Beauty, Appearance, And The Performance Of Femininity: Social Constructs And Their Impact On Body Image Of Women

Suravi Pathak
PhD Research Scholar, Department Of Sociology, Jagannath Barooah University, Assam

Prof. Jyoti Prasad Saikia
Professor, Department Of Sociology, Dibrugarh University, Assam

Abstract:
Gender is not merely a biological category, but it is socially constructed and continuously performed identity. Femininity, in particular, is constructed and sustained through the disciplined regulation and beautification of the female body. This paper examines beauty as a central element in the construction of femininity and explores its implications for women's body image formation and mental health. The female body emerges as a primary site where culturally sanctioned norms of beauty are inscribed and regulated. Beauty practices ranging from grooming and adornment to cosmetic consumption are examined as forms of aesthetic labour embedded within global consumer capitalism. The paper traces the historical growth of the beauty industry, highlighting its expansion through globalization, media explosion, and digital platforms, which intensify pressures on women to conform to narrow and often unattainable ideals of youthfulness, slenderness, and flawlessness. These ideals significantly influence women's body image formation. Body image can be understood as a multidimensional construct involving perception, evaluation, and emotional investment in one's body. Failure to meet socially prescribed beauty standards often results in body dissatisfaction, diminished self-esteem, and adverse mental health outcomes. The paper concludes that beauty operates as both a cultural expectation and an economic project, positioning women as active participants yet constrained subjects within a gendered system that equates feminine worth with physical appearance.
Keyword: *Gender, Beauty, Body Image, Body Dissatisfaction, Mental health.*

I.   Introduction:

Bodies are given very much importance in forming one's gender identity; bodies are gendered on the basis of their biological differences. The construction of gender (masculinity and femininity) is based on early decisions about sex (Mckenna, 1978). Our gender identity is assigned to us at the time of our birth, which shapes the social world around us. Understanding gender provides us with a broad framework to explore how society divides people into feminine women and masculine men. Femininity and masculinity are the traits that have been assign to women and men respectively to make them different or mainly binary opposite. Exploring gender moves our understanding beyond the biological construction of human bodies. Gender is determined by social structures; as we socialized in the world we gradually learn our gender. This is what Mead meant by the 'socially constructed self', as our gendered self is also a social construct. We learn about our gendered self by interacting with others from very beginning of our life, which can be understood as the socialization process. Ann Oakley, (Oakley, 1972) extended the ideas about socialization to try to understand how gender is learned and femininity and masculinity are socially constructed. We often argue while understanding sex and gender is that sex is a static category or an ascribed status, on the basis of which our gender identity is given. But to understand how gender shapes our social world we need to believe gender as something that we do, rather than something that we are. Dramaturgical approach of gender suggests that gender is something that we do. Everyone is an actor trying to put a performance of femininity and masculinity. This approach is derived from symbolic interactionism which emerged from Mead's work and is linked to early ethnomenthodological explanations of gender as a performance (Holmes, 2007). How one individual act or perform their gender is also influenced by the expectations and perceptions of others. Everyone while performing their gender try to give best impression of them. It has been argued that women are the epitome of actors in Goffman's sense:

---

continually constructing their selves through the perceptions of others (Tseelon, 1995). We are constantly working towards presenting ourselves as masculine and feminine in relation to others and while doing so we produce our gender mainly through interactive work. West and Zimmerman (1987) tried to put forth the idea that we need to understand the mechanism of 'doing gender' in our everyday life. When we understand gender as an activity we understand that we actually produce gender through our actions. According to west and Zimmerman, Gender is routine and recurring, in our everyday interactions we perform certain behaviours that signal our gender to others. The idea behind such performing of gender is that people feel that they must perform gender correctly to be accepted as a "normal" member of society, such situation is explained by West and Zimmerman as being "hostage" to the social expectation of "doing" gender (1987). To add more to the understanding of sex and gender, Judith Butler stated that not only gender but sex is also a socially constructed. She argues that gender is not'normal', it is a stylized repetition of acts (1990). According to Butler as soon as new parents announce it's a girl then the process of gendering begins. Hence for Butler gender is not performance, it is performative. How we act, behave and also what we do is basically performing our gender. Our actions, behaviours, and choices reflect performances of gender shaped by socially constructed distinctions between male and female, rooted in culturally defined notions of masculinity and femininity. These norms prescribe behaviours considered appropriate for one's gender identity, assigning distinct roles to men and women that align with societal expectations of masculinity or femininity. The body, in turn, becomes a crucial site for constructing and expressing this identity, where cultural ideals about gender are visibly embodied. And we best understand the process of 'gendering self' through the lived experiences of our body.

II.   Crafting The Feminine Self: Beautifying The Female Body

The women's body is undoubtedly the place to begin for any in-depth understanding of femininity as it is the surface on which are inscribed the culturally coded and socially sanctioned contexts of the perfect and desirable women (Thapan, 1995). Femininity can be understood as a set of normatively disciplined expectations imposed upon female bodies within male-dominated, patriarchal societies. These norms shape and regulate women's identities, defining acceptable expressions of femininity and exerting control over their self-conception. Femininity operates as a structured set of ideals, routinely enforced through cultural definitions of what is "normal," "natural," and expected for women, thus shaping the process of "becoming" a woman in alignment with these socially prescribed standards. Simone de Beauvoir mentioned that one is not born but rather becomes a woman (Beauvoir, 1988/1949). Process of becoming a woman is always culturally bound. Construction of femininity is a continuous, complex and often a contradictory process (Dube, 1988). In moulding the women into the ideal feminine beings considerable importance is attached to the ways she carries herself, the way she sits, stands, talks and interact with others (ibid). In addition to bodily movement, gestures, and behavior, the development of femininity places considerable emphasis on a woman's physical appearance. Across societies and cultures, significant value is ascribed to the physical appearance of women, shaping ideals of beauty that define an image of the "ideal" feminine being. Therefore among all the social and cultural contexts against which a woman's identity is continually defined, her 'bodily beauty' is a central aspect of this definition. To clarify the concept of "beauty," we referred to the Oxford Dictionary's definition, which describes beauty as a combination of qualities that delight the senses or an attractive feature or advantage. Again, OED (2006) also defined beauty as "a combination of qualities that is very pleasing to the senses or the mind". However, these definitions raise complex questions when applied to physical or bodily beauty, particularly in the case of a woman. What exactly constitutes a beautiful woman? What are the qualities that delight the senses? More critically, we must ask: who determines what is considered beautiful? As Tate (2009) argues, the judgment of beauty is not solely an individual matter but is deeply embedded in social processes. Beauty is something we are socialized to recognize and appreciate, and thus, our understanding of beauty is shaped by collective cultural norms and shared social practices. Beauty, often regarded as a central asset in a woman's life, is seen as a quality to which women are expected to aspire a standard not equivalently imposed upon men. Thus, beauty becomes a distinctly feminine attribute, central to the construction of feminine identity. Furthermore, a woman's identity as a feminine being is not static; it is an ongoing, continuous process of becoming, shaped by adherence to these aesthetic and behavioral norms. Accordingly, beauty is not only external, it is internal, too. Yet, women are misled by shaping their identities depending on the physical appearance only (Marwa G. Mohammed, 2019). But in constructing a feminine appearance integral to their gender identity women themselves actively participate through every day practices. As Butler (1988) posits, gender is not a static identity formed over time but rather a construct shaped by the stylized repetition of acts and expressed through the body's stylization. Performing femininity, therefore, involves women engaging in beauty rituals and practices that align with societal ideals of femininity. This ongoing engagement in beauty standards means that the process of "becoming" a woman, particularly regarding her physical appearance, is embedded in daily routines. Through these repetitive practices, women continuously shape and reinforce their feminine identity, embodying gender expectations in ways that render femininity an active and ongoing

production. To produce the feminine appearance women are seen engaging in certain grooming as well as beautification practices of their bodies. When we look at different culture and society, we see various society and culture defining a woman's beauty in various ways. It can be argued that beauty is a currency in every society. Researchers (Hunter, 2002; De Casanova, 2004) note that smooth skin, thick hair, and a symmetrical body is valued in most cultures. To achieve these ideals various grooming and beautification practices are practised upon the natural, naked human body. These practices hold significant cultural and societal importance across various geographies and historical periods. In fact, in most cultures, personal beauty is arguably the most important quality a woman can possess (Robinson & Ward, 1995). The whole idea of beauty is gendered and 'doing beauty' actually involves a process. These processes are essential for the creation of gendered bodies, particularly in the construction of feminine identity. Women, in particular, invest considerable time and resources into their bodily appearance, with beauty practices being universally relevant. Beautification occurs in multiple spaces, from personal grooming at home to professional treatments at beauty salons. At home, individuals engage in personal beauty work, while professional help is sought in salons. The role of physical beauty is central to the formation of gendered, especially feminine, subjectivities, as beauty regimes play a pivotal role in shaping and defining these identities. Bodily grooming and beautification, integral components of beauty practices, occupy an important space in global beauty regimes. A growing body of ethnographic research, along with representations in art and literature, supports the notion that expectations and investments in bodily appearance are increasingly relevant worldwide, extending beyond women to include men as well. The practices of bodily grooming, adornment, and beautification are not new phenomena; ethnographic accounts suggest that these practices have long been intertwined with human evolution, as evolutionary psychologists argue (Etcoff, 2000). These enduring practices highlight the deep-rooted cultural significance of beauty and bodily modification in shaping gendered identities.

III.   The Business Of Beauty: Growth Of A Beauty Industry

Beauty is a universal concern found across diverse cultures (Cunningham, 1995). But the pressure to pursue these beauty norms have just increased over time and only gotten worse (Wolf, 2011). Intensification of such pressure upon women can be understood from how the conventions of beauty are socialized as these are not innate. Grooming, beautification, and the modification of the natural, naked human body hold significant cultural and societal importance across various geographies and historical periods. Bodily grooming, beautification and maintaining a beauty care routine has been a very important part of most women. The public gaze whether male or female is always speculating how next the woman will cloth her body, or adorn it or maintain it, or manipulate it, or shape it to perfection (Thapan, 1995) .Such importance of maintaining women's bodies are result of viewing their bodies as charming and beautiful to be admired and applauded. Women often become locked into a "compulsory heterosexuality" (Rich 1981) that orients them towards men. Backman and Adams (1991) describe the myth of beauty, and illustrate how women are, from a young age, taught to prize relationships with men, whom, presumably they attract with their beauty. Whereas men's cultural value is derived from their physical and social accomplishments, women learn from an early age that they are prized primarily for their appearance, specifically their ability to approximate the feminine beauty ideal of a young, slim, toned and voluptuous body (Grogan, 2008). Hence to look beautiful and attractive maintaining a youthful appearance and prevent any visible sign of aging from the body, mainly face is given more importance. Because looking older is not only socially read as lost of physical beauty but also a myriad of denigrated if not feared physical and social characteristics (Clarke, 2017-2018). Due to our society's narrow definition of beauty that associates beauty with youthfulness, women are considered less attractive when they age.

Beauty is often understood as a physical attribute through which women gain social acceptance and personal satisfaction. In many cultures, personal beauty is arguably regarded as one of the most important qualities a woman can possess (Robinson & Ward, 1995). However, achieving this standard of beauty often comes at a cost, as both men and women are expected to invest significant amounts of money in personal care and beauty products. The global beauty industry has evolved into a powerful and pervasive force that shapes societal standards of attractiveness and defines beauty in ways that transcend individual cultures. This transformation has been fuelled by the rise of global capitalism, technological advancements, and mass media, all of which have played significant roles in promoting and reinforcing idealized beauty standards. While the desire to look attractive has always been a part of human experience, the 20th century witnessed the rapid growth of a global beauty industry, largely driven by global advertising and media. The media platforms like film, television as well as digital media became vehicles for advertisements that often depicted flawless, youthful, and slender women as the epitome of beauty. Such widespread dissemination of beauty ideals created a demand for products that promised to help women achieve these ideals. To fully grasp what being "beautiful" means in a globalized context, it is essential to examine the evolution of this industry. The origins of beauty products lie primarily in local knowledge of the scents and healing properties of plants, flowers, and herbs, whose uses were bound by age-old religious and cultural beliefs (Geoffrey Jones, 2010). But this beauty

industry has developed into a thriving global business, enduring economic and societal shifts and evolving consumer demands. Feminist writers often criticised the growth of the beauty industry for creating an obsession for physical perfection with women being the prime consumer. But we also have to accept the fact that the industry also stands out as a space where women have played significant roles as entrepreneurs and leaders. Despite being underrepresented in many other business sectors, many women have achieved remarkable success in the beauty industry (Geoffrey Jones, 2010). The globalization of the beauty industry has transformed beauty standards and practices into a worldwide phenomenon. The rapid spread of mega-brands like L'Oreal, Avon, and Uniliver etc provides compelling evidence of how quickly brands, fashions, and trends transcend national boundaries in the twenty-first century. But for an industry which looks global, it has some decidedly local characteristics. In the Indian context, the beauty industry reflects these local differences vividly. As (Jones, 2010) writes, unlike Western markets, where colour cosmetics enjoy substantial popularity, the Indian market is more focused on skincare mainly skin-lightening products dominate a significant portion of the market, driven by cultural preferences for fair skin. India's beauty sector has seen a remarkable growth in beauty sector. With a large and youthful population, India represents one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding markets in the global beauty industry. As per reports submitted by Statista Research Department on January, 2024; the ranking revenue in the beauty and personal care market is led by the US with 97.81 billion us dollar, followed by China with 67.81 us dollar, then Japan with 45.96 us dollar and in the 4th position comes India with 30.54 us dollar. Changing lifestyles and growing awareness contributed to a significant development in India's cosmetic industry. As per the Drug and Cosmetic Act 1940, "cosmetic" means any article intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled or sprayed on, or introduced into, or otherwise applied to, the human body or any part thereof for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance, and includes any article intended for use as a component of cosmetic (Shahrash & Rao, 2022). India has a great and long history concerning the development and use of cosmetic products. The earliest records of cosmetics and their use date back to the Indus Valley Civilization, circa 2500-1550 BC. Ingredients such as clarified butter and oil were used in ancient India for facial beautification and hair removal (Ibid). In India, the demand for beauty products is driven by personal grooming desires and the influence of global beauty standards, while local preferences remain significant. Focusing on the local preferences, India's unique preference for Ayurvedic and natural products has led to the growth of home-grown brands like offering herbal and organic alternatives. This provided an opportunity for domestic companies like Mama Earth, Khadi Essentials, Plum, and Soul Tree to capitalize on the burgeoning demand for locally tailored cosmetic and personal care. This transition has gained academic attention as it marks a significant departure from traditional beauty standards dictated by Western aesthetics. It is, therefore, crucial to examine whether this shift truly represents a break from existing beauty paradigms or if it is simply a reconfiguration within the framework of consumer capitalism. The whole beauty and fashion industry has attempted to maximize its reach in contemporary times through the use of social media platforms. Social media is a comprehensive term used to define the online technological tools that allow people to interact easily with the online community by exchanging data and sharing information via Internet (Kaur &Kumar, 2020). Recently social media platforms dipped its toes into marketing because nowadays almost every other person has an account or more on social media platforms and brands cannot miss this opportunity to advertise their products and services through it (ibid). Promoting business through social media is an art, which requires creativity. To get maximum benefits from social media, it is important to choose the best platform which is more likely to reach and engage the target audience (Kaur & Kumar, 2020). Social media through its visual nature and potential to reach the public is a perfect fit for beauty and wellness centers (ibid). Web based and mobile platforms such as instagram have given rise to a set of new stars or influencers who possess significant market reach, for e.g. fashion & beauty influencers or some widely followed digital content creators (Foster, 2022). These influencers play an important role in positioning products for social media users and help shape their sale and promotion on behalf of the brand partners online. Appearance and attractiveness are important for the visibility of the influencers online as it can be considered a key to produce fame and attract online audience. In such online space beauty has become a business metric, especially important for brands whose market focus lies within fashion and cosmetics (Foster, 2022). The beauty industry uses these platforms as a huge marketing base, and with a few clicks they can reach their target audience with significant impacts (Siddiqui et.al, 2022).

IV. Body Image Formation Of Women And Its Impact On Mental Health

We need to understand beauty has become increasingly instrumentalised as a form of capital, with individuals expected to invest in their physical appearance as a means of enhancing social and economic opportunities. The emphasis on aesthetic labour is one key aspect of neoliberal beauty oppression, which refers to the time, effort, and resources individuals dedicate to maintaining or conforming to societal beauty standards. Women, in particular, face heightened pressure to engage in this aesthetic labour, as beauty norms often dictate narrow and unrealistic ideals that prioritize youthfulness, thinness etc. This expectation extends beyond mere grooming practices or consumption of beauty products to encompass a range of activities, including dieting,

exercise regimens, cosmetic procedures etc. With the advent of consumer culture and industrialization, the body has increasingly become a project which is in constant need of modification and beautification, for which people spend more time and money on. Expectations that we have from our bodies have a direct impact on the formation of our body image. Body image is regarded as an important aspect of one's gendered identity, because as pointed out by Thapan (1995) body image is one of the important aspects of gender consciousness. The phrase 'body image' was first coined by an Austrian neurological and psychoanalyst Paul Schilder (Schilder, 1950). He defined body image as a person's feeling of the aesthetics and sexual attractiveness of their own body. Body image is the mental picture of one's body, an attitude about the physical self, appearance, state of health, wholeness, normal functioning and sexuality. One's experience of her body is highly subjective and is a product of their perception, thoughts, and feeling about her body size, competence, and function (Cohen et.al, 1998). As discussed by Mazzeo (1999) the multidimensional construct of body image consist of three important elements: A) Perception; which depicts one's own and also others perception regarding the body. Our self perception towards body is often influenced by the perceptions of others as well as the media. B)Attitude, this is also another important element of body image which implies people's satisfaction with their body shape, size or the way they view their bodies. From their attitudes towards their bodies both positive and negative body image is formed. C) Preoccupation is the third element of body image as given by Mazzeo (1999). It deals with importance placed on physical appearance and strength of these beliefs. Excessive preoccupation might lead to negative body image. Positive body image formed when their expectations meet the societal standard of desirable and attractive body. Again while fails to meet those standards result in formation of a negative body image leads ultimately to body dissatisfaction. Body displeasure is a trouble in body image or in the way one perceives his/her body mass or figure and has possibility to influence mental health and value of life. Body image is the 'mental image' of his/her body and almost everyone has a body image. It is how we see our-self in mirror and picture of our-self in our mind. We judge this image as good or bad by comparing it with the standard of 'ideal body image' set by society, family & friends and their culture. This judgment is called 'body esteem'. Individual with positive body image tend to have higher body esteem in comparison to those with less positive body image. According to certain studies it is showed that women's dissatisfaction with their bodies is higher than men. The reason behind this is the society placing higher value on women's physical appearance and attractiveness than their counterpart. And also evaluate their worth primarily on the basis of their looks. Body dissatisfaction also linked too many adverse psychological consequences including disordered eating-Anorexia Nervosa, depression, and feeling of anxiety, hampering sexual functioning, and poor self esteem and diminished quality of life (Cash T. F., 2004). Hence negative body image formation is closely associated with loosing self confidence and low self esteem. Contemporary media, social networking sites etc also plays an important role shaping people's perception towards their bodies. Grogan (2007) pointed out some pivotal factors that influence the process of their body image formation. Body image can be both positive and negative. Negative body image is the result of the negative evaluation of one's own body or by others which often leads to body dissatisfaction. People feel dissatisfied with their bodies mainly their physical appearances when failed to meet the societal standards of ideal beauty and body. Grogan (2007) further discusses about the slim body ideal obsession of the western society, where women's bodies are expected to be shapely and slim. Slenderness is generally associated with happiness, success, youthfulness and social acceptability. Association of beautiful with goodness and also assign more favourable personality traits and life outcomes to those perceived as attractive. And negative stereotyping attached to the body which is not considered attractive. Mainly overweight people are often stigmatized. With the emergence of fashion beauty complex 'slenderness' has become the body ideal, other body modification processes like tattooing and body piercing has also become wide spread. According to certain studies it is showed that women's dissatisfaction with their bodies is higher than men. The reason behind this is the society placing higher value on women's physical appearance and attractiveness than their counterpart. We all have witnessed that various trends in fashion, beauty ideals are emerging every now and then; due to which the followers or viewers of such consistently want to enhance and shape their bodies to perfection. In this process they end up being dissatisfied with their own physique. Body dissatisfaction often linked with many adverse psychological consequences including disordered eating, Anorexia Nervosa, depression, feeling of anxiety, hampering sexual functioning and poor self esteem and diminished quality of life (Cash T. F., 2004). Negative body image formation is closely associated with loosing self esteem and self confidence which hampers a person's psychological well being. In contemporary times a wide range of mental health difficulties arises out of poor body image. Body image concerns are highly present in almost all societies around the globe because of a strong pressure to pursue appearance ideals. Hence the relationship between body image issues and poor mental health needs to be viewed from academic lenses. The sociology of the body has become an established discipline in the 1990s, with Bryan Turner coining the term 'somatic society' to describe the new-found importance of the body in contemporary sociology (Grogan, 2008).Hence, the body images concerns also needs to be viewed from a critical feminist lens because of the gendered nature of body ideals. Women are socialized to be invested in achieving an unrealistically slender and highly groomed

appearance which diverts energies and resources away from other activities and continues to perpetuate systems in which women's social worth is indexed to their appearance (Widdows, 2018). To understand body dissatisfaction among woman we need to understand their experience of bodies in everyday life. Body image concerns are present across the globe due to strong pressures to pursue appearance ideals. Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping people's perceptions of beauty and body image, particularly among women. Mainstream media content, including advertisements and editorial images of fashion, tends to reinforce a narrow set of ideals surrounding beauty and appearance (Bauman, 2008). A slender or fit physique, a pore-less facial complexion, and whiteness or light skin are often privileged in press pages and across campaign images reinforcing the importance of these features as markers of beauty (Laan & Kuipers, 2016). And other women who do not match these ideals are rendered invisible. It is important to understand the bodies celebrated by these images and videos online display a kind of social privilege mostly among younger women. Because it is true that in the social media platforms like instagram and face book conventionally beautiful and hegemonically attractive users are rewarded with visible metrics of popularity and public praise including likes and comments (Banet-Weiser, 2015; Chen & Kanai, 2021). Promotion of such unrealistic beauty standards has a detrimental effect upon young women's body image formation and mental health. Negative body image has a complicated relationship with mental health and can result from a number of things, such as cultural ideals of beauty, individual experiences, and psychological factors (Bajwa & Chandola, 2023). Although these concerns may vary with cultural context, their prevalence and association with poor mental and physical health is global (Rodgers, 2022). Given these high rates and the negative effects of body image concerns, it is important to increase our efforts to prevent and decrease them across the globe.

V. Conclusion

Physical beauty holds a unique place in the lives of women; it has also been accorded immense value by every society and culture. By taking into consideration the role beauty plays in a woman's lives it can be said that beauty is an important element in constructing femininity. This process of becoming a feminine being women are expected to perform modifications on their natural bodies as well as invest a significant amount of time as well as resource in it. It is not that there are certain set of restrictions and expectations that has been imposed upon women's bodies. But they also actively participate in this process of beautification of their bodies. Because as stated by Bartky, (Bartky, 1988) femininity as spectacle is something in which virtually every woman is required to participate. Hence they play an active role in performing their given femininity. One of the important reasons of performing beautification practices is viewing their bodies as charming and beautiful to be admired and applauded. To understand the construction of womanhood it is important to focus on the experiences of women of their bodies. Appearance and attractiveness of woman often used as an assessment of their body image. There are various factors interwoven together to form the body image of woman. Much importance is placed on her body shape, size, weight, height etc. When people's bodies do not meet the ideal images it creates dissatisfaction and loss of confidence in their bodies. Such loss of confidence in one's own body is also a major cause of distorted body image formation. Dissatisfaction with one's own body often makes people to undertake extreme dieting and exercise regime. Such excess focus on dieting leads to even disordered eating habits. Individuals with distorted body image have a tendency to associate attractiveness and physical appearance with achievements and competence (Kostecka, Kordynska, Murawiec, & Kucharska, 2019). Hence, disturbed body image is one of the prevalent problems of our society. To understand thoroughly about the body image formation process women's lived experiences of the body is also important to take into account; as the body image is created through both positive and negative experiences. The presentation of their bodily self and appearance become more important than the self. The young women are both product and producer of their own identity. In this globalised era women's attractiveness has become a commodity. The appearance-obsessed, image-obsessed and self-obsessed culture is nothing but product of late consumer capitalism, which aim to sell things based on other people's insecurities regarding their bodies. Promotion of such unrealistic beauty standards has a detrimental effect upon young women's body image formation and mental health. Now that individuals have constant access to social media platform that exposes more and more body perfected images, including those of people's peers which led to an even more heightened body anxieties among people (Fardouly, 2015). The new age digital era has made the pursuit of beauty and maintenance of it necessary for proving and gaining social acceptability. These ideals were not just externally exposed but further internalized and sustained by women themselves through act of self policing and self regulation.

References

[1].   Backman, C. W., & Adams, M. (1991). Social Psychology Of Identity And Self-Concept. In A. M. Messick & J. F. Kihlstrom (Eds.), Social Psychology: A General Reader. Mcgraw-Hill.
[2].   Banet-Weiser, S. (2015). Empowered: Popular Feminism And Popular Misogyny. Duke University Press.
[3].   Bartky, S. L. (1988). Foucault, Femininity, And The Modernization Of Patriarchal Power. In I. Diamond & L. Quinby (Eds.), Feminism And Foucault: Reflections On Resistance (Pp. 61–86). Northeastern University Press.

[4]. Bauman, Z. (2008). The Art Of Life. Polity Press.
[5]. Beauvoir, S. De. (1988). The Second Sex (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original Work Published 1949)
[6]. Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts And Gender Constitution: An Essay In Phenomenology And Feminist Theory. Theatre Journal, 40(4), 519–531.
[7]. Butler, J. (1990). Gender Trouble: Feminism And The Subversion Of Identity. Routledge.
[8]. Cash, T. F. (2004). Body Image: Past, Present, And Future. Body Image, 1(1), 1–5.
[9]. Chen, J., & Kanai, A. (2021). "You've Got This": Young Women, Digital Intimacy And The Performance Of Mental Health On Instagram. Media, Culture & Society, 43(2), 219–236.
[10]. Clarke, L. H. (2017). Facing Age: Women Growing Older In Anti-Aging Culture. Canadian Review Of Sociology, 54(1), 84–103.
[11]. Cohen, R., Fardouly, J., Newton-John, T., & Slater, A. (1998). Body Image And Mental Health: Current Issues And Perspectives. Journal Of Psychosomatic Research, 44(3), 351–356.
[12]. Cunningham, M. R. (1995). Biology And Beauty: Evolutionary And Sociocultural Perspectives. In J. H. Barkow, L. Cosmides, & J. Tooby (Eds.), The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology And The Generation Of Culture (Pp. 392–423). Oxford University Press.
[13]. De Casanova, E. M. (2004). No Ugly Women: Concepts Of Race And Beauty Among Adolescent Women In Ecuador. Gender & Society, 18(3), 287–308.
[14]. Dube, L. (1988). On The Construction Of Gender: Hindu Girls In Patrilineal India. Economic And Political Weekly, 23(18), WS11–WS19.
[15]. Etcoff, N. (2000). Survival Of The Prettiest: The Science Of Beauty. Anchor Books.
[16]. Fardouly, J. (2015). Social Comparisons On Social Media: The Impact Of Facebook On Young Women's Body Image Concerns And Mood. Body Image, 13, 38–45.
[17]. Foster, E. (2022). The Influencer Industry: The Quest For Authenticity On Social Media. Journal Of Consumer Culture, 22(1), 79–94.
[18]. Jones, G. (2010). Beauty Imagined: A History Of The Global Beauty Industry. Oxford University Press.
[19]. Grogan, S. (2007). Body Image: Understanding Body Dissatisfaction In Men, Women And Children (2nd Ed.). Routledge.
[20]. Grogan, S. (2008). Feminist Perspectives On Body Image. In T. F. Cash & L. Smolak (Eds.), Body Image: A Handbook Of Science, Practice, And Prevention. Guilford Press.
[21]. Holmes, M. (2007). What Is Gender? Sociological Approaches. Sage.
[22]. Hunter, M. L. (2002). "If You're Light You're Alright": Light Skin Color As Social Capital For Women Of Color. Gender & Society, 16(2), 175–193.
[23]. Kaur, S., & Kumar, A. (2020). Role Of Social Media Marketing In Beauty And Wellness Industry. Journal Of Content, Community & Communication, 12(6), 123–133.
[24]. Kostecka, B., Kordynska, A., Murawiec, S., & Kucharska, K. (2019). Body Image And Its Impact On Mental Health. Psychiatria Polska, 53(1), 31–44.
[25]. Laan, E., & Kuipers, G. (2016). Beauty Work And Body Image In Western Media. European Journal Of Cultural Studies, 19(6), 601–617.
[26]. Marwa, G. M. (2019). Female Beauty And Identity In Contemporary Culture. Journal Of Feminist Studies, 15(2), 134–147.
[27]. Mazzeo, S. E. (1999). Development And Preliminary Validation Of The Eating Disorders Examination Questionnaire. International Journal Of Eating Disorders, 25(3), 279–285.
[28]. Mckenna, W. (1978). Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach. Sage.
[29]. Oakley, A. (1972). Sex, Gender And Society. Temple Smith.
[30]. Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory Heterosexuality And Lesbian Existence. Signs, 5(4), 631–660.
[31]. Robinson, T. N., & Ward, J. V. (1995). African American Adolescents And Skin Color. Journal Of Black Psychology, 21(3), 256–274.
[32]. Rodgers, R. (2022). Body Image And Mental Health In The Digital Age. Current Psychiatry Reports, 24, 203–212.
[33]. Schilder, P. (1950). The Image And Appearance Of The Human Body. International Universities Press.
[34]. Shahrash, A., & Rao, R. (2022). Regulatory Framework For Cosmetic Products In India. International Journal Of Pharmaceutical Sciences Review And Research, 74(2), 80–85.
[35]. Siddiqui, S., Ameen, M., & Khan, I. (2022). Social Media Marketing Strategies And Their Impact On Beauty Industry. International Journal Of Digital Marketing, 7(3), 56–66.
[36]. Tate, S. A. (2009). Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization And Politics. Ashgate.
[37]. Thapan, M. (1995). Embodiment: Essays On Gender And Identity. Oxford University Press.
[38]. Tseëlon, E. (1995). The Masque Of Femininity: The Presentation Of Woman In Everyday Life. Sage.
[39]. West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing Gender. Gender & Society, 1(2), 125–151.
[40]. Widdows, H. (2018). Perfect Me: Beauty As An Ethical Ideal. Princeton University Press.