terms of religion, language, caste system, class system, education gap, and may lead to inaccurate sociopolitical conclusions. Thus, the country's culture has developed differently at each stratification point including different norms. What is seen through observation is that the urban upper class people are accepting rapid change in culture, while people belonging to the lower class or who have lower education may guard their traditional culture.

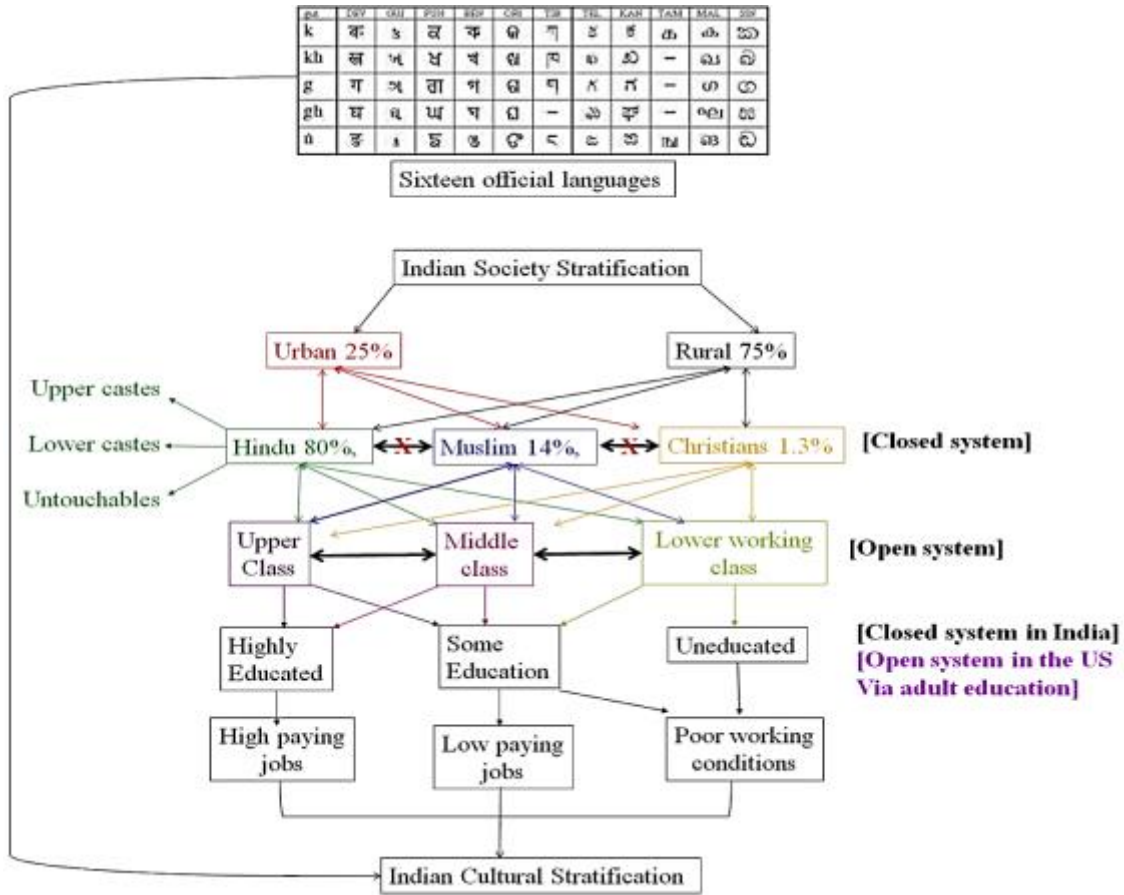


Figure-4: India's societal stratification

With globalization increasing, younger educated people have become a part of a rapidly growing *Information Technology* sector, which exposes them to foreign cultures. Because of this there is increasing change in the urban Indian social structure which is attempting to influence many Indians across the country. Although attempts by many Indian citizens are being made to formulate a social theory that accepts the great diversity of human situations on Indian soil and yet provides coherence through an active sociocultural process, the stratification may be widening. In comparison, the United States is anecdotally a “melting pot” of different societies combining into uniformity but one can see the difference in the diagram above, depicting the Indian cultural stratification. With this understanding of the Indian society being a “salad bowl,”

the Indian culture is an amalgamation of several influencers and factors. Culture, defined as the way of living, includes food, language, clothing. The Indian culture has been influenced by priests, castes, religions, city or village, Mughals, British rule, Hindu officials, the West, and much more. India has been introduced to many customs and cultures, resulting in its current mixture.

Vogue in India

In 2007, *Vogue India* was launched under Condé Nast International as the first internationally owned magazine in India. It is the seventeenth edition of *Vogue* and the first edition in South Asia (World Heritage Encyclopedia, *Vogue India*). The editor-in-chief of *Vogue India* from 2007 to the present is Priya Tanna. *The New York Times* described her role:

Priya is responsible for putting together and inspiring the creative team dedicated to introducing Indian women to the world's fashion bible. Priya and her team focus on combining the best of Indian and international fashion, creating trends for fashionistas to follow, and providing the latest news, reviews and stories in a format that is both stylish and accessible. (Priya Tanna, 2008)

Priya's outlook on *Vogue India* is also mentioned in the article, stating "Vogue's launch in India symbolizes India's arrival onto the global fashion scene. India is ready for a magazine that is intelligent, sophisticated, edgy and fun and that understands the stylish, modern woman" (Priya Tanna, 2008). This statement is important because it addresses the readiness of the Indian society for a forward thinking, internationally owned magazine. It marks the Indian society as ready but that has not been proven anywhere.

Statistics taken from January 2015 state that *Vogue India* has 275,000 magazine readers, 334,000 website visitors, and around one million followers through some form of social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The average age of the magazine's readers is 25 to 45 years old, its distribution runs to around 100 cities and around 5,500 retail outlets.

96% of *Vogue* readers own 2 or more cars, over 90% of *Vogue* readers own a high end mobile phone, 72% of *Vogue* readers own a vacation home, 93% of *Vogue* readers purchase products from high-end international luxury brands and 87% of *Vogue* readers purchase products from Indian designer brands, and more than 90% are consumers of luxury and premium brands in the fashion, beauty and accessories categories. (Media Kit – India)

These statistics at a glance look very impressive for the magazine because of the high numbered percentage. But if one looks closely, the statistics open up many areas of discussion. For example, the magazine is distributed to about 100 cities, but India has over 400 cities. The 2011 Census stated that there were 7,935 towns, 475 urban agglomerations, and 981 suburbs. Further, in the Census, towns are defined as a minimum of 5,000 people (List of Villages/Towns, 2011). Looking at these Census numbers, one starts to question how great the 100-city distribution output actually is. *Vogue India* may be hitting many Indians with the income or lifestyle similarly displayed in the magazine, but are they targeting exclusively the affluent?

From 2007 to 2015, *Vogue India* has displayed monthly spreads using top actors and models in both the Indian and American entertainment industry. Top Bollywood actors such as Sonam Kapoor, Aishwarya Rai, Deepika Padukone, Rani Mukherjee, and Priyanka Chopra have

been featured, as well as Hollywood actors like Sarah Jessica Parker, Blake Lively, Cameron Diaz, and Cindy Crawford (Figure 5).



Figure-5: Examples of Vogue India covers

Headlines featured on these covers include: The Shape Issue, 2015: The Year to Eat Right, What to Expect When You're Expecting (wardrobe), Are You Ready for Valentines?, Sex Vs. Smartphone, Vogue India Celebrates the Skin Tone the World Covets, and The Bride Guide – couture.

One important action that was mentioned earlier and will be discussed further, is the initiative launched by *Vogue* in October of 2014 towards women empowerment. In this, *Vogue* stated that

Today, the issues surrounding women's empowerment have taken on a broader meaning in India: they touch and impact the lives of both urban and rural women, and encompass financial, sociological and emotional aspects as well as the issue of safety. Which is why with #VogueEmpower, our endeavor is to raise awareness through the magazine, social media, digital, multi-media platforms and offline activities. The message is simple: It starts with you. (Vogue Empower)

The marketing strategy for this campaign was also pushed forward with a strategic plan involving many mediums such as TV, print, in-person interviews and events. Deepika Padukone became a key factor, specifically, in the pledge by becoming the face of the empowerment initiative. According to the Media Kit for *Vogue India*, the public relations value of this initiative was equivalent to \$1,630,607 or eleven *crores*, the currency in India (Media Kit – India). Through key concepts, data analysis, and discussion, this paper will help give a start into answering the complex questions mentioned in the introduction: *What identities of empowerment for Indian women are being suggested by Vogue India and India Today Woman and what implications do each have? Are these magazines empowering growth or displaying what seems to be glamorous and more of a 'dream'?* Although one cannot truly state if *Vogue India* will maintain its success if it changes its methods of displaying empowerment, this research will help its audience analyze the possibility and the opportunity for this magazine to do so.

India Today Woman

A counter magazine used as comparison to *Vogue*, is *India Today Woman*. This magazine is a branch magazine from the popular *India Today* publications. *India Today* is a weekly magazine established in 1975. The magazine is known for its coverage on many local and national events. *India Today Woman* started as a monthly magazine to present issues and topics centered on women and/or news that would appeal to and interest women. This magazine is also a platform where many women are showcased, giving their talents, life stories, and accomplishments and given a chance to be in front of the people and voiced out to the readers and/or people who glance at the magazine. This magazine, which has a circulation of 570,000

readers, covers categories of women's interest, fashion, health and wellness. The magazine's media campaign states:

India Today Woman is one of the most recent launches of India, highlighting the powerful and independent Indian women. This monthly women oriented supplement by India Today is one of the most inspiring magazines for the contemporary multi-tasking woman. IT Woman features interviews of powerful, motivating and inspirational women with their interesting success stories. The magazine chronicles various achievements of women in every field in today's age and promotes feminism to the hilt for the upliftment and emancipation of the educated Indian woman. Woman is the most successful and widely read woman supplements of India Today across India. (Advertise in India Today Woman...Rates.)

Another explanation of this magazine is provided by Release MyAd, a website that supports and provides information to those who want to advertise in leading online mediums including *India Today Woman*. This description states:

One of the recently launched magazines by the India Today group, it is dedicated to the contemporary woman of India. With an aim to inform, empower and develop the reader, it contains interviews of powerful and inspirational women in India. Other features of interest include columns on Wellness, Nutrition, Fashion and Relationships. It also features articles emphasizing the achievements of women in every aspect of the society. With a circulation of 570,000 copies, this monthly published magazine is well spread and is a handy companion to the successful woman. (as cited in Kerketta, 2015)

Again, the goal of this project is to study how *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* present different identities of empowerment, the former more glamour-oriented and Americanized than

the latter. To that end, the following section will analyze magazine covers to evaluate how they are portraying empowerment relating to the Indian women, many of whom may not be identifying at all with the “all-American” magazine. Before getting into the data generated and analyzed, the next section will define and discuss the key concepts involved in understanding this research.

CHAPTER 2

Key Concepts Defined

My research on fashion magazines in India falls more deeply into topics of culture, societal norms, and personal identity. The first three concepts defined for purposes of this research are *fashion*, *empowerment*, and *Americanize*. Although this paper deals extensively with these concepts, they are terms with broad definitions. Along with the concepts of culture, societal norms and personal identity there are three theories applicable to this research. They are *Social Comparison Theory*, *Social Identity Theory*, and the *Elaboration Likelihood Model*. After a discussion of the concepts of fashion and empowerment, the goal for this section is to define what each theory states and how it is applicable to this research.

Fashion

“Fashion is revealing. Clothes reveal what groups people are in. Advertisements on buses, billboards and magazines give us ideas about what to wear, consciously or subconsciously. Clothing can be used as a political weapon” (What is fashion, 1999). As mentioned earlier, Katherine Hamnett, a top British fashion designer, defined fashion as “a language which tells a story about the person who wears it. It creates a wordless means of communication that we all understand” (What is fashion, 1999). So what is fashion? According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, fashion is “a custom, look, or way of doing things that is considered acceptable; clothing that is considered stylish; and/or a way of doing things” (Fashion Definition, Cambridge English Dictionary). Fashion is a way of doing things that is considered acceptable. This is the definition this paper will follow.

As explained earlier, India is an example of a “salad bowl” in which different elements retain their individual identities and yet, together, they form a distinct recipe. Due to so many elements, fashion in India can take many forms that fit according to the various groups or communities. Even with so many elements, fashion will be recognized and observed as a changing factor heavily influenced, more recently, by an international market. Figure 6 shows traditional costumes of India’s different regions and the first *Vogue India* cover. Right away, one can see a difference between *Vogue India*’s cover and the other pictures depicting Indian women.



Figure-6: Traditional costumes from various regions of India and the first issue of Vogue-India (the cover includes Bollywood actresses Bipasha Basu and Priyanka Chopra and international model and actress Gemma Ward).

Empowerment

Defining empowerment is not easy because it is a concept that changes based on the construct in which it is being used. Page and Czuba (1999), in their article titled *Empowerment: What Is It?*

say, “as a general definition, we suggest that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important” (Page & Czuba, 1999). For this research, *empowerment* will follow Page and Czuba’s definition above and the listed principles of women empowerment found in the United Nations guidelines:

- Treat all women and men fairly at work and at home irrespective of their education and employment status.
- Respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men equally
- Promote education, training and professional development for women
- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality. (UN women – United Nations entity for gender equality)

In India, women empowerment has seen many faces: a wife, a household worker, a teacher, a prime minister and a president. Women’s status changed slowly and gradually within the last 200 years. After the independence of India, the constitutional makers and national leaders strongly demanded equal social positions of women with men. Today many women occupy respectable positions in all walks of life. Yet, they are not absolutely free from discrimination and harassment in the society. Only a handful of women have been able to establish their potentialities (Figure 7).



Figure-7: Some examples of women empowerment.

Empowerment is an important key term because both magazines claim to represent women empowerment in India, but of which India are they representing? Are they representing the woman living in urban India or the one living in rural India?

Americanize

The dictionary definition of “Americanize” is to make American in character or nationality. This is what this paper is referring to when it states that something is being Americanized. Many factors found in *Vogue India* have a trend in resembling ideas, concepts, styles, and objects seen in America, or more specifically, *Vogue US*. This trend will become clearer in the results and discussion sections of this study, but in comparison to other magazines *Vogue India* stands out as having characteristics noted or seen as “American.” This research, however, is not claiming that “Americanized” is a bad concept or has negative connotation. Becoming Americanized can have the same power and strength in it that a society or a group of

people may need. The purpose of this paper is not to staple becoming Americanized as a bad thing; instead I am using Americanized as a measure of comparison and observation (Figure 8).



Figure-8: Vogue India - Americanization of Indian fashion?

Application of Socio-Psychological Theories

Social Comparison Theory. The *Social Comparison Theory* describes how people relate to one another and judge accordingly. This theory is one explanation of why people may follow trends or pick up uncharacteristic activities and/or traits. In simple terms, it is how one compares himself/herself to another and if they modify themselves after the comparison. “Leon Festinger (1954) was the first to systematically consider this topic in *A theory of social comparison processes*. ‘Social comparison’ referred to the search for and utilization of information about other persons’ standings and opinions for the purpose of self-assessment – judging the correctness of one’s opinions, beliefs, and capabilities” (Suls & Wheeler, 2012). According to this, what is depicted is a need for evaluation. People have an inert need to evaluate themselves to others and act accordingly. “To come to an accurate picture of the self people tend to compare themselves to others” (Hafner, 2004).

This *Social Comparison Theory* is important in evaluating the relationship between the magazine and its audience. Who sees these magazines? What are the thoughts or comparisons being made? Is the audience evaluating themselves against the models in these covers? There is no clear way to measure data and analyze answers for these questions; however these questions are relevant and become a by-product of this research. Knowing that the Social Comparison Theory is a researched model of how the mind can work, one should be cognizant of what is in front of them. More specifically a national company should be cognizant of what they are producing and displaying (Figure 9).



Figure-9: Am I better?

Social Identity Theory. The *Social Identity Theory* discusses how people form groups and personal identities. Proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979, this theory displays three cognitive processes that connect to people becoming a part of an in-group or an out-group (Social Identity Theory Tajfel and Turner 1979). The three cognitive processes are *Social Categorization*, *Social Identification*, and *Social Comparison*. Social Categorization is when a person decides which group they belong to or which group another person belongs to. Social Identification is how actively a person associates themselves with that group. This is how compatible the person identifies the group they are becoming a part of. “The norms and attitudes

of other members within that group being seen as compatible with your own or worthy of emulation by yourself, or as compatible with those of ‘another person or persons” (Social Identity Theory Tajfel and Turner 1979). Lastly, Social Comparison is the process of becoming integrated into that group. “Your own self-concept or the social concept of ‘another person or persons’ becomes closely meshed in with perceptions of group membership” (Social Identity Theory Tajfel and Turner 1979). Here is where one’s self-esteem grows and this person can overlook many factors about his/her group while looking in detail at factors that are involved in the out-groups, or groups he/she does not place into (Figure 10).

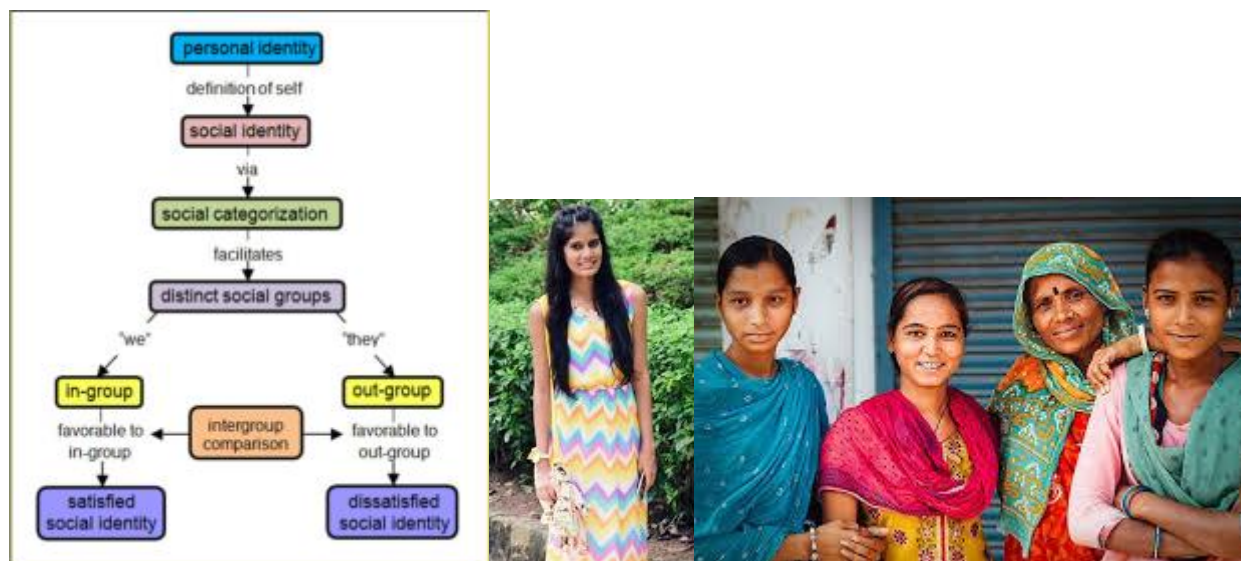


Figure-10: *A satisfied social identity!*

The *Social Identity Theory* is important to this concept in how it displays the connections people make to groups. It defines how people relate to certain groups and how they can judge groups they don’t see as relateable. This is important in how groups are formed in societies where there are many social, religious, cultural, political. factors that fall into play when picking

a group. It also speaks to the question of whether those in the Indian society who relate to *Vogue India* are judging those who do not.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model. *The Elaboration Likelihood Model* discusses how a decision is made. Its basis is attitudes and how those are perceived and used in the decision-making processes. This model looks at two routes in making a decision: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route is “when we are motivated *and* able to pay attention. It is the logical, conscious thinking route to decision-making” (Elaboration Likelihood Model, *Changing Minds*). This route has the ability to cause permanent changes in a person’s attitude as he/she adopts what is being projected to them. On the other hand, the peripheral route is when a person does “not pay attention to persuasive arguments but is swayed instead by surface characteristics such as whether he/she likes the speaker” (Elaboration Likelihood Model, *Changing Minds*). In this route, changes in attitude or perceptions are only temporary (Figure 11).

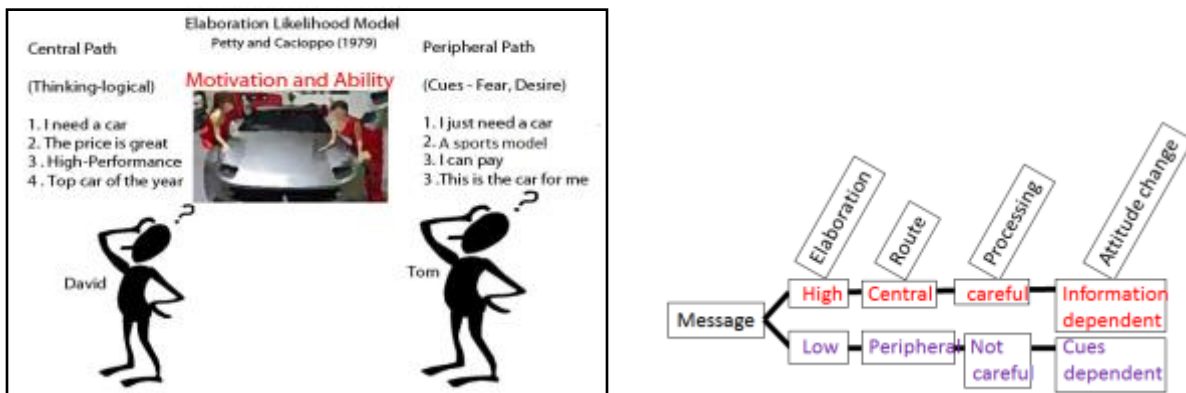


Figure-11: A visual display of *The Elaboration Likelihood Model*

The Elaboration Likelihood Model is important because it discusses what people see and how paying attention can change or influence their thoughts and perceptions - in both a temporary and permanent manner. It is important to know what in the environment can influence

minds and how that might impact social norms, rules, or balances. This concept of combining motivation, attention, and emotions is important in understanding where the divides in society can come from and how people relate to the objects or factors around them, such as a magazine cover.

CHAPTER 3

Materials for Analysis

Primary Sources

Magazine Cover Pictures. The most critical primary sources used were cover pictures of three magazines, *Vogue India*, *India Today Woman* and *Vogue USA*. These magazines were selected because of their unique position in the Indian society, described below.

- *Vogue India* is the Indian edition of *Vogue USA*, a monthly fashion and lifestyle magazine. *Vogue India* is published by Condé Nast India Pvt. Ltd., which is a 100% owned subsidiary of Condé Nast International. Condé Nast India is based in Mumbai and New Delhi.
- *India Today Woman* is one of the most recent launches of *India Today*, highlighting women empowerment in India. This supplement of *India Today* is one of the most inspiring magazines for the contemporary multi-tasking woman. The magazine features interviews of women from different sectors, providing powerful, motivating and inspirational stories. The magazine chronicles achievements of women in every field in today's age and promotes feminism. *India Today-Woman* is the most successful and widely read woman supplements of *India Today* across India.

Two years (2010 and 2015) of *Vogue* (India and USA editions) and 11 months of *India Today Woman* were selected for analysis. In total, 24 *Vogue* magazine covers and 11 *India Today Woman* covers were analyzed. Figure 12 and 13, below, show examples of the magazine covers and an example of actual data documents used for analysis.



Figure-12: Examples of the covers utilized

Each cover (*Vogue India*, *Vogue USA* and *India Today Woman*) was imported into a PowerPoint slide and placed side-by-side as seen in Figure 12. The cover information was entered on top of the slide. The pictures were then printed. The pictures from *Vogue USA* and *Vogue India* were then set next to each other based on matching years. The next set of pictures for analysis, were from *India Today Woman*. A total of 11 covers from this magazine were analyzed from multiple years. These covers varied in years because of the difficulty in finding available replicas of the magazine covers.

Analysis. Each cover was then analyzed by noting on an Excel spreadsheet the model, the head and expression, the position, clothing, makeup, hairstyle, accessories, cover headlines, and background.

Data collected in the first category, the model, described who the model(s) was and what his or her occupation was. The second category, head and expression, described where the model was looking, whether his/her head was tilted or straight, which direction the face was pointed, and whether the model was smiling or not. Position, described where the model's body was facing, if the model was sitting or standing, whether he/she was standing straight or hunched, and what the model's arms and legs were doing. Facial expression was an important index because, after noticing the model at a glance, the model's look is usually the first thing a viewer notices in detail or with a longer glance. The facial expression (serious look or smile) tells a lot about how the viewer will perceive the model and the magazine contents. This facial look can transcribe into seeing the model as friendly or personable versus seeing the model as having an attitude or not very personable. A model with a smile may seem confident as well as approachable, whereas a model without a smile may also seem confident and strong, but not very approachable. Also, a smile versus no smile reflects how natural the model looks. Does he/she seem choreographed, eliciting a specific look asked by the director or are they also bringing their natural personality into the picture? Usually a smile seems more natural if it is not faked, which one can tell by research done on how to sense a fake or a real smile. This resonates with the friendly persona versus attitude persona that was stated before.

Clothing was noted on what the model was wearing and which area of skin was showing. Hairstyle, described the color of hair, did the model have an up-do or was her hair left open, were there waves, curls or was it straight, where was the hair if it was left open, for example over the model's right shoulder and did the model have bangs or any hair falling onto his/her face. Accessories noted what jewelry the model was wearing, were there any watches or other accessories that accompanied the outfit and/or the 'look' of the model in the cover.

Headlines are important because, when someone picks up a magazine, after the initial glance, the headlines are then read and looked at in detail. In some instances, someone might pick up a magazine because of the headline which sparked interest. With the appeal and design of the cover, headlines help pique magazine spread and sales. In this section, each magazine cover was analyzed for the content of its headlines. Each headline was scored on whether the topic of the headline fit into one of six categories: style, relationship, health, goals, work, or model in the cover. Style included any reference to clothes, makeup, hair, trends, what is new and in style. Relationship included any reference to another person, a literal relationship, guides in improving or changing a dynamic with someone. Health included any reference to diets, fitness, recipes, medicine, physical or mental health. Goals included any reference to social issues or events, how the world or a group of people should change. Work included any reference to actual work being done, what is being achieved, education. Lastly, any headline that specifically referred to the model in the cover and didn't fit the other categories fell under the category for model in the cover. Some headline examples are:

Style

- A – to – Z of Gorgeous Hair
- High Street and Denim Special

Relationship

- Are You Ready for Valentine's?
- "Adi Brought Calm into my Life" Rani Mukherjee on *Mardaani* and Being Mrs. Chopra

Health

- Are You Ready for Yoga 2.0?
- A Taste of Home, A Quick Lunch Menu

Goals

- "We Can't Live in the Past" – BJP MLA Diya Kumari
- "I Had This Feeling that I was Special" – Alia Bhatt

Work

- Leading from the Front – Dimple Yadav, Member of Parliament
- Bionic Woman

Model on the Cover

- Mr & Mrs Bachchan – Together for the first time exclusively for *Vogue India*
- Happy Birthday Mr. Khan – sexy, witty, unstoppable at 50

Lastly, the next category, background, described what was behind the model. Was there a blank wall, a solid color, a room setting, a beach ambiance, etc. These categories made up the analysis of the covers and were documented, as mentioned above, in an Excel spreadsheet (Figure 13).

Each month of 2010 or 2015 had its own section and each country had its own color, as seen below. Since some covers had more than one model, each model was evaluated and the data entered separately. The printed covers were subjectively evaluated in great detail to try to document any and every aspect. Using this table structure, connections were made between each magazine cover to see how similar *Vogue USA's* covers were to *Vogue India's* covers and how dissimilar, or perhaps similar, *Vogue* covers were to *India Today Woman* covers.

Figure 13 presents an example of the process of analysis for each magazine cover. The purple background represented *Vogue USA* for its' January, 2010 and 2015 covers. The red background represented *Vogue India* for its' January, 2010 and 2015 covers. In the spreadsheet, columns represent the indices assessed (model, facial expression, position, clothing, makeup, hairstyle, accessories, cover headlines, and background) and rows represent different characteristics of each index. The aim of this figure is to demonstrate the Excel spreadsheet composition; the texts are not legible.

Cover		Model	Facial Expression	Position	Clothes	Makeup	Hairstyle	Accessories	Headlines	Background
Jan-10	USA	Rachel McAdams	profile of face	sitting down	black 3/4th sleeve sweater	fresh look, soft on amount of makeup	top-do	white & crystal earrings	America's Ultimate Spa	pastel crime & white
		Hollywood actress	small smile	angled body	sweater is deep v-neck cut, open until last buttons, frames chest	black eyeliner, smudged eye shadow at ends, mascara	starts, little messy, tweezed at top for volume		YowHawke 2000 Fashion Upstarts Revitalized Classics Wicked Flak Jackets Cheeky Chic Cocktail Dress	blurred back
			straight gaze at camera from angle	slight legs up	smell red skirt with black and white flowers, goes slightly past knees	small amount of pink blush	blonde with brown roots and undertones		Looking Forward, Looking Back The Decade's Bravest And Best Dressed	black, red and white letters
				shoulders back	flowered corset top, v-necked, colors: purple, white, red, pink, yellow	pink lipstick	pulled away from face and neck – accentuates neck		Rachel McAdams Mean Girl Turned Sexy Sleuth	
				straight mid-frame		clear and short nails			When Size 4 Is Too Big: A Curvy Model's Struggle To Fit In	
			Head is covering half of '10' & '11' and full '10' in Vogue title			shaped eyebrows			White Lies Do Your Bleached Teeth Hide Health Problems?	
	India	Sonam Kapoor	straight gaze at camera	standing straight	blue and white leopard print skin tight, spaghetti strap dress, deep 'U' cut neckline	heavy brown and gold eye shadow	open, let down hair style	long gold necklace with small pendant at end, falls mid chest	Sonam Kapoor From 80 Miles to Perfect 10	dirty surface
		Bollywood actress	closed lip smile	slight lean towards back and left hip	jacket that covers right shoulder but drops a little on left side, showing shoulder and dress strap	mascara	heavy loose curls	black braided with blue accents on right hand	Work It! Get Priyanka's waist, Deepika's legs and Malaika's butt	starts white at top, only then goes silver
			front of face, not profile	no legs seen	jacket colors green, pink, black, red, gold	a little light pink blush	tweezed for slight messy look and volume	silver and black ring on left hand	Flirt: Kamila Shamsie, Aneel Bijani, Sharon Stone	blue and white letters
				one hand on hip and one hand up by shoulder		nude, little pink, lipstick	hair covers some of right face and shoulder		The Shape Issue What to wear if you're tall, short, thin, curvy or athletic Real women reveal what works, from XS to XL	
			Head is covering half of '10' & '11' and full '10' in Vogue title			shaped eyebrows	black hair		What's the future of beauty in 2013	
				shoulders back		clear and short nails				

Cover		Model	Facial Expression	Position	Clothes	Makeup	Hairstyle	Accessories	Headlines	Background
Jan-15	USA	Sienna Miller	straight gaze at camera	standing	light blue long sleeved rain coat/jacket	slight black eyeliner	blonde hair	large dark blue hat	Eat Like a Viking The Next Diet	light green and white
		Hollywood actress	front of face, not profile	only upper body shown, shoulders closer in	front over lap cover/close on jacket	mascara top and bottom lashes (prominent)	short, straight and let down	silver and gold rings on left hand	Super Bowl Punch Is The New Cocktails	blurred back
			small smile, can see teeth	no skin seen besides a little neck		slight pink blush	bangs cover some of right eye		F&A Twigs Styles Breakout Star	outside setting
				one hand holding hat, one up by shoulder		nude lips			After Hours James Corden Takes On Late Night	red, white and black letters
				model is behind the		shaped eyebrows			Sienna Miller Her Fabulous Second Act "I'm Trying To Be Cool About It. But Inside I'm Dancing"	
				body is a little angled but head is straight					Fashion's New Year Earrings Are Big, Jackets Are Small, And Heels are High, High, High!	
	India	Anushka Sharma	angled face	sitting down, shoulders back	blue, brown, and gold jacket dress	minimal makeup	brownish-black hair	brown and gold ring on left hand	Anushka Sharma Tell us everything!	room setting
		Bollywood actress	straight gaze at camera from angle	straight mid-frame with legs tucked in	low cut showing neck and some cleavage	nude lips	long, straight	white and gold ring on left hand	2015: The Year To Eat Right Customized diets, DIY food, gadgets for health-food geeks	couch, pillow, stool, carpet, & window
			full smile with teeth	one hand on waist and other rested on lap	jacket buttons until thigh and then falls to the sides, showing legs	little shimmer on cheek bones	aired away from face		A-To-Z Of Gorgeous Hair	blurred back
				model is behind the		brown eyeliner			What To Expect When You're Expecting (from your wardrobe)	open room
				body is angled		mascara			The Imposter Syndrome Are you faking it?	gold, gray, browns blue, white and black letters
				legs seen and full neck		shaped eyebrows, clear and short nails				

Figure-13: An example of the data collection sheet used for the January Vogue covers

One other primary source used in this study was a video titled *The Actresses Roundtable*.

The Actresses Roundtable (Masand, 2015) is an interview done with successful actresses. This interview was conducted by Rajeev Masand, a film critic and entertainment reporter for CNN –

Indian Broadcasting Network, with four Bollywood actresses who have been starting or running successful careers so far. The setting for the interview discussion was a table setting, where the actresses were able to discuss various topics ranging from film, to personal life, to social issues. Rajeev Masand has been seen interviewing many Bollywood actors in his roundtable discussions. This was one of the only actress versions of his show. The actresses interviewed were Kalki Koechlin, Deepika Padukone, Richa Chadha, and Anushka Sharma. This video provided information as a primary source to the discussion seen in later sections.

Secondary Sources

In the present study, secondary sources were found through extensive literature search and review, using Web of Science, Google Scholar, Journals from various disciplines, and articles posted through multiple online sites. When looking for journals with relevant articles, the disciplines used were Psychology, Sociology, Mass Communication, Humanities, Women's Studies and Business. These disciplines gave a good spectrum on topics that were associated to this research and helped understand many leading principles discussing fashion and a society/culture. Papers were selected using appropriate inclusion and exclusion criteria. For online sites, background information and relevant articles were read and researched. Background information included statistics on India and the Indian society, statistics about *Vogue* and *India Today Woman* coverage, mission and media representation, and facts that furthered this study. Articles searched covered many topics including the mission statements, arguments for and against *Vogue*, leading actions taken by *Vogue*, other entertainment topics relevant to this study, discussions around fashion and society, and topics in image and representation.

These sources, both primary and secondary, will facilitate the discussion of whether magazines are being true to the definition of empowerment and to the depicted society. The literature review together with the photographic analysis will offer a better understanding of both physical comparisons of pictures and research done and written on both societies, the fashion industry, and changing societies as a consequence of mass communication.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The questions posed at the beginning of this project are:

- *What identities of empowerment for Indian women are being suggested by Vogue India and India today Woman and what implications do each have?*
- *Are these magazines empowering growth or displaying what seems to be glamorous and more of a 'dream'?*

To answer these questions, the magazines' cover models/subjects were analyzed and the results were distributed into four sets of findings to correlate to the discussion.

- i) The model(s) pictured,
- ii) The model(s)'s facial expression (specifically a smile versus no smile),
- iii) The outfit(s) and the amount of 'skin' seen on the covers, and
- iv) The headlines on the covers.

The Models Pictured

A review of the previous issues of *Vogue*, both US and India, revealed that they primarily use actors or actresses as their models. Covers of 43 out of 48 magazines that were analyzed included models known for their acting profession. While *Vogue US* featured mostly Hollywood actresses, *Vogue India* had used models from Hollywood and Bollywood. At least four *Vogue India* covers featured Hollywood actresses. With the latest trend of Bollywood stars featuring in Hollywood productions, that count jumps to nine.

In comparison, *India Today Woman* featured a variety of individuals on their covers (Figure 14). While *India Today Woman* featured an actress only 40% of the time, *Vogue India*

featured actresses 90% the time. The actresses that were used only came from a Bollywood background, there were not any models featured with a Hollywood background (Figure 15).

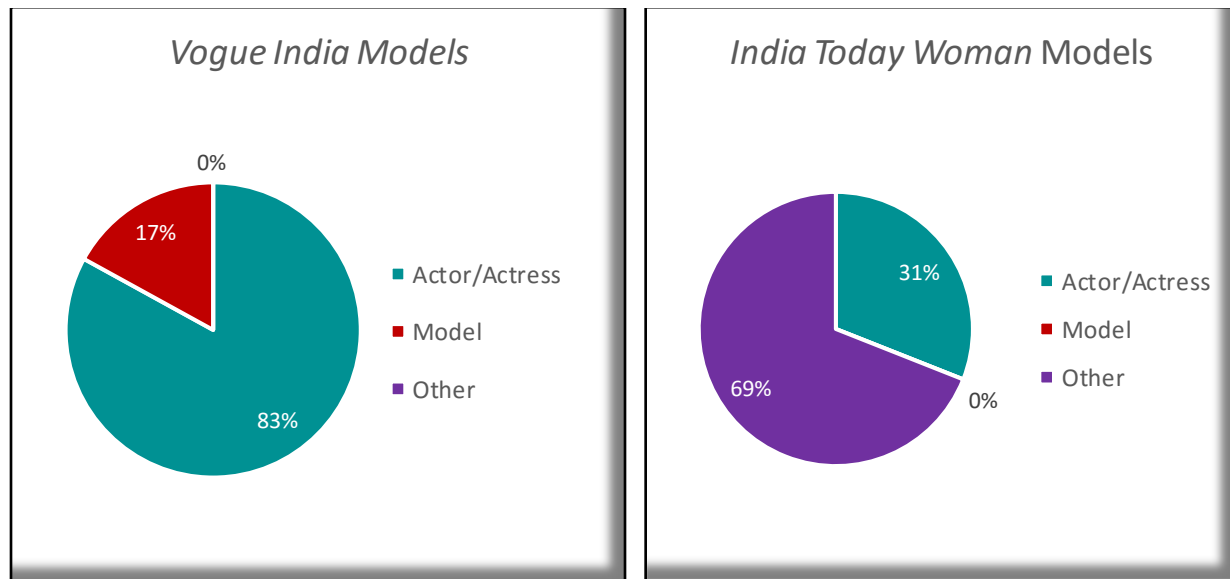


Figure-14: Relative cover composition of Vogue India and India Today Woman

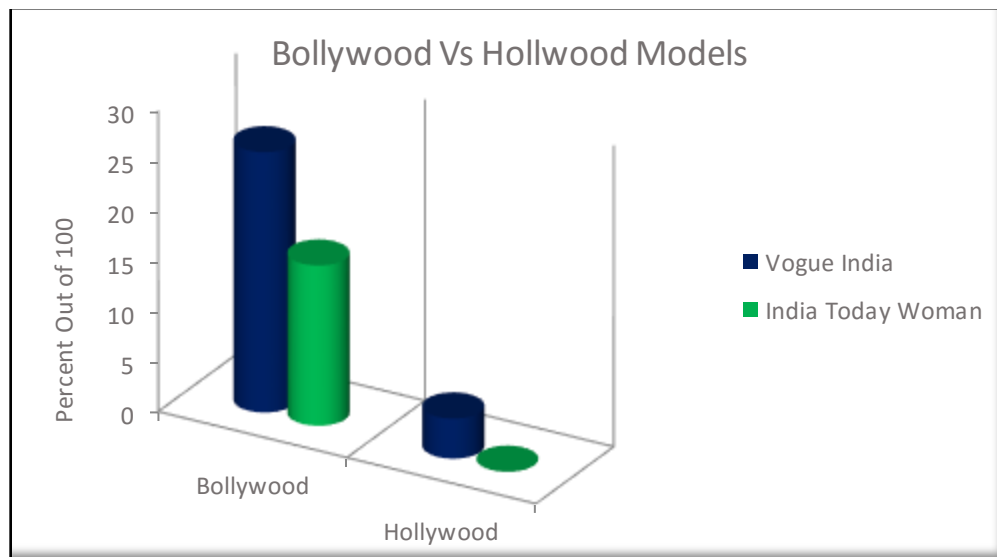


Figure-15: Composition of Bollywood and Hollywood models in two magazines.

As one can see, *Vogue India* used both Bollywood and Hollywood models, while *India Today Woman* had no Hollywood presence. Although the number of Hollywood models used in *Vogue India* is low, in comparison to *India Today Woman* this is a statistic to take note of.

Facial Expression

To analyze facial expressions, a data table was made that characterized the type of smile (or no smile) and how that spread across the magazine covers. The categories that distinguished the type of smile were full smile with teeth seen, full smile without teeth seen (closed lips), small smile, or no smile. An example is provided below to show what the breakdown looked like in the covers and the differences between the smiles or no smile (Figure 16).



Figure-16: Representative magazine covers with different degree of smile.

Vogue India and *India Today Woman* were quite different in their use of facial expressions for their models (Figure 17). On the spectrum, *Vogue India* ranked higher in the ‘no smile’ category while *India Today Woman* ranked higher in the ‘full smile with teeth’ category. If you were to combine the two ‘full smile’ categories together, 17.2% of *Vogue India* models fit this category and 65% of *India Today Woman* models fit this category. This combined percentage for *Vogue*

India models does not match or exceed *India Today Woman* in the categories either separated or combined. The question is this: Does having a model who is smiling make the magazine more relatable, appealing, and/or personable? If it does, is *Vogue* depicting a different ‘strong’ persona from that of *India Today Woman*? Are the magazines representing the ideal of a personable, strong and appealing woman differently? These will be looked at further in the following discussion section.

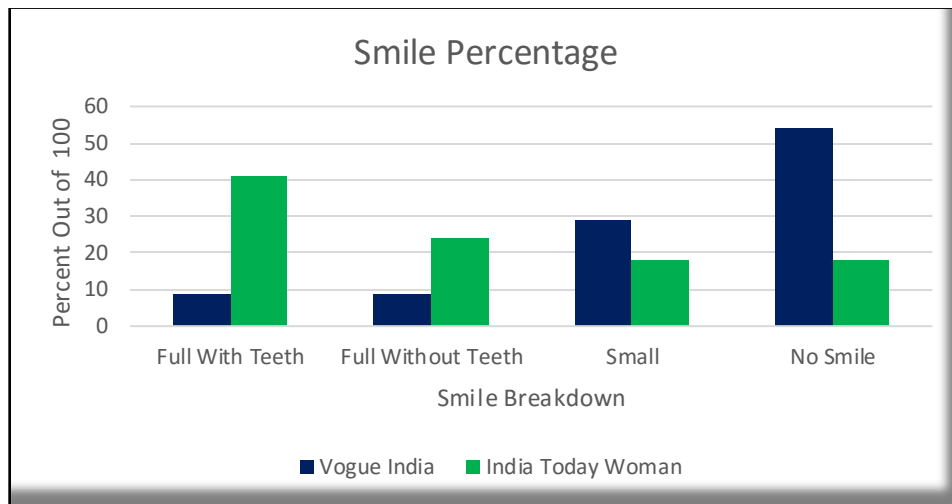


Figure-17: Percentage of cover models showing different degree of smiles. Green: *India today Woman* and Blue: *Vogue India*.

Outfits Used

The type of outfit used. In 2010 and 2015, *Vogue US* had a tendency to show formal outfits, although some issues had a casual look depending on the theme, but each issue had a high fashion identity in the outfit(s) chosen (Figure 18). The common outfits were cocktail dresses, fancy and formal blouses, and sweater cover-ups or jackets. Other casual outfits included swim suits, sweaters, and jean shorts with a casual top. Each model, whether she was wearing a cocktail dress or a casual sweater, depicted an image of elegance and an upper class vibe. *Vogue*

India was also seen to have a similar trend in the outfits. Many of the issues included formal, fancy, high fashion, and elegant themes, even in themes such as ‘out at the beach’ (Figure 19).



Figure-18: Vogue US outfits



Figure-19: Vogue India outfits

Very few of these covers had a more casual look in the outfits, but these still resembled *Vogue's* theme of high fashion and elegance. Many of these models were seen wearing outfits one would not normally be able to wear or even afford. They had a sense of being expensive and/or ‘out of

reach' just by looking at them. The reality may be different or even opposite but the way the outfits are showcased gives them that aura and appeal.

Another factor that ties into the above analysis is whether the type of outfit worn is seen as American or Indian, in its style and origin (to an extent). Here origin does not necessarily mean this outfit was produced or invented in America versus India, but where is this outfit seen most often and when worn is it normally referred to as an American style or an Indian style. The graph below (Figure 20) depicts the findings seen when tallying how many models were wearing American outfits versus Indian outfits.

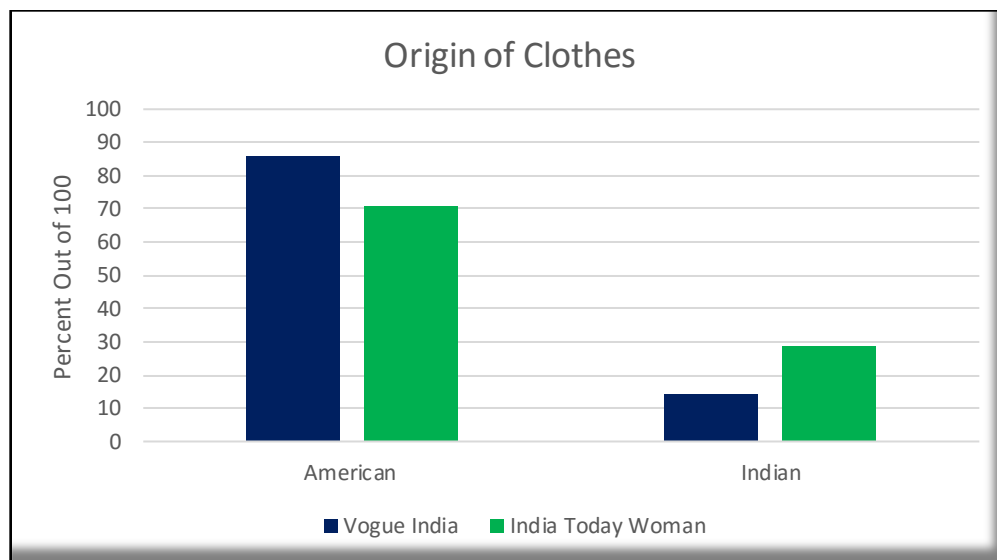


Figure-20: Origin of clothes (style) used by the models of Vogue India and India Today Woman.

How much skin was seen from the outfits chosen in both magazine covers. With the outfits described, the next step was to analyze how much skin was shown on *Vogue India* covers and *India Today Woman* covers. For this section of analysis, 'skin shown' was broken up into

different areas of the body. The categories were: Body/Torso, Neck and/or Collar Bone, Shoulders, Arms, Cleavage, and Legs. Each of these categories has been depicted below.

Body/Torso

This category was not about how much skin was seen but instead about whether the model had a more close-up cover photo or a distance (full body) cover photo. This category was tallied by whether the full body was pictured, three-fourths or half of the body/torso was pictured, or if the picture was from the chest area – up (Figure 21).

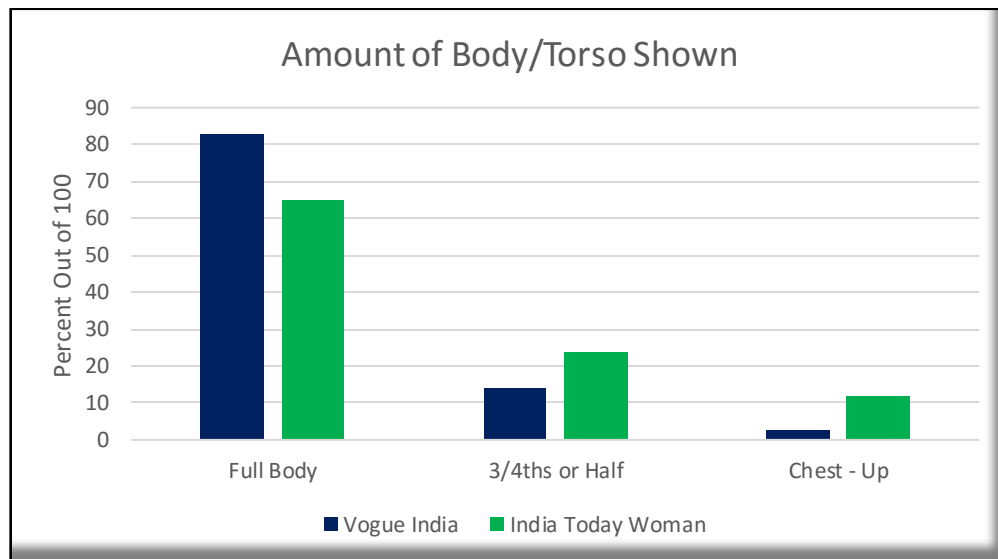


Figure-21: Body cover in cover models.

Although the numbers are similar in this section, one point to note is the variation difference. *Vogue India* has a big jump between full body and three-fourths or half body. Whereas, *India Today Woman* has a small jump between the categories and shows more variation in their depiction of the model pictured. This is important when noting what the cover is showing and

setting in the minds of its readers. This also will tie into the next sections where amount of skin seen is dependent on, this, the portion of the model pictured on the cover.

Neck and/or Collar

The first category is the amount of the model's neck and/or collar bone shown by the outfit worn and the model's pose. This section was tallied according to whether the whole neck and collar bone was open (seen), if some of the neck was open which usually meant the collar bone area was covered or the neck had some fabric hiding areas but it was still dominantly open, or if the neck was covered and very little to no neck or collar bone area was open (Figure 22).

Full Neck & Collar Bone



Some Neck



No Neck



Figure-22: Representative photographs showing exposed skin.

The 'Some Neck' category was the in-between breakdown which meant if the neck area was covered by hair, cloth, or pose, but some amount of skin could be seen in that area, then the cover was tallied here. Another point to note is in the 'no neck' breakdown, the neck could be seen in some but the outfit or the model's hair was covering all of the collar bone and upper chest area. The graph below depicts these findings (Figure 23) in which one can see the big jump

in the *Vogue India* scores between full and some. Going from 83% to 14% shows a preference for or an overlook at the amount of skin shown in the neck and collarbone area. On the other hand, important to note, *India Today Woman* fell more into the middle breakdown but also did not have such a large jump between two of the breakdowns, as seen in the *Vogue India* covers. The difference is still there but not as large and shows more variation in the covers in comparison to *Vogue India*.

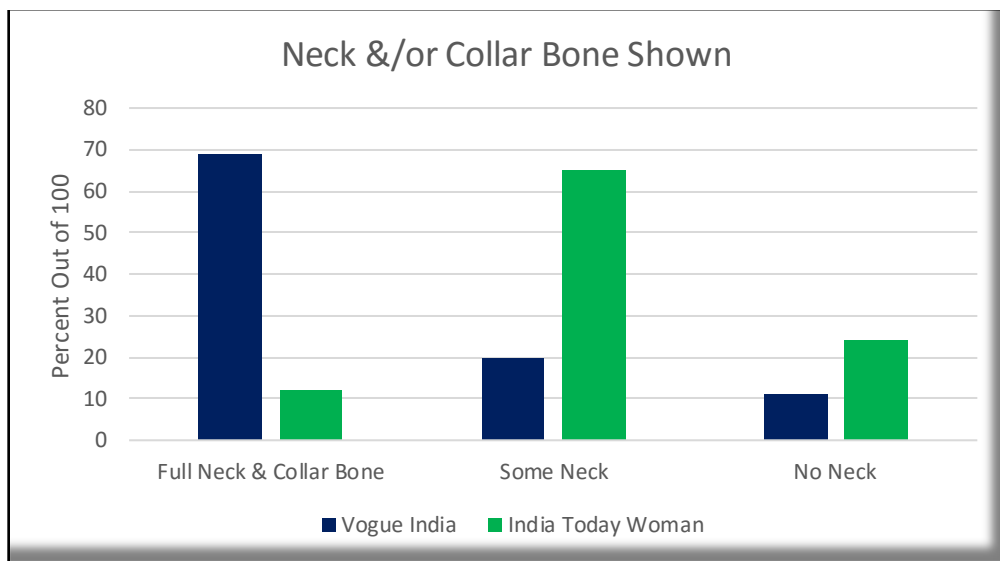


Figure-23: Percent of models showing neck and collar areas.

Shoulders

This section was tallied into three breakdowns of whether both shoulders were seen, if one or some of the shoulder(s) were seen, or if no skin in the shoulder region was seen. Figure 24 shows that the two magazines had more models who fell into the ‘one or some’ breakdown and the ‘none’ breakdown. With that said, *Vogue India* scored higher in the ‘some or one’ breakdown, whereas *India Today Woman* scored higher in the ‘none’ breakdown (Figure 25).

Full & Both

One or Some

None



Figure-24: Models showing exposed shoulder skin.

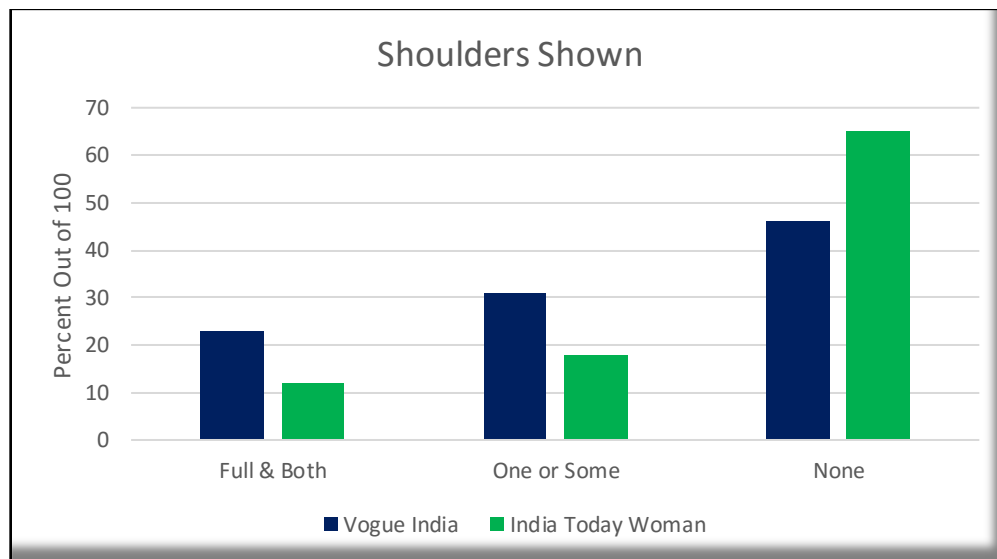


Figure-25: Percentage of models showing exposed shoulder.

Arm exposure

The breakdowns for this category, similar to the previous two, are full arms seen, half or some of the arms seen, and none of this region seen as shown in Figure 26. There were similarities seen between the two magazines in the 'full' and the 'none' breakdown. More difference was in the 'half or some' category, where *India Today Woman* scored higher. *Vogue* had a higher tally in

the ‘full’ or ‘none’ category while *India Today Woman* only finds a higher score in the ‘half or some’ breakdown. This may be another indicator of *India Today Woman* setting more variation in their covers, whereas *Vogue* is one extreme or the other (Figure 27).



Figure-26: Arm exposure in models.

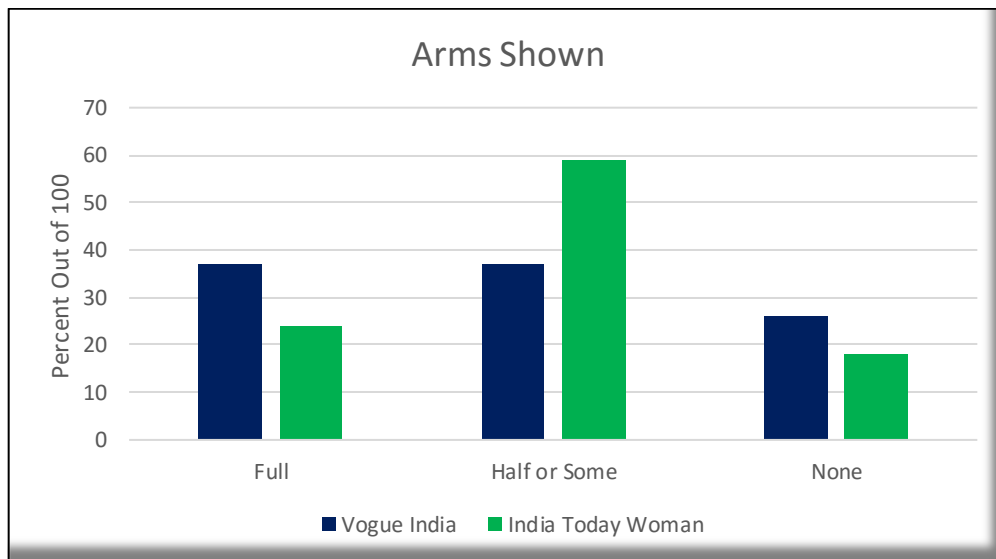


Figure-27: Arm exposure in models.

relates back to the type of outfit worn. In the Indian outfits seen in the *India Today Woman* covers, cleavage was not seen at all. In *Vogue India*, the majority of outfits, both in the American style and the Indian style, were elegant, fancy, and/or what is considered high fashion. A lot of the neck lines and cuts in the outfits displayed more cleavage and skin.

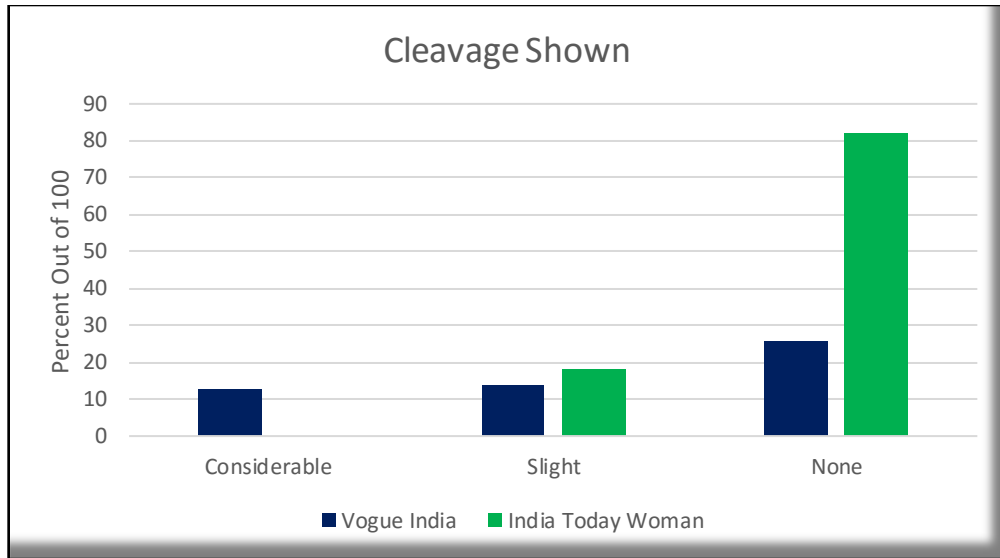


Figure-29: Cleavage exposure by models.

Leg Exposure

This section, similar to categories above, was divided into full legs seen, some of the legs seen, and no legs seen. If the model was only pictured from their waist or chest – up, then they automatically fell into the none category. When full body was pictured, the difference in skin shown was seen to be very different between the two magazines (Figure 30).

Full & Both

One or Some

None



Figure-30: representative models for leg exposure in Vogue.

As shown in Figure 31, *India Today Woman* did not have any models seen with all of his/her legs exposed, while *Vogue India* had more models showing skin in the leg area (full exposure + some exposure > no exposure).

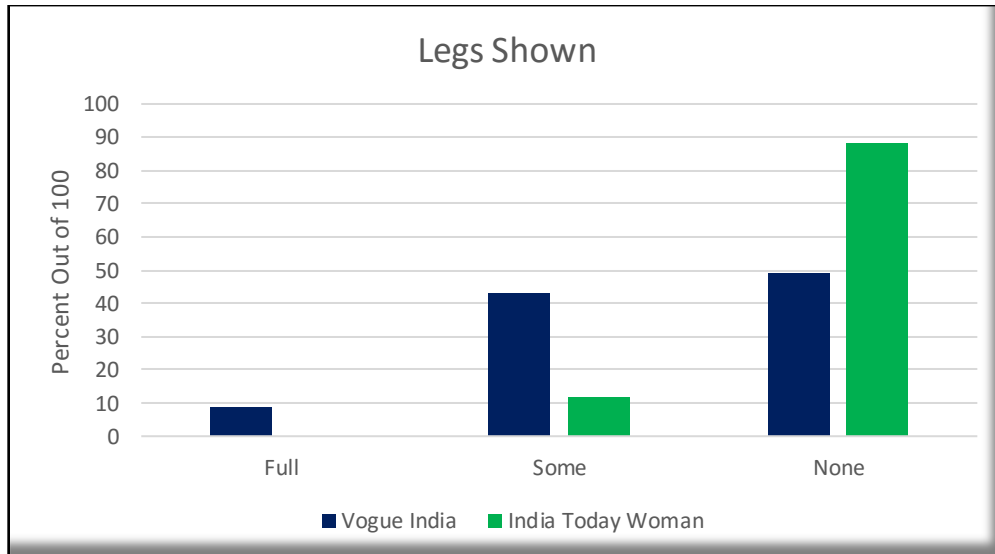


Figure-31: percentage of models leg exposure.

Altogether, analysis of how much skin was seen is very important to this study. Putting all of the results together, two major themes were found. The first is that *Vogue India* shows more skin on their covers in comparison to *India Today Woman*. The second is that *Vogue India* tends to pick one of the extreme breakdowns within each category while *India Today Woman* tends to either go for the in-between breakdown or show variation among the breakdowns in each category. This is important and leads into many questions: Why does *Vogue India* show more skin? Are those reading each magazine or both receiving the same message about body image and style? Also is one magazine over the other trying to find a medium instead of an extreme?

Cover Headlines

Analysis of the headlines found on *Vogue India*'s covers revealed that 60% were in style, 7.5% were in relationship, 13% were in health, 2.2% were in goals, 2.2% were in work, and 15% were about the model shown on the cover. Analysis of the headlines found on *India Today Woman*'s covers shows that 4.2% were in style, 16.7% were in relationships, 8.3% were in health, 37.5% were in goals, 25% were in work, 8.3% were about the model on the cover (Figure 32).

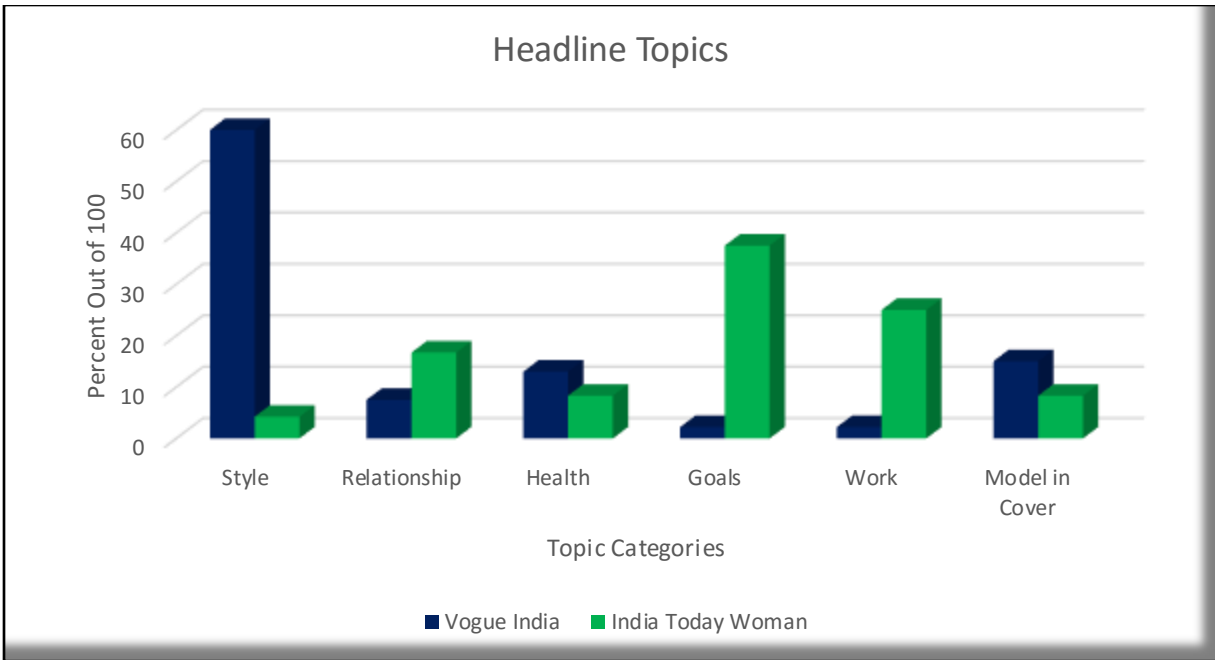


Figure-32: Analysis of headline topics.

From these statistics and the graphed depiction, a clear difference in the topics covered by each magazine is seen. *Vogue India* focuses on style, relationships, and health. The headlines that focused on the model also tend to mention his/her style, relationships, or popularity. Also these covers did not add many headlines that discussed goals and/or work. *Vogue India* seemed to stay away from having those on its covers and instead keeps the readers pointed towards fashion and beauty, which follows the design of the cover.

India Today Woman, on the other hand, was seen to focus on the opposite spectrum; it had more headlines that discussed goals, work, and health. In this case, when the headline referred to the model it was very uncommon for it to be about the model's publicity or style. Instead these headlines focused on the models' work, their aspirations, their self-confidence, and other topics similar. The focus here seemed to point readers towards a different direction from

Vogue. Here, the goal seemed to be to educate the readers even at a glance on social topics, work related topics, and self-confidence examples and explanations.

The data was gathered and analyzed in order to discover the focus of the magazine covers and the differences or similarities between the two. As was mentioned previously, *Vogue US* and *Vogue India* had very similar cover designs, models, category breakdowns, and headlines. For this reason, the analysis section presented here focused on *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* with the assumption that the former matches *Vogue US* very closely. What resulted was a depiction of how different *Vogue India* was from *India Today Woman*, and vice versa. These two magazines, through all the elements of their covers together, set up very different messages. Both *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* are being sold to the same population, yet both are setting different ideals. What does that say for the people reading each or both magazines? How is this translating into the population? How can this affect the current Indian society?

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The goal of this project is to study what empowerment identities are suggested by the covers of *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman*. Do these magazines present the same or different identities of empowerment for Indian women and what implications would different identities have? My hypothesis is that *the representation of empowerment in Vogue is more glamor oriented and Americanized than the representation of empowerment in India Today Woman*. Both magazines depict identities of empowerment as what they see as women issues in India and how to help. However, many of the concepts described in *Vogue India* do not match the environment that clothing factory workers face every day in order to provide and earn some money. If *India Today Woman* is different, which it is, then how is it an important force for depicting strong women and how could it be a better format to help these factory workers who are working in horrible and unacceptable conditions? This section will discuss women in modern India, and offer a critique of images of women empowerment by *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman*.

Women in Modern India

To understand the impact of *Vogue India* or *India Today Woman*, it is important to understand the status of women in India. India has approximately 1.252 billion people, of which almost 48% are women, which is almost 0.6 billion people. The constitution of India has accorded certain rights to women:

- to all Indian women equity (Article 14)
- no gender discrimination (Article 15(1))
- equality of opportunities (Article 16)

-equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d))

However, the social attitude towards women lags much behind the Indian constitution (Figure 33). In fact, the Indian society treats the urban middle class women differently from the wealthy class women (about 25% of the female population) who are well educated and participate in all sectors of professional India such as politics, science, military, health care and education sectors. Gender gap is almost nonexistent for these urban women; one reason may be because many of these women are their household providers and caretakers (Shukla & Bardoloi, 2015). However recently, there has been an increase in violence against women in major urban areas, especially in Delhi, the capital city of India (Kambou, 2014).

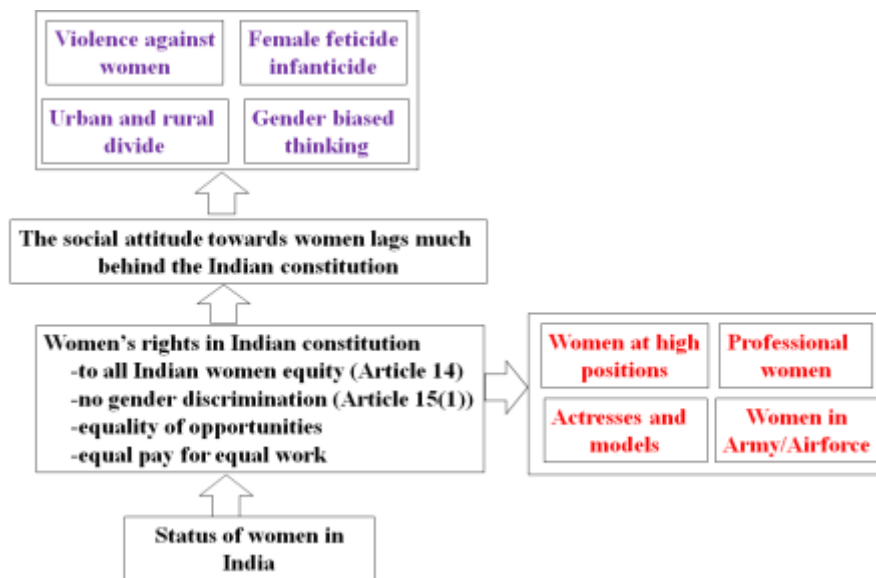


Figure-33: A flow diagram showing status of women in India

Then, there are women living in rural areas or poor women living in urban areas that live a different life. They are poorly educated, unskilled, unemployed or working as low paid laborers with no economic security such as the workers in clothing factories. Figure 34 shows the annual household spending on education. Urban households spend at least three times more resources than rural households or people living in poor urban areas.

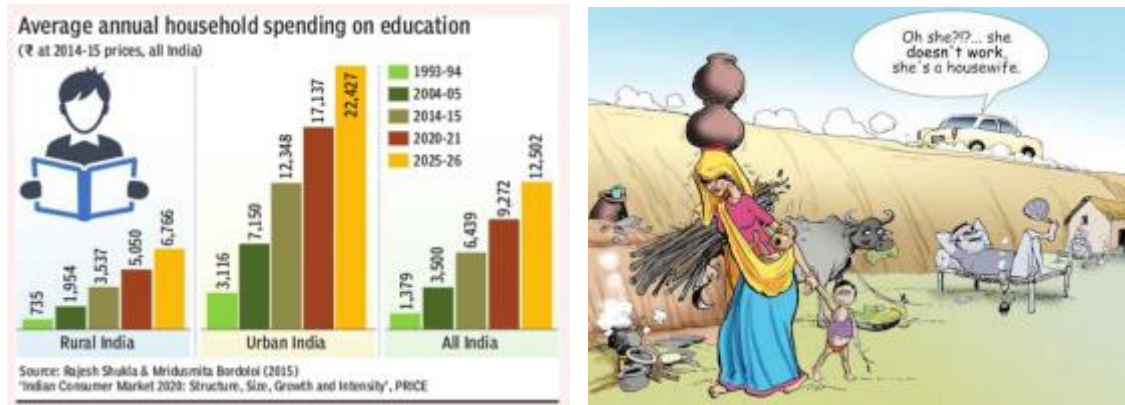


Figure-34: Graph of annual household spending on education & a cartoon depicting how some rural women are seen (Shukla & Bardoloi, 2015) & (Status of Women in India...Thoughts)

Taken together, these observations indicate that the two magazines studied in this project are designed for a small proportion of educated urban to upper class Indian women.

Representation of women empowerment by *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman*

Facial expression. Facial Expression of a model is probably the first feature that a reader focuses on. Since covers compete for attention next to dozens of other magazines on the rack, each magazine uses the facial expressions of cover models to convey the intent or content of the issue. Earlier cross-cultural investigations have detailed possible relationship between facial expressions and elicited emotions (Keltner & Ekman, 2000; Smith & Scott, 1997; Izard, 1992; and Matsumoto, 1987). As shown in Figure 17, *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* use different styles of facial expression. Approximately 70% of *Vogue India* models had “no smile” face, showing a serious look, while *India Today Woman* models exhibited data in all of the categories (full smile with teeth showing 8%, full smile teeth not showing (8%), small smile (30%) and no smile (54%)) for facial expressions. This may indicate that *Vogue* models are instructed to give non-smiling or mildly smiling expressions that may portray a sultry or sexy

look. The magazines, by using special facial expressions may attract different groups of readers that may or may not overlap. Another basis for using specific facial expressions is because often people make judgments of trustworthiness based on someone's facial expression. Todorov (2008) and Todorov et al (2008) successfully modeled computer-generated faces that could be identified as trustworthy or not trustworthy. They also identified the features of trustworthiness (Figure 35).

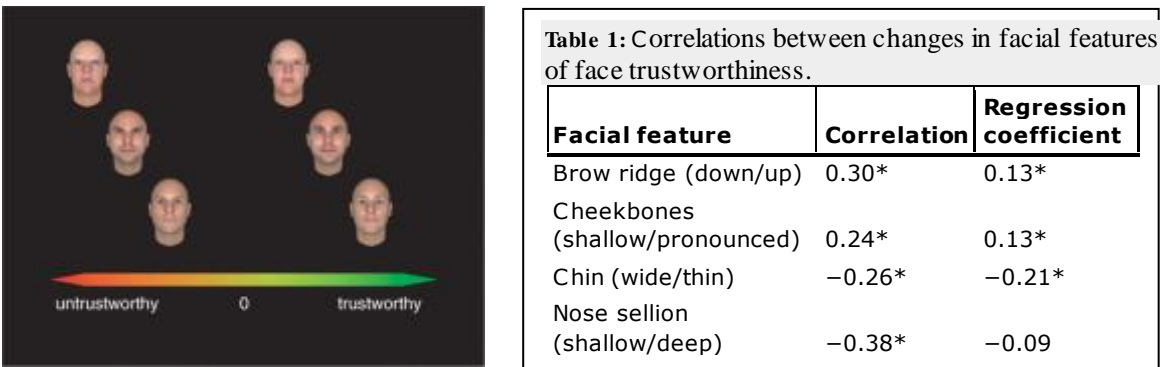


Figure-35: Modelling of trustworthy and untrustworthy faces

They figured that trustworthiness correlated 0.75 with judgments of attractiveness, -0.76 with judgments of aggressiveness and 0.63 with judgments of intelligence. Thus, a perception of attractiveness and/or intelligence leads to trustworthiness, while a perception of aggressiveness leads to non-trustworthiness.

Although the possible mechanism of facial response is not fully understood, an implication of the central nervous system is proposed (Morris et al, 1996). The perception of a sad face activates the left amygdala and right temporal lobe, the perception of an angry face activates the right orbital-frontal cortex and the anterior cingulate cortex (Blair, 2003, 2004), and the perception of a disgusted face activates the interior insula and the limbic cortico-striatal-thalamic regions (Phillips et al, 1997). Calder & Young (2005) proposed a comprehensive model describing how the human brain interprets facial expression.

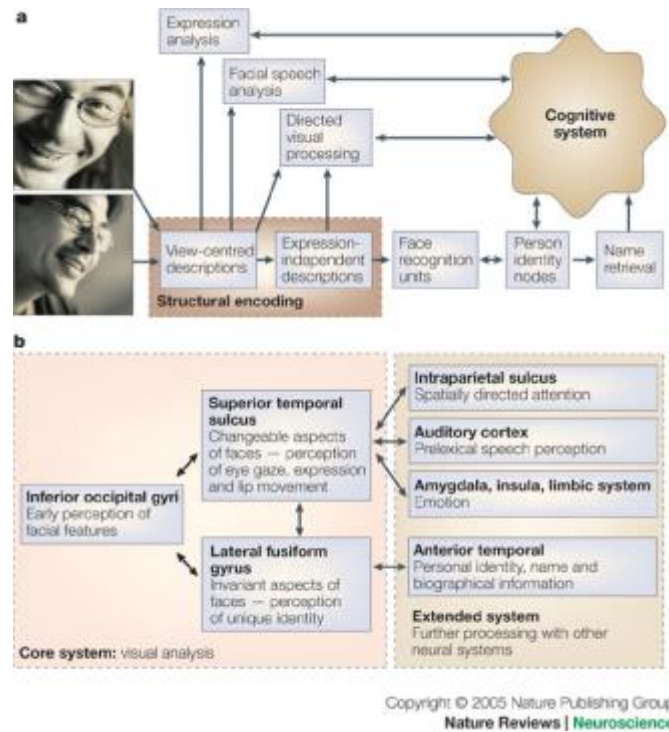


Figure-36: Model describing how the human brain interprets facial expression

Clothing. Appropriate clothing of models has the potential to convey their inner self (self-image, mood, social aspirations), but also attract readers who prefer magazines that are consistent with their interests. The preference for clothing is identified by (i) physical features of clothes including skin response, (ii) size and shape of the clothes, and (iii) thermal comfort, and revealing. All of these factors would generate an emotional response – both positive and negative (Venkatesh et al, 2012). In the present study, we classified the clothing section into two groups: (i) the types of outfits (Figures 18 – 20) and (ii) degree of body exposure (Figures 21 and 22). The model may be fully clothed, but may include sheer items to show legs, arms, bare back, and mid stomach.

The types of outfits. As shown in Figure 20, about 85% of *Vogue India* models and 70% of *India Today Woman* models wore American design dresses. Thus a slightly greater percentage of

India Today Woman models wore Indian style dresses. This may reflect a shift in women's apparel market from indigenous to western style possibly due to rapid growth and rising urbanization that have spawned a new class of consumers with more money to spend, and a growing passion for fashion. In future this trend is expected to grow rapidly (Figure 37). The models also wore Indo- western fusion dresses (the data shown in the Master Data Table). There is sufficient but not compelling evidence in support for generation of a unique set of emotions in response to the models wearing a particular set of clothes (Kim, 2000 and Kim et al, 2000). Kim (2000) reports two emotional dimensions: (i) pleasure/activation response such as activation, and desired, social affection and (ii) hypoactivation such as drowsy, restful, soothed. Kim et al (2000) selected apparel advertisements from the Korean edition of *Vogue* magazine and found generation of positive, negative and activation responses. Although no further information is available on this topic, it is possible that the magazine covers can generate positive or negative response to clothes the models are wearing and a decision whether or not to buy the magazine.

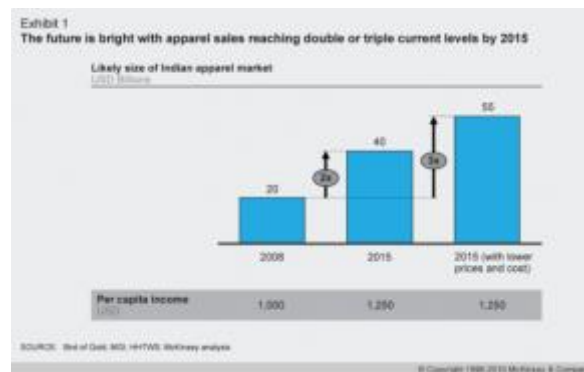


Figure-37: The future of apparel sales

Degree of body exposure. In the fashion industry, there has always been a trend toward more body display applied to female models. However, the issue of exposure is regulated differently in different countries, seen below in figure 38. In this section, studying body exposure in *Vogue India*

in comparison to *India Today Woman* was important for this research topic. In general, *India Today Woman* models exposed less skin than *Vogue India* (Figures 22 – 25). Approximately 70% of *Vogue India* models, while about 10% of the *India Today Woman* models had fully exposed neck and collar-bone areas. An interesting observation was that the degree of body exposure shown in *Vogue India* and *Vogue USA* was comparable, in fact, somewhat similar issue-by-issue. This is seen due to (i) recent liberalization of the entertainment industry, (ii) tolerance of western culture and (iii) influence of Bollywood on the society. That is why *Vogue India* relies on actresses and models who are willing to be photographed partially exposed.



Figure-38: Fashion models in different countries

Collectively these categories depict a lot about the empowerment seen in each magazine.

Leading further, *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* both try to appeal to women but have different messages passing through each cover. Further discussion will provide a view on why these magazines are not actually appealing to the same audience and how *Vogue India* tends to target a certain type of woman.

CHAPTER 6

SHOULD #MYCHOICE BE THE CHOICE?

An article in *The Irish Times* highlighting *Vogue India*'s spread, "The American Dream," starts by saying "Do you ever see fashion editorials and just feel nostalgic for a time that you've never even lived through?" (Mac Cabe, 2012). This spread features an Indian woman as the model wearing different outfits and posing in a bowling alley, by a pool table, and in a lounge setting. The outfits one sees the model wearing are spring dresses, tank tops, rolled up jeans, short shorts, a cowboy themed jacket, and a jean jacket (Figure 39).



Figure-39: Images from Vogue India's 'American Dream' spread

What is interesting here is how the author started his article and what these images portray. "A time that you've never lived through" is where this discussion starts on *Vogue India*'s idea of empowerment and whether it is applicable to Indian women in India. The model's outfits and settings convey the concept of Americanization as featured for a woman in India. Having a bull head, a loose tank top, or what could be referred to as 'booty' shorts is found more in the American population than what the Indian society may be ready for based on its rich culture and religious history. With this example and further discussion presented later, the Social Comparison theory comes into play. Earlier this theory was defined as how one compares himself/herself to another and if they modify themselves after the comparison. This act of

comparing oneself is more or less involuntary. People have the inert need to evaluate themselves to others and act accordingly, which leads many people to change their behavior because what they see is more appealing to them than what they have. An educated, young Indian woman who looks at the spread above may try to copy the model just because what she sees seems better than what she currently looks like or is wearing, in her perception. This becomes dangerous, especially when an outside eye can see how Americanized this spread actually is. Can a young Indian woman wear some of those outfits in India today and be completely comfortable? The spread shown above does show one form of empowerment. One does see a confident Indian girl who is not worried about societal dangers or culture norms, but is instead doing what she wants/likes to do. But this is also where the act of displaying women empowerment and not realizing its implications becomes important. First, let's look at what *Vogue India* is displaying and what implications it may have.

As brought up earlier, the *Vogue* empowerment initiative's (2014) mission statement displayed for this campaign is:

To celebrate our seventh anniversary this October, *Vogue* India is launching #VogueEmpower, a social awareness initiative that draws attention to women's empowerment. Today, the issues surrounding women's empowerment have taken on a broader meaning in India: they touch and impact the lives of both urban and rural women, and encompass financial, sociological and emotional aspects as well as the issue of safety. Which is why with #VogueEmpower, our endeavor is to raise awareness through the magazine, social media, digital, multi-media platforms and offline activities. The message is simple: It starts with you. We want them to mobilize people to think, talk and

act in ways that highlight and draw attention to women's empowerment. (Vogue Empower)

The marketing strategy for this campaign was also pushed forward with a strategic plan involving many mediums such as TV, print, in-person. The campaign's website includes the mission statement, a list of those who pledged, videos that express the act of empowerment, a store where items were donated from top designers, a place to donate for the cause, and inspirational stories enforcing empowerment.

The '#MyChoice' hashtag and video presenting Deepika Padukone as the spokeswoman and face of the empowerment initiative, became a key factor in the pledge (Figure 40).



Figure-40: Deepika Padukone in Vogue India's Empower campaign

This campaign is successful because of its strategic use of partnership to build awareness. Using individuals and companies with name recognition and putting out videos and images to raise awareness is a good strategy for creating some stir on the topic. However, this campaign was met with much criticism not because of the content of the initiative but for how the magazine showcased it. One critique stated: "With an impeccable designed cover for the issue carrying the campaign, complete with perfect looking people, the magazine proves what it really is – it is just

a fashion magazine that caters to the upper caste, upper class women. It is not a representation of the real world. And who exactly is Deepika addressing in the video? Bargaining with patriarchy is definitely not feminist!” (Dandapani, 2015).

In a letter to *Vogue India*, Nasreen Talukdar disputed the claims made by *Vogue* in its’ #MyChoice campaign by stating: “Empowerment is totally different from how you pictured it. Women empowerment is not about the clothes you wear, your body type, at what time you choose to be home, when to have sex or when to have a baby. It’s much beyond that. Empowerment deals with more substantial and powerful issues” (Talukdar, 2015). She also poses the following question: “.....why couldn’t you have your cover pages and stories on the real women who struggle each day of her life, even as I speak of them now?” (Talukdar, 2015). The magazine often ignores the fact that India is a culturally diverse country where the definition of beauty and fashion exhibits regional flavors, none of which may resemble the women shown on a *Vogue* cover.

Going forward, this initiative mentioned reaching both urban and rural women. However, some critics say this is more to gain a larger audience rather than actually trying to reach rural women who have very different lifestyles. By stating that the magazine caters to all types of women, *Vogue India* opened its doors for more criticism which may not be very wrong in what is being pointed out. Both of criticisms analyzed above also have a lot to say about this “representation” of rural women. What can be seen not only in this campaign but also on the *Vogue* covers, in general, is that the target audience is upper class women. Even the #MyChoice campaign presented the topic of empowerment by using famous and rich actors and actresses to claim that people should take charge and find empowerment in themselves. The videos and

images do not feature someone more relatable to the middle class women and there is not one that includes a rural woman.

There was one issue of *Vogue India* that chose to incorporate rural men, women, and children in its spread, but this issue received heavy backlash on what they chose to do. In August, 2008 the magazine had a 16-page spread on designer items modeled by what they named average Indians (Figure 41).



Figure-41: Images from Vogue India's spread of average Indians

Here what can be seen are middle to lower class Indians being pictured with one or more expensive material items. For example, the pictures above show the man holding a designer umbrella and the child wearing a designer bib. Both of these items are materials these people could probably never afford. If compared to the *Vogue India* covers analyzed, these pictures do not have that given sense of glamor or “dream.” Instead none of the models were ‘made to look good’ or given the treatment a Bollywood actress would be given in a *Vogue* spread. This view on “average Indians” that *Vogue* displayed brought up a lot of conversation on what the magazine was trying to do and why they would decide to showcase these people this way. An article gives an example of class disparity in India and the response to this spread.

Middle class families go out for a meal and make the ayah - nanny - stand by their table. She is not allowed to sit. "A friend of mine saw an ayah sitting in the toilet of a five-star hotel in Bangalore," said Raja Menon, a film director who recently made a film about the disparity between rich and poor. "The family were dining in the hotel and told her to wait in the toilet." (Dhillon, 2008)

Parsa Venkateshwar Rao, a columnist, brings up a strong and compelling argument. "The poor are always used as props, not as real people, which is why they haven't even been named in the magazine. Would they use homeless or hard up people in London for this kind of shoot?" (as cited in Dhillon, 2008). Kanika Gahlaut, a columnist for *Mail Today*, said: "There's nothing 'fun or funny' about putting a poor person in a mud hut in clothing designed by Alexander McQueen, she said in a telephone interview. 'There are farmer suicides here, for God's sake' she said, referring to thousands of Indian farmers who have killed themselves in the last decade because of debt. The magazine does not even bother to identify the subjects" (as cited in Timmons, 2008). Because this is about a spread inside the magazine, it may not seem to relate to the covers analyzed and focused on for this topic but that is incorrect. The spreads in *Vogue* are treated with the same detail and recognition of image as the covers of the magazine. With that said, one can compare the models used in the typical covers to this spread and see the big difference not only in setting, but it is also one of the only times models are seen in Indian clothes that are not above the average Indian's pay scale. The question in this comparison then is, if *Vogue India* is willing to showcase the average Indian then why is it so keen to use Bollywood figures at such an extreme?

Bollywood, a leading industry, producing many movies a year and showcasing worldwide known actors and actresses is a place tapped into heavily by leading print publications, include *Vogue India*. Actors and actresses become the face of the particular magazine cover and in turn become who the reader sees as a person to look up to, read about or even envy. These actors and actresses have millions of fans just in India and then more spread out across the world. With this type of fan following, much of what is produced that includes these actors becomes an object of interest for the millions of fans. With or without trying or even knowing, these products then become something looked at in detail by many and followed by many. Therefore, the models pictured as seen in the analysis hold a heavy weight once pictured, which is something they and the magazine can be cognizant of. This is often brought up in interviews, where actors and actresses are asked about and discuss their position as public figures. An example of this was an interview done by Rajeev Masand, asking four leading actresses questions in a roundtable discussion setting. These actresses were Kalki Koechlin, Deepika Padukone, Richa Chadda, & Anushka Sharma. The interesting and relevant question to pay attention to, for purposes of this study, was Rajeev's question about being a public figure. Below is the dialogue that progressed regarding this topic:

Interviewer: "Actors are routinely criticized for never taking a stand when it comes to hot button issues...still it's important that public personalities, actors take a stand. Do you feel that enough of you do?"

Answer: "An actor has a responsibility to deliver in their job as an actor, the choice is personal. Yes, you are seen by a lot of people, but for every actor to be an activist on every topic is ridiculous. "

Answer: "But I don't think anyone should expect it out of actors... and for some reason anything that can happen in the country, Bollywood is just crucified. For what?"

Interviewer: "But that is the result that our heroes are our demigods..."

Answer: “It’s a serious problem if actors are role models. I’m sorry, find better role models.” (Masand, 2015)

From this interview, and many alike, it seems that actors do not want to be taken as role models. But is that really plausible being a public figure who is broadcasted in multiple media avenues? Especially when many of these actors and actresses were part of the empowerment initiative by *Vogue*. With the publicity they do get and knowing the society they live in, why not use the reach they have to actually improve women empowerment? Taking part in a rally or an organization are great ways, but why not also spread what they can do in all mediums they take part in, such as a magazine cover? “Do they have that control?” is a good follow-up question which cannot be answered in this paper but could be an avenue for further research. From the analysis above, it was noted how often Bollywood actors and actresses are shown in both *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman*, the difference then becomes what is the story related to them on the cover and how are they portrayed in the cover.

Headlines and model portrayal are important here because of the difference seen between the two magazines. Both magazines included Bollywood actors/actresses, but *Vogue India* was seen to depict material stories related to its models while *India Today Woman* chose topics of substance related to its models. The difference between material stories and substance stories is what is in the content and how it relates to the given definition of empowerment. As a reminder empowerment is defined by Page and Czuba (1999), in their research article titled *Empowerment: What Is It?*, as “a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important” (Page & Czuba, 1999). Headlines that fall into the categories of style,

relationships and/or models in the covers are material stories based on the definition of these categories given in the results section, whereas headlines that fall into the categories of health, goals and work are substance stories. *Vogue India* had headlines with material stories; there were very few covers that included a story of substance. On the other hand, *India Today Woman* had headlines covering substance stories and some that also touched on the material stories. *Vogue India* depicts an extreme while *India Today Woman* depicts a medium.

This medium is what empowerment is about. Covers from *India Today Woman* in no way look less appealing than *Vogue India* covers; they may be less cluttered or subtler but the models in both magazines look good and put together. The difference then is subtleness and glamour. *Vogue India* was seen to score higher in the extreme categories. For example, they had models who either showed no skin open in the arms area or models who were bare armed. Another example is *Vogue India* was seen to have their models in glamorous outfits, outfits probably too expensive for even the middle class in India. On the other hand, again, *India Today Woman* was seen to take the medium role. *India Today Woman* had an array of outfits, some had short sleeves while others had bare arms and others long sleeves, some were glamorous and some were very “normal”.

When wondering if this medium role works and is possible in *Vogue* and elsewhere, there are many examples where it is even displayed, minutely. For example, Bollywood’s top actress, Sonam Kapoor’s, who also has been displayed on many *Vogue India* covers, in her interview with *The Indian Express*, comments on fashion and what it can do. She stated “I feel it (fashion) is an expression of individuality and I think fashion is an art. I feel sometimes when you wear clothes, it’s not only about looking nice, it also makes you look beautiful” (Fashion is an art, 2015). This is an act of empowerment because it is relating fashion to more than just wearing

clothes. Here, Sonam Kapoor is connecting a person's individuality and their personal statement to what they wear. Fashion becomes a movement of controlling one's own life and growing in what he/she finds power in. But more importantly it is being done by *India Today Woman*. This magazine showcases many aspects and fields of women empowerment. They state it in their mission statement and display its identity through its covers. Featuring women with different backgrounds and stories, having headlines that relate to more than just style or relationships, creating a simpler cover with more focus on the important issues, are all aspects of how this magazine is displaying the true sense of empowerment, by definition. It is showing women who are powerful and also putting them in a relatable light. Along with this the women aren't shown as less fashionable, they are still wearing various types of outfits both American and Indian, their hair is done in up do's and down in waves, some show more skin than others...there is a lot about these covers that give them a fashionable look and an approachable or relatable look as well. *India Today Woman* is empowering by showing there can be a medium and women in India can find that medium.

The models used who were not part of the Bollywood industry, were seen to have many different backgrounds, professions. These models are seen to lead discussions in various topics. In an interview by *India Today Woman* with Reham Khan, one of the models analyzed on *India Today Woman's* cover, she is described: "She has worked as a prime time anchor for three top channels where she interviewed prominent politicians, covered big stories, and spoke on all that mattered. Reham Khan became a household name in Pakistan, known for saying that you don't need to shout to be heard. Without being bestowed any official position in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) or the KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) government where the PTI holds power, Reham's presence indicates that she is determined to be part of a changing Pakistan" (Tarar,

2015). This interview goes on to talk to her about personal life matters such as covering her head after marriage, what her husband, who is a famous cricketer and now politician, is like at home, and her parenting style. It then talks about her career and goals, such as what it is like being a broadcaster, what interviews were memorable to her, and what social activities and groups she is taking part in. Finally, it discusses her as a person alone, such as what she is passionate about, how she feels about women in the society, what are her fitness tips, her favorite food, and much more. From her interview, when asked about how she sees the place of women in the society, her response is what stands for empowerment: “First change your perception that you’re inferior in some way. I don’t think that I’m a woman, I am an individual, and it doesn’t limit me from doing anything” (as cited in Tarar, 2015). This one interview touches on many aspects of this person’s life and as a public figure she displays the definition of empowerment that *India Today Woman* is trying to capture. An all-rounded woman, who has many aspects of her world and life where she is finding power and equality.

Manasi Kirloskar, another model on one of the *India Today Woman* covers that was analyzed, is a graduate in Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design and now works as Executive Director of Kirloskar Systems, Ltd. in India (Manasi Kirloskar...Block, 2013). Articles written about her discuss her talents, work ethic, job growth, personality and hobbies. They highlight her achievements that she earned herself, not because she came from a family with a higher status and running a business. The *India Today Woman* cover on which she was pictured did the same. It highlighted what this woman had achieved and continues to achieve at her young age. It also showed the ‘medium’ because she is a 21st generation woman who was brought up in India, had the opportunity to live in America for college, and moved back to India to pursue her career aspirations. In just her photo, one would not see an overly Americanized

picture of her or a very Indian view either. One just sees a woman who is reaching personal and career heights. Other women pictured on the covers of *India Today Woman* include: Padmasree Warrior, CEP of Cisco Systems; Punita Lal, Executive Marketing Director of PepsiCo India; Sangita Singh, Senior Vice President of Wipro Technologies; Ashwini Ponnappa, Badminton Player; Sangeeta Pendurkar, MD for Kellogg India; Padma Lakshmi, Celebrity Chef & Cookbook Author; and Fatima Bhutto, Author (Take four, 2011). The headline on the cover with their pictures is a highlight of that achievement and of that woman. These covers display empowerment as a woman of equal stance, who has her own achievements and who can still seem fashionable and seen be as a role model.

This is how empowerment should be depicted. A woman can be empowered by finding a normal between all spectrums: glamour and casual, American and Indian, a lot of makeup and no makeup, having an up do or leaving hair down. It is not just in how a woman presents herself but also in what she does, which is where the distinction discussed above comes into play. Models that are shown from different backgrounds and different success stories, in their own way, are empowering for a woman to see. Always seeing what trend the latest Bollywood actress is following, how a Bollywood actor is celebrating his 50th birthday, or what dress a famous fashion designer has produced doesn't empower women in all aspects. What these magazines display is not just about the outside perception but also what each woman's brain is perceiving and routing. The Elaboration Likelihood Model describes two routes facilitating a decision-making process. When a woman notices, sees, and/or reads a *Vogue India* or an *India Today Woman* cover, their brains are receiving the stimuli that will later build self-perception, attitudes, beliefs, and much more. These stimuli, in the form of messages, take either the central route or the peripheral route. Both of these routes have some influence on that person, whether that

becomes permanent or short-term is based on the route. Either way what women are seeing is becoming incorporated into their brains and later maybe their behavior whether they are processing it or not. Having headlines that speak only about one topic, such as fashion and style, is setting example messages for those who are noticing and reading these headlines. Whereas having headlines that speak about a woman in all senses is setting another set of example messages for the audience. Knowing the definition of woman empowerment and more about the Indian society, one can make a judgment call on which set of messages may be better for the empowerment and confidence of Indian women today.

With that said, the identities of empowerment displayed in both magazines are very different while the audience is more or less the same. In both magazines the majority of the audience are women between the ages of 20 and 40, middle class and up, and educated. With that in mind, women in one society are noticing, reading, adapting to, and maybe being jealous of two different definitions of empowerment. Not only that, they are also taking this information back and incorporating it into their lives as they find fit. The Social Identity Theory discusses this act of incorporating what one finds in the environment into his/her personality. It also looks at becoming part of an in-group and identifying an out-group. When these magazines depict two different definitions of empowerment to the same audience, more or less, how do the women decide which group to be a part of? Some will find their in-group in *Vogue* while others will find their in-group in *India Today Woman*, but with this split these woman's personalities are being developed and enhanced differently. Two different meanings of women empowerment are being grown which is facilitating the growing divide in adapting Indian women personalities. Women are growing their confidence with different base points which doesn't particularly help the concept of women empowerment as a totality. If a magazine is taking an empowerment initiative

or putting in writing that they are trying to speak to women in both urban and rural settings, then they need to find that medium. The medium is what will speak more than just displaying the high society and/or Americanized lifestyle.

A claim was made that fashion has the strength and power of influence to change a society. With the analysis results in front, it can now be said that magazines have the strength and influence to reach many women in a changing society - Especially fashion and women centered magazines, because they have a route to reach many women by covering topics that are appealing. This research has shown that a medium is a better route of empowerment than showing an extreme which is hard to relate to. Not only is this role of finding a medium showcased in *India Today Woman* but many other businesses and mediums are catching on to this and using it in their own products and messages. Examples of this are seen by Shades of India, which is one of India's foremost design houses, and Japore.com, an online shop for products with designs made through Indian craft. If one were to go to Shades of India's and/or Japore.com's Facebook page, right away one would see more than just items related to the latest trends, what to wear, how to look better, or related topics. There is a blend between fashion and trends and posts highlighting the culture, religions, myths, land, landmarks, and the real people of India. For one of Shades of India's newest collections, 'Cinnamon,' they did a spread using a domestic worker who Mandeep Nagi, director and chief designer at Shades of India, passed by on her way home. The model, shown below in figure 29, was unnamed by choice in the spread and coverage.



Figure-42: A mother and worker used as the model for Shades of India's 'Cinnamon' collection

The model in this spread is a great example of empowering the real women of India. Not only does this spread treat a lady who works as domestic help like a proper model, as an actress may be treated, but it also shows her personality in the feature. One can see her shyness turn into growing confidence with each picture.

Reflection for Action

Both *Vogue India* and *India Today Woman* relate their magazines to women empowerment; the difference is how these magazines depict it. While one focuses on empowering women through their looks, outfits, health, relationships, the other focuses on empowering women through their lifestyles, careers, aspirations, goals, personalities. The latter speaks to how empowerment is defined more than the former. Although *Vogue India* is trying to empower women, its priority use of Bollywood stars and the unbalance between the Indian society and the Americanized or glamorized pictures on its covers doesn't seem to match what is defined as finding power in oneself. *India Today Woman* displays a different sense of empowerment by featuring models who have achieved more than fame through entertainment, instead these are models who are known for their achievements in both their professional and personal lives. It displays the all-rounded woman, who finds equality and success. This is the definition of empowerment that should be depicted to the Indian society more than *Vogues'* representation based on previous discussion of the Indian society and what it is like for a 'normal' Indian woman today and in the past. If these magazines researched and covered the working environments of their clothing factories, they could help raise awareness on what the factory workers have to go through and deal with. *Vogue* and *India Today Woman* could work to empower the working women in clothing factories and give these women the opportunity of better working environments, safer environments, and better pay for the amount of work they are expected to produce. *Vogue* and *India Today Woman* are stating that they support and speak for women empowerment which gives them the responsibility to take ownership and assess what they are displaying and what message they are portraying. Both magazines, especially with a similar audience, should be shouting out confidence for women in all aspects of their lives.

Confidence is the key to empowerment and while each magazine is trying to depict women confidence differently, what will work in the long run is *India Today Woman's* depiction of confidence and empowerment. Chua Sock Koong, CEO of telecom major SingTel, said at an event hosted by *Business Today* where she was chief guest: "There is a crisis of confidence in women. Don't short-change yourself" (as cited in Seetharaman, 2012). This is what these magazines need to focus on if they are going to attach themselves to the empowerment tag and topic. Empower women by supporting their confidence and growth in all aspects of womanhood, not just fashion and/or relationships. Give women a role model who is personable, relatable, and actually seen on the cover for women from urban settings or rural, from high class families, middle class families, or lower class - women of all ages, cultures, religions, and locations. Find equality and empowerment in confidence and achievements.

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