advertising rule over the life of the viewers? People nowadays are very busy but to sit in front of a television set and be tortured by the long commercial breaks is the last thing one wants to experience. Sometimes the viewer forgets what he or she was watching before the break. Many go to a different channel when there is commercial break during, a programme.

Many these days call "commercial break" as "programme break", for, the break itself is long enough to be a programme. If one wants to watch something on TV one has to bear with the commercial pop ups. Along side the Bangladeshi TV channels, there are also quite a number of foreign channels one can surf from. So why waste precious time just to watch commercials? One might as well stand beside a road and watch commercials on the roadside television screens.

Every Eid festivals, we watch numerous dramas and musical programmes with utmost eagerness. All the TV channels try to produce quality programmes and there is steep competition among each other in order to capture viewers. The effort on their part is commendable no doubt. However, recently a number of eminent citizens complained in a vernacular daily about these commercials, saying that they were all irked to the point of exhaustion by the commercial breaks and by the length of the breaks.

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If we turn out attention to the media world more horrifying picture can be seen: women are severely under-represented in the real work of the media.

According to a report by Dr I Arul Aram who is a Visiting Research Scholar at the London School of Economics, women constitute 52 per cent of the world's population yet make up only 21 per cent of people featured in the news. Women are most underrepresented in radio where they are only 17 per cent of news subjects compared with 22 per cent on television and 21 per cent in newspapers.

Dr Aram also says that news is still mainly reported and presented by men the only exception is television the report says and it's because young women are considered more presentable from male point of view (Freud is right again). Female news presenters present 57 per cent of the television news. Women do only 27 per cent of the newspaper reporting.

Is the picture any different than that in Bangladesh?

It's really shocking that after a decade after the fourth world conference on women, while the UN Deputy-Secretary General Louise Fréchette is saying that international community is finally comprehending that empowering women and girls around the globe is the most effective tool for a country's development at the opening of 50th session of United Nations commission on status of women (26 Feb 2006) women in Bangladesh are being viewed as mere commodities on the television screen.