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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the thesis entitled, _Emotional Labour In 21st Century: A Sociological Study Of Fashion Models In Assam_ submitted by me towards the partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in _Sociology_ of Jadavpur University, is based upon my own original work and there is no plagiarism. This is also to certify that the work has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree/diploma of the same Institution where the work is carried out, or to any other Institution. A paper out of this dissertation has also been presented by me at a seminar/conference at _BBAU Lucknow and ASCDS Dec 2017_ thereby fulfilling the criteria for submission, as per the M.Phil Regulation (2017) of Jadavpur University.

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On the basis of academic merit and satisfying all the criteria as declared above, the dissertation work of _Daisy Bhattacharjee_ entitled _Emotional Labour in 21st century: A Sociological Study of Fashion Models in Assam_ is now ready for submission towards the partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in _Sociology_ of Jadavpur University.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Aesthetic labour involves certain dispositions in the form of embodied capacities and attributes that is required to be possessed by the workers in the interactive service work. The employers develop and commodify these dispositions through recruiting, selecting, training the workers and transforming them into certain skills which are used to produce service encounter that appeals to the customers (Warhurst et al., 2000). Aesthetic labour helps to understand how the different modes of worker embodiment are produced by organization in different ways in today's service economy.

Emotional labour deals with performances through interactions, developing and using impression management skills by the employees. The employees make an effort to manage their emotions in an organizational setting. Such jobs include face-to-face interactions or voice-to-voice contact, and allow the employer to exercise a degree of power over the activities of employees by surveillance and training (Hochschild, 1983). The employers create certain course of action to ensure that gestures, smiles, empathy are authentically produced. They also exercise control over the workers' appearances, their behavior, expressions and words. From self-presentations and physical endeavors to workers' feelings, demeanor and moods, everything is directed.

The aesthetic components of labour in service industry are again led by gender and sexuality like McDowell highlighted that one's sexuality, body and gender performance is a necessary part of the work, indicating the connection between aesthetic and gendered natured of work (1995). Women in particular are considered more likely to be a part of emotional labour force than men. Women are evaluated as carers like how nurses are mostly women and women by default are care-givers in a family. They are often asked to manage their emotions, like their aggression or anger that is not considered appropriate for her gender.

1.1.1 Characteristics of Fashion Modeling and Study Context

'Looking good' and 'sounding right' are primary agendas of interactive service industry where the employees have to more or less interact with the clients or customers directly. Similarly in fashion modeling as a profession, the fashion models have to keep appeasing their employers by upholding the required demands but unlike some other service job, here they are mostly freelance workers with temporary employment and not tied to one employer or organization. Therefore they have to do it mostly by themselves without any proper organizational setting to instruct them. They are provided with grooming lessons and many models these days do take up fashion modeling courses in fashion institutes to learn the techniques to fit into the glamour industry. But they have to individually generate proper attributes and skills to get selected and sustain in the fashion industry by adhering to the given requirements and adapting to the fluctuating fashion trends. The models are expected to possess certain 'embodied' dispositions on their entry into employment and fit into the appearance standards set by their employers. The models are demanded to work on their bodies as aesthetic laborers and self-discipline it to produce appearances in ways that would be appealing to their employers and clients. Fashion modeling sheds light into how discipline does operate in a commercial setting (Mears, 2008). Many join the industry from the age of 15-16, participating initially in the local beauty pageants. They have to maintain their bodily aesthetics to meet the demands of the industry which does involve the reproduction of the body and self.

Fashion models are considered cultural icons as they are symbolic carriers of beauty ideals (Brenner and Cunningham, 1992; Mears, 2011), while being critiqued at the same time. Their bodies are considered as subjects of critical gazes scrutinizing and judging them at every step. They are reduced to mere physical surfaces which can be improved and put to use to display products. Their bodies, chest-hips-waist in common, are constantly measured to meet the beauty standards and achieve the desired 'look'. The way we look has attained more and more importance with several brands endorsing fairness and beauty enhancing products, and how they relate it to attainment of success. Fashion models go through several restrictions and risks to maintain the ideals of a 'perfect' body image and construct a beautiful appearance and thereby a beautiful self. For instance Venezuela, a country that is obsessed with winning international beauty pageants has several 'beauty factories' where girls from a tender age of 10-12 get cosmetic surgery, nose job, implants and so on under the watchful eyes of their parents preparing

them to become 'beauty queens'[1].India also has the fourth highest number of cosmetic surgeries in the world and over 2,000 cosmetic surgeons. Young girls and women struggle with issues of body image. Huge numbers of small beauty pageants are held in this country every year and millions of young dreams hang onto these (Bhattacharya, 2018).

Fashion models ultimately falls into the role of 'aesthetic objects on display' for the industry and the rest of the world. The media ascribe them with positive and negative attributes- beautiful and glamorous on one hand, artificial and obsessed on another. They find themselves in a profession which provides them with less to no respect from the outsiders as they are judged with certain preconceived notions and stereotypical ideas the society created for them. Being on the lower side of the employment structure in the fashion industry, they find themselves among the powerless section with others exercising control over them on what and how to do things. The models who appear at the centre of the glamour industry and are the front faces of advertisements, fashion events and catalogues; are often marginal, without a voice and rarely are the ones 'calling the shots' (Bhattacharya, 2018).

Service interactions can usefully be divided into two types: relationships and encounters. In fashion modeling, the models are required to maintain relationships with the industry people and manage encounters with them and the outsiders. Unlike the service workers who use their emotional labour to structure their relationships with employers and customers, the models do not necessarily interact with the buyers/public directly. They regulate their emotions to manage interactions with the influential industry runners as their employment and work profiles depend on being on their good side. By being a part of the disadvantaged section with no power on their hands, fashion models use their emotional labour to handle criticisms and scrutiny. Emotional labour helps them to find value in a job which is often considered undignified by societal standards. The job is based on interactive services but the working of the profession is quite different than the other service jobs, and involves physical labour, aesthetic labour and emotional labour on the part of a fashion model's work.

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[1]www.theguardian.com/world/2011/sep/12/venezuelans-obsessed-with-beauty

1.1.2 Fashion Industry in Assam

In the contemporary world, fashion industry has boomed into a giant industry with the growth of demand for textiles and clothing in the domestic and international markets. According to Forbes India, the global consumer is estimated to spend around US$1.5 trillion on fashion in 2015[2]. The largest segment being the womenswear contributes around 48% of the overall industry value in 2016, which is followed by menswear (31.4%) and children wear (11.4%). Asia Pacific and Western Europe are leading markets contributing 36.6% and 22.8% respectively in 2016[3].Indian fashion industry is estimated to be worth INR 1000 crores, while the market size is approximated to be INR 20,000 crores. According to a report by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India, the fashion market of India was estimated to cross $18 billion in 2016 with heightened brand awareness and growing purchasing power in smaller cities[4].The domestic textile industry contributes about 14% to India's industrial production, 5% to the GDP and 27% to the country's foreign exchange inflows. Textile and apparel industry is a critical contributor to the Indian economy, directly employing about 51 million people and indirectly employing about 68 million people[5].

Being one of the largest exporters of cotton and silk, Indian textile Industry varies from hand-spun to hand-woven textile sectors, producing varied items suitable for different market sections within the territory and across the world. In India, Assam is one of the leading raw silk producing states, ranking 3rd in the country. Sericulture in Assam comprises of four varieties of silkworm viz eri, muga, mulberry (pat) and oak tassar. Assam leads in production of Vanya silk (eri, muga and tassar), contributing over 80% of muga silk and over 60% of eri silk produced in the country[6].Sualkuchi, the weaving village in Assam is known as the Manchester of the East and is world renowned for Assam silk. Assamese mekhela-chador made of silk (eri, muga and pat) isone of the major cultural representations of Assamese society.

Fashion hub is not only restricted to metro cities but due to various factors like brand awareness, new fashion trends, growing consumer class, increasing interest in designer wear, urbanization and globalization it has spread over several places in nooks and corners of the country. North-

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[24] www.indianmirror.com/indian-industries/fashion.html
[36] www. advantageassam.com/handloom-and-textile-and-handicrafts

[5] Brief report on the Textile Industry in India. Corporate Catalyst (India) Pvt LTD. July 2016.

east India was under-represented in Indian fashion scene for a considerable period of time in the past but over the years the fashion industry in the region has seen drastic changes. There are some of the finest designers from North East India who have come up and promoted the ethnic fashion of the region, and excelled in the national and international scene.

Assam is currently sprawling with significant achievements of the fashion industry which initially started with local and regional events but over the last decade has reached the national and international levels. From Assam, many designers have represented the ethnic textiles and fashion in larger platforms. To name a few Anuradha Kuli presented her handloom clothing line in Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) and has Bollywood celebrities as clients, Sanjukta Dutta presented her designs with Bollywood celebrity showstoppers in LFW to dressing up top celebrities in Cannes film festival, Payal Oshan Goswami showcased her designs in North East Festival and Rongali festival hosted in the country's capital; and many other designers embarking on this progressive journey.

As the life style of people has changed with the change of time, this change has also influenced the dress materials, style of wearing, the fashion choices of Assamese society (Saikia, 2011). Western dresses have influenced the minds of the people of Assam, which created an impact on the traditional wear as well making way for innovative fusion of ethnic textiles and handlooms with the western-wear designs. Kunal Kaushik, a prolific fashion designer from Assam took Assamese handloom and textiles and presented in varied versions of western wear in Tiffanys Fashion Week Paris in 2017.

The fashion industry here just like any other place is not just confined to fashion designing but along with it there is fashion photography, fashion modeling, make-up artists, fashion editorial, fashion choreographers, groomers, stylists, fashion blogging to mention a few. There has been advancement in fashion industry in the state with several fashion events organized yearly such as Miss North East Diva pageant, Miss Luit beauty pageant, Mega Miss North-East, Malestorm and other fashion weeks like the East India Fashion Week, North East Fashion Week and so on thereby giving platforms to the aspiring models. Eclectic Model Hunt organized by the Eclectic magazine from North East region and Miss Luit beauty pageant (premiered in 2001) were few of the earliest beauty pageants organized in Assam. Victoria Secret model and actress named Monikangana Dutta from Assam who made a mark on national and international level started

from a pageant show in the state itself. Another famous model Dipannita Sharma who made her name on the national fashion scene during Miss India 1998 contest when she got selected in the final five and later joined Bollywood film industry started her journey from Assam. But the struggle of a fashion model who embark on their journey from North-eastern region has seen a remarkable change as there are conveniently easier opportunities and platforms for them to enter the field in the present times. There are several institutes in Guwahati city alone with numerous students on rise from Assam and other North-eastern states who want to study fashion designing, do courses in modeling, take fashion photography lessons etc. Also several model hunt auditions and go-sees have started to take place in the capital city of Assam organized by big national/international brand names. Like for instance Lakme Fashion Week partnered with Northeast India Fashion and Design Council (FNDC) in 2016 and organized modeling auditions to scour fresh faces from North East India to walk in LFW, IMG Reliance in collaboration with the UN and the British Council searched for fresh talent in designing and modeling from the region and hosted the Made in Assam talent show at Guwahati city in 2016.Several new faces from the region are acquiring better chances by moving to big metro cities and getting involved in high-end modeling contracts with big agencies.

1.2 Literature Review

This section reviews the existing literature work that provides an insight into several aspects of working as fashion models, focusing on 1) significance of fashion models' bodies and emotions, 2) disciplining of bodies and application of emotional labour, 3) gender discrepancies in fashion modeling.

1.2.1Aesthetic Labour in the context of Fashion Modeling

Witz, Warhurst and Nickson (2003) analyzed that aesthetic labour is a prominent element in service industry where the body plays a vital role. The style of flesh, the performance and the staged work of body leading to embodied self needs to be focused on. As per them, aesthetic labour goes beyond emotional labour as there are certain embodied dispositions which the employers demand from the employees leading to commodification of aesthetics as sense of appearance, skills, style of flesh; everything gets commodified via recruitment, or training (Warhurst et al, 2000). As fashion models are in style market, where the body is given

importance and placed in the primary focus, they perform aesthetic labour which can be defined as mobilization and commodification of embodied dispositions created leading to the desired 'look' for which the body must be self-disciplined. Their work becomes commodified, as they become subjects and objects in this regard. Witz et al (2003) tried to understand the process of how aesthetic labour is created or staged and becomes an embodied self, and an aesthetic labourer might be seen as an animate component as the employers command them on how to present themselves. Entwistle and Wissinger accentuate that aesthetic labour entails on-going production of the body/self and is not merely a specious performance at work (2006). The withstanding nature of this labour is seen by the level of body maintenance that is required to be done by the fashion models and as freelance aesthetic laborers, they cannot separate from their product which forms their entire embodied self.

1.2.2 Disciplining the body: Theoretical perspective

Foucault in his work Discipline and Punish (1977) theorizes that the docile body is a pliable object on which disciplinary action can be taken and power can be organized. Body is considered as an object whose postures; movements are shaped by discursive forces and can be traced throughout history how powers are organized on it. For the body to be disciplined, it needs to accept powers to work on it. Foucault addresses the docile body as something that is willing to be shaped, capable to be manipulated and trained. Shilling devised the concept of 'body projects' (2003) which refers to how people relate to their bodies in post-modern times. The modern world has seen individuals who view their body as an entity open to recreation and remodeling in relation to the manufacturing of their self-identity. Several institutions such as prisons, schools and military provide settings for bodies to be disciplined. The contemporary culture is a system of supervision operated through institutions like hospitals, universities, work places and most notably- prison system.

Bodies are positioned as susceptible for disciplinary forces to act on them. Foucault explains this arrangement as 'mechanics of power'- how one can have a hold over other bodies so that the latter can operate as per the demands of the former with required accuracy, speed and efficiency. Mears talks about the unpredictable and uncertain 'look' as fashion trends fluctuate and fashion models measure themselves against the floating norms of fashion that give way to the requirements of the clients (2008, 2011). The fashion models live their lives under constant

scrutiny and endure judgments and criticisms along the way and in turn act as epitome of beauty for others. Foucault included several body processes as applications of power. He explicates that the embodied exercise of power lies in the activity of the process rather than the outcome. The modality of control through which discipline works refers to consistent subtle coercion and uninterrupted supervision of processes of activity. Foucault argues that body becomes the target of power leading to being treated individually as an object of control and ultimately leads to its commodification. The new power over life is attained through discipline of body where body can be treated as being productive and economically useful. Fashion models are often treated as mannequins whose bodies are used to display clothing, accessories or other products in exchange for a wage.

Following Foucault's line of thought, Bordo highlights in her work 'Unbearable Weight' (1993) how the female body is culturally restrained via dietary practices and how conveniently it can be altered via surgery. Cosmetic surgery- a radical body modification process which involves various procedures like liposuction, breast augmentation, botox injections, nose job etc whose main job is to provide a younger body and youthful look (Shilling, 2003). Bordo explores the ideologies of the female body and untangles the obsessive fascination women have with food, desires and control; the effects it has on their lives and the constant pressure on them bestowed by the society that glorifies the cultural ideal of slenderness. Mears highlights the actions on how the female models have to self-discipline themselves as per the floating norms, mostly skinny is the body structure they are expected to have, and also be fluid enough to change themselves in accordance to the fluctuating norms (2011). The bodies of fashion models are expected to be disciplined and flexible in ways that it adheres to the changing uncertain demands and uphold the body ideal for others. They are often fixated with the idea of slimness as demanded in their line of work and persist self-disciplinary mechanisms of maintaining a strict diet, exercising etc which is not simply restricted to their workplace but they carry it forward to their personal space.

Women's relationship with their bodies shows how culture shapes gender performances and it inevitably works because of the effects of the power of 'the perception of being attractive' has on us. Bordo explicates how society through cultural images regulates women and the daily activities of diet, dressing, cosmetics etc get normalized in everyday life. The body is docile, submissive and ready to be trained and shaped to be a better version by fitting into the ideal. The

current obsession of modern woman with the ideal of 'hourglass figure' and 'hyper-slenderness' depicts how bodies conveniently succumb to cultural ideals placed upon them (1993) and fashion models being the 'cultural icons' endorse it. They are both victims and perpetrators of such cultural ideology.

Featherstone (2010) argues that the preoccupation with the reformation of the body is not just restricted to the surface appearance but goes beyond it. An individual's inner personality is believed to shine through his/her outward appearance, thereby linking beauty with inner morality. He asserts how the enhancement and moderation of the body through different technologies is linked with the construction of beautiful appearance which would lead to a creation of beautiful self. Body work is believed to transform the self by upgrading it and opening up positive possibilities which comes with the new body. The consumer culture promotes the idea that being fat or not bothering about how one looks is considered as having a faulty self. It is presumed that people with enhanced appearances enjoy their bodies as they get more compatible with their actual selves. Shilling has argued that in conditions of 'high' modernity, the body is often viewed as a project to be worked upon and attained as a crucial part of self-identity (2003). Foucault in The Care of the Self (1990) asserts that the ultimate aim of the practices of self belongs to the ethos of control. The proper care of the self necessitate self-governance of the body following the codes of conduct given by the society. These internalized codes and rules have been well-embedded in us so without any sort of reminders we groom ourselves regularly- wash ourselves daily, shave our beard or cut our nails and hair, dress properly so to keep our bodies in ways that won't be objectionable to others. These daily rituals of how we attend to our bodies, what food we eat, way of dressing- is internalized by us through the medium of culture.

Fashion models are often taught by the groomers and stylists on how to create the 'look' not just by reforming the body and face but along with that are given training to maintain proper postures, movements and gestures of the body, the way they walk, talk, stand and maintain an attitude. The transformation includes an involvement of outer and inner modifications which would enhance the person completely and will have the capacity to turn heads. The goal is to have the power to affect others through enhancement of appearance along with the proper

presentation of style. The body in movement should be affective to get noticed, not only to be looked at but has the potential in social spaces and urban milieu.

In the post modern era, the idea of maintaining one's body is embedded into the idea of keeping a healthy body which is again related to one's self-worth. Shilling notes that the self-improvement process promotes not just body transformation but lifestyle transformation as well (2003). The dieting practices, maintenance of body and fitness regimes promote self-improvement ideology and motivate 'healthy' lifestyle. The celebrities, fashion models not just exemplify a beautiful body but also encourage a better lifestyle, making it a compelling choice and normalizing self-disciplinary mechanisms as a pursuit towards a healthier well-being.

1.2.3 Hochschild's Theory of Emotional Labour

Hochschild developed her concept of 'emotional labour' as inspired from Mills and Goffman's ideas in her book 'The Managed Heart' (1983). Witz et al used Goffman to understand how the aesthetic labour is produced or staged. Hochschild was critical of Goffman for focusing mainly on the surface- outer impressions, without considering the feelingful self. She goes beyond his ideas and incorporates the management of feeling done by the employees in a corporate setting to fulfill the organizational needs. The instant emotions that individuals feel get impaired as and when personal emotions start to get socially engineered and are transformed into emotional labour to be sold in exchange for a wage. This management of emotions that is done internally is not elaborated by Goffman as he focused more on the presentation of self rather than the manipulation and administration of feelings.

Hochschild aimed to explore emotional labour- what it is, how individuals manage emotions, what are the expenses and returns associated with management of those emotions at work and in personal life. Hochschild defined emotional labour as the management of feelings and emotions to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display and its commodification as labour power (1983). Emotional labour alludes to workers to put a disguise of emotions which is expected from them to meet the organizational demands of the employers or the clients. Hochschild coined the terms 'feeling rules' and 'display rules' to describe the emotions prescribed as per organizational needs. 'Feeling rules' refers to the rules which guide an individual's social actions as associated with his/her normative role expectations in private and public life (1979, 1983). 'Display rules' implies to the role expectations based on norms set by the organization of how an

individual should behave in their work-related situations (Rafaeli & Sutton: 1989, Ashforth & Humphrey: 1993). The employees are required to follow the societal, occupational and organizational norms while continuing their service interactions. The fashion models for instance, are required to maintain their interactions with clients and stay focused on stage or in front of the camera by being calm and portraying a self regardless of what their actual feelings are at the time. There is a pressure on the workers from the employers to display specific feelings while interacting with the people and that is done through the mechanisms of surface acting or deep acting.

1.2.3.1 Surface Acting and Deep Acting

Hochschild discusses the concepts of 'surface acting' and 'deep acting' to help understand how the workers in the post-industrial service industry manage their feelings in their place of work. In surface acting, emotions are involved which are not actually felt by the workers. Surface acting implies to the pretention of feelings which the workers do as they feel something inside and express something else on the outside. On the other hand, deep acting deals with a specific emotion which an individual tries to feel and think in their mind. In deep acting, a feeling or emotional response is self-induced and that feeling provides the basis of 'acting' or impression management. It makes the workers change their feelings inwardly rather than just doing it on the outside like surface acting.

Hochschild proposed two dimensions of emotional labour namely 'passive deep acting' and 'active deep acting' (1983). While the former occurs when the employees handle their emotions automatically rather than deliberately adhere to the organizational expected feelings, the latter refers to the situation when the employees consciously alter their feelings to fit with the organizational display rules. Hochschild noticed that different occupations require different levels of surface acting and deep acting. The fashion models initially may use active deep acting in a conscious effort to alter their emotions to please their employers and deal with situations. They may also internalize deep acting over time and show signs of passive deep acting as the management of emotions happens automatically without a conscious effort. The concepts of surface acting and deep acting by Hochschild were utilized in this thesis to examine the emotional labour used by fashion models.

Hochschild's work involved qualitative data from the individuals who worked as flight attendants and debt collectors. From her findings she argues that emotional labour may have negative impact on the well-being of the workers.

1.2.3.2 Emotional Dissonance and Inauthenticity of Self

Hochschild suggested that both the mechanisms of surface acting and deep acting are used by the employees to display distinctive feelings in public situations and they may have adverse effects on them. First, depicting emotions that are not genuinely felt may cause disharmony as the workers perform surface acting- they present a particular feeling on the outside while feeling something else on the inside. It may cause a feeling of strain that Hochschild terms as emotive dissonance. This dissonance can make the person feel false and deceitful. Again deep acting can be a trouble for the workers as it may falsify the reactions and weaken one's sense to identify true emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Self- engagement in deep acting for long may lead to alteration of self. It can cause self-alienation as they lose the connection with their authentic self. They may find it hard to distinguish their actual self from the one they are enacting as a part of their job role. Therefore Hochschild highlights the negative consequences of emotional labour as feeling of self-alienation, identity crisis, frustration, anxiety, withdrawal and so on.

1.2.3.3 Emotional Labour as used in Fashion Modeling

Hochschild considered emotional labour as a way by which the organizations control the workers not just physically but mentally and emotionally as well. Also the workers find a sense of satisfaction in helping the customers. But fashion models are independent workers and not tied to one organization so they neither perform emotional labour in accordance to one employer nor to please their customers or their audience as they do not interact with them directly. Mears and Finley (2005) highlighted that fashion models manage their feelings to create a fitting bodily or facial display to portray themselves as desirable and find satisfaction in it. They use emotional labour as a coping mechanism to negate the humiliation they endure at every stage of being a model. Finley addressed the job of a fashion model as involving unceasing pressure to maintain their body shape and weight, endure humiliating remarks and criticisms and face constant rejection. They are reduced to mere inanimate dolls whose faces and bodies are used as hangers to display others' products. Holla (2015) focused on how the subjectivity of fashion models starts to go unrecognized to the point of being unseen. As the clients or designers propel towards

the attainment of improved look, it starts to weigh on them. Stylists, make-up artists constantly interfere to adjust their faces and bodies without asking. When models perform as aesthetic objects on the front stage, they feel proud and admired because for that limited period of time, their job seems to put the focus on them making them the stars of the show. And here emotional labour helps them to gain value in a job that leaves them in an objectified state. Mears and Finley shed light on how models hide their genuine feelings and often create illusions for others on stage or in front of the cameras (2005). The models compare it to the work of performance artists and reject the objectification process by defining their job as acting. They find value in a job which demands them to be passive objects as they transform themselves into active subjects by performing emotional labour. They even use emotional labour to charm their clients and manipulate others in the process to keep getting work. Their work environment is often degrading and they might find themselves in uncomfortable situations while wearing short revealing clothes for a show or while giving a particular pose for a photographer. No matter what their discomfort is, they are required to accept it and mask their true emotions to adhere to their client/employer's requirements. Emotional labour provides them with dignity and asserts their worth by reminding them that they are not just mere display objects but their work involves hard work, effort, intelligence. It helps them find satisfaction in their job and gives them the push to keep working in this field.

Entwistle and Wissinger (2006) focused on how aesthetic labor involves embodied self and analyzed how the physical effort to keep up appearances has an emotional side to it. Aesthetic labour is not merely superficial performance in the workplace but it is an ongoing production of body and self, and maintenance of body aesthetic which the fashion models are expected to conform to. A greater emphasis is placed on the networking they do which demands them to always stay on as they cannot walk away from the product while it becomes their embodied self. So along with the labour of body maintenance, many skills in emotional labor are required and aesthetic labour does not supplant emotional labour but extends it.

1.2.4 Gender variance in Fashion Modeling

Entwistle and Mears (2012) highlights how women are socialized as objects of desire and are schooled from a young age to uphold womanhood by adhering to gender norms. Women and men conform to heteronormative sexuality in different ways where women's beauty is valued

more than men's thereby creating discrepancies between them. Women are shaped into feeling more pressure on how their bodies are evaluated but men do not need to call attention towards their bodies. Bordo analyzes the practices of femininity given by the society which place women as passive objects and men as active subjects (1999). Fashion modeling being a profession that emphasizes femininity is considered a privileged domain for women to work where women are subjected to look good and being gazed at. But male models in fashion suddenly find themselves as objects of gazing rather than being the gazer. Previously these men did not live their lives under scrutiny but without notice they find themselves on display to the eyes of spectators, judged and criticized as what women go through routinely. Entwistle (2004) addresses how men in fashion industry have to adjust to its habitus which is essentially both feminine and queer.

In consumerism era, popular culture through advertising, magazines, newspapers, media promote traditional gender relations in daily encounters. Bordo demonstrated how the patriarchal structures operate on feminine body through culture by focusing on weight, appearance and ideal of slenderness often pushing them towards health issues- anorexia, hysteria etc (1993). As Bordo addressed, women learn to anticipate and accept the gaze while taking pride in their objectification process when they feel their beauty can captivate eyes. Female models find themselves amidst this system which places their bodies out in open for others to scrutinize and judge. The clients and employers who emphasize on slender bodies put the models on self-disciplinary activities to attain the body ideal as per the floating norms of fashion. Male models also keep themselves groomed and indulge themselves in body projects like getting involved in gym activities or using protein supplements, steroids etc. These are promoted in present era through fitness regimes as more often in relation to 'healthy' lifestyles as a necessary part of survival (Shilling, 2003). The body modification processes have gained value among all genders these days as the beauty procedures of grooming, waxing, manicure-pedicure etc are often related to taking good care of the body.

Mears and Finlay (2005) asserted that women more likely engage in emotional labour than men traditionally. The question here focuses on the point of whether the application of emotional labour is steered by the demands of the job or gendered response to the demands and whether male models with their involvement in female-dominated work may start to engage in emotional labour. With young men entering the fashion modeling field in large numbers in the recent times,

the limited literature found on the dynamics of the work which is conventionally feminine is considered helpful to explore the gender performances in this line of work.

To illustrate the issues faced by the models and how they deal with them, this study focuses on emotional labour and aesthetic labour, both taken into consideration to understand the work performed by them. The focus is to understand the disciplinary mechanisms that work on their bodies and the complexity of emotion management in this line of work. Hochschild's concepts of surface acting and deep acting are used to examine the employment of emotional labour by fashion models, to investigate the ways it helps them to get across the embarrassments they experience in every step of being a model and how emotional labour get commodified in the process. Also an attempt in the thesis has been made to understand the gender performances in the fashion industry, how it is shaped differently for men and women, and how the male models manage their emotional quotient when they find themselves in an occupation which is unmasculine and different from their cultural socialization.

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection

This section deals with the methods and approaches used for data collection. It highlights the objectives of this study, approaches, sample and methods employed in the research.

1.3.1 Objectives

- To assess the nature of work and how fashion models perceive fashion modeling as an occupation.
- To understand how disciplining of bodies and power relations work in the industry and investigate the ways by which fashion modeling has transformed into commodified emotional labour.
- To interpret the position of the male models in comparison with the female models.

1.3.2 Nature of research

The primary objective of the research was to explore the fashion models' perceptions of their occupation. To explore this, the methodology that has been undertaken in this research is qualitative in nature. In qualitative methodology the researcher looks at settings and people holistically; people, settings, or groups are not reduced to variables, but are viewed as

a whole(Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).This approach helped to gain deeper insight with respect to the experience of the respondent as a fashion model while addressing the three research objectives of the study.

The phenomenological approach under qualitative research was chosen for this study. Phenomenology is concerned with the study of experience from the perspective of the individual and help gain insights into people's motivations and actions (Lester, 1999). It is the duty of a social researcher to interpret individuals' actions and their social world from their perspective. Phenomenological approach helps to understand the social phenomena from the point of view of the individuals involved and interpret meanings from their narrative of experiences.

1.3.3 Sampling

The researcher has followed snowball sampling in order to collect data for the study. Here the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others (Bryman, 2012).

Initially the researcher met two fashion models and they gave her access to other people relevant to the research study.

1.3.3.1 Sample Size and Information of the participants

The sample of participating fashion models is acknowledged as being small and justified by the approach of qualitative research. The sample for the study included fashion models who are currently employed or were employed as professional or amateur models in and around Assam. Here when the researcher uses the words amateur models and professional models, she means that the former includes those who are/were engaged in the industry on a temporary, short-term basis to earn some pocket money whereas the latter implies those individuals who took up this job as their primary occupation and to some extent made a name in the industry locally or regionally. To get an in-depth understanding of the issues associated with this study, the sample size was restricted to 20. Out of the 20, 15 were females and 5 were males. To gain a better understanding of how the industry works in the region, 5 interviews were conducted with 5 fashion promoters/designers in the industry.

(**Table 1.1**: Profiles of the female participants at the time of interview)

Pseudonyms	Age	Ethnic community	Duration of time in the fashion industry (in years)	Current role in the fashion industry	Other information
Ankita	22	Marwari	3	Professional model	Solely focused in modeling as a career, from Guwahati
Ananya	26	Bengali	7	Print model (part-time)	Works in media. From Lumding town, currently in Guwahati
Anna	26	Assamese	7	Professional model	Working as a part-time lecturer.From Morigaon town, currently in Guwahati
Dia	27	Nepali	5	Professional model	Looking for other jobs.From Tinsukia town, currently in Guwahati
Ishani	22	Assamese	1	Amateur model	Law student, from Guwahati
Juthika	26	Assamese	5	Professional model	Working in marketing industry, from Guwahati
Kakoli	24	Assamese	3	Amateur model	MBA student, from Dibrugarh town
Kritika	22	Assamese	5	Amateur model	MA student, from Tezpur town
Luna	19	Assamese	2	Amateur model	Student, from Duliajan town
Mini	26	Assamese	6	Ex-professional model	Advocate. From Guwahati, currently in Kolkata
Priya	26	Assamese	3	Ex-professional model and actor	Currently civil engineer, from Guwahati
Prerna	30	Assamese	11	Senior professional model	Also a trainer and groomer. From Nalbari, town, currently based in Guwahati

Sumi	31	Assamese	12	Senior professional model	Currently also a groomer and trainer. Based in Guwahati
Shruti	21	Manipuri	4	Amateur model	Student. From Silchar town, currently in Guwahati
Yami	27	Assamese	6	Professional model	From Guwahati, currently in Delhi

(**Table 1.2**: Profiles of the male participants at the time of interview)

Abhijit	24	Bengali	4	Amateur model	Working as a Lecturer.From Nagaon town, currently based in Guwahati
Deep	20	Assamese	3	Currently an amateur model	Solely focused to take it up as full-time career, relocating to Mumbai. From Nagaon town, currently in Guwahati
Fred	30	Assamese	8	Professional model	Economics teacher and later got into modeling on a full time basis, currently a trainer. Based in Guwahati
Pinak	28	Nepali	3	Professional model	A full-time model. Based in Guwahati
Ricky	23	Assamese	3	Professional model	Struggling to make it a full-time profession, also interested in acting. Based in Guwahati

(**Table 1.3**: Profiles of the fashion promoters and designers who were interviewed)

Pseudonyms	Age	Employment in the fashion industry (current role)	Duration of time in the fashion industry (in years)	Other information
Mitali Saharia	55	Fashion promoter	19	From event management she made a transition into fashion industry, prominent name in the fashion circle of Assam, organized fashion shows in Assam and abroad, founder of a leading fashion council of Guwahati, promoted quite a number of female models in Delhi and Mumbai
Priyam Guha	41	Fashion promoter, pageant organizer, choreographer, groomer, designer	23	From fashion designing to fashion coordinator, groomer, choreographer. organized fashion shows, trained models who reached national level, prominent name of the fashion industry in Assam
Pooja Baruah	34	Fashion designer	10	Joined this profession as a fashion designer after opening a boutique. From Nagaon, currently in Guwahati
Pihu Pegu	29	Fashion designer	3	Started as a fashion designer in 2016 after opening her own boutique. Did shows regionally and internationally. Based in Guwahati
Karan Kakoti	39	Fashion designer	15	From Guwahati. A well-known name in the fashion industry of NE region. Showcased his work both nationally and internationally

1.3.4 Timeline and study site

The research was first-hand and small-scale, with two data collection phases confined within two months, November-December (2018).

The study was conducted in Guwahati, capital city of Assam. Guwahati being the gateway to North-East and ever-growing fashion hub of the region attract many young people who relocate to the city to start their careers in fashion. Interviews and discussions were held in cafes and restaurants with quiet ambience and participants' homes as per their convenience. The interviews

lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour each and the opening questions in each interview focused in compiling profiles of the participants and their duration in the fashion industry. Due to the small size of the sample, the interviews could be conducted and the analysis of the data could be handled in a limited timeframe.

1.3.5 Primary source of data collection

The study relied on qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews and observation method divided into two phases.

1.3.5.1 In-depth interviews

The first phase of data collection involved in-depth interviews with participants. The goal was to look at the process or the meanings the participants attribute to their given social situation (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007). In-depth interviews are based on non-directive, unstructured and open ended questions. It helped in laying greater emphasis on the interviewees' own perspectives and explores the issues through their insights.

The interviews were mainly unstructured but the researcher had five main questions in hand to guide the interviews with a focus on the research objectives. The participants were asked questions which centered on identifying (1) fashion models' perceptions of their workplace encounters; (2) the ways in which they deal with the scrutiny and judgments they have to endure on their bodies; (3) the meaning they attribute to their actions and how it affects their experiences; (4) how they face the stigma associated with fashion modeling; (5) the possible gender attributes and differences in relation to their work.

Initially to establish a conversation, the participants were asked about themselves (biography including age, commitments outside of work, plans for the future) and their employment as a fashion model. The researcher had to formulate spontaneous questions throughout the interviews to elicit relevant data from each participant and was careful to not impose her own opinions or close off dialogue early. The conversations led to a breadth of questions which surfaced as the discussions deepened like (for e.g, how are the interactions with the employers or clients like?; have they ever had to face criticisms for their physical attributes? If yes how did they deal with it?; do the industry people normalize the scrutiny the models have to go through?; how did this profession affect their personalities?; what kind of comments do they get to hear from outsiders

for working in this field?; and the potential relevance of age and no control of the participants on their own work).

1.3.5.2 Observation

The researcher got the opportunity to study the field situation first hand by being in the workplace of the fashion models. In the second phase of data collection, the researcher got to witness the audition process of a fashion week which was held in the month of December, 2018. The researcher also got the access pass to attend the fashion week held over two days in a 5-star hotel of Guwahati city where 30 fashion designers and 50 fashion models were given the platform to showcase their work. The researcher gained direct knowledge about the respondents' work conditions and the environment of the front stage and back stage.

As the researcher's participation in group core activities was minimal, so as an observer she interacted with people and made field notes based on the observations she gathered in the audition day and the main event. Photographs were captured to enhance the research process.

1.3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data comes after field access has been found, sampling decisions have been taken, data have been collected, recorded and elaborated (Flick, 2007). The process of thematic analysis was adopted in my study. The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). It helped the researcher to identify patterns and themes involved in the data collected. The data was organized and interpreted by the researcher with the help of thematic analysis.

1.3.7 Limitations of the study

Due to time constraint, the researcher had to finish data collection within two months. During that time, a number of individuals initially contacted for the interview were not available due to their examination schedules or other work commitments. Also most of them were reluctant to talk about issues.

1.3.8 Ethical Concern

Ethical standards have been maintained by the researcher so as not to put the respondents and participants in any risk or harm. All the names of the participants have been changed and

pseudonyms are used by the researcher to identify them. Audio recording of the interviews has been done with prior permission of the participants. The interviews were recorded in MP3 format on a mobile phone. Photographs were taken with prior permission from the organizers and the people involved.

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter One examines the background and context of the study, followed by review of the relevant literature. The concept of aesthetic labour and disciplining of body in the context of fashion models have been examined. The dimensions and outcomes of emotional labour were overviewed with an emphasis on how the fashion models employ emotional labour. Finally, the methods and procedures used in this study is described and justified. The research design of the study is introduced with the justifications on why certain methods were used and applied. Lastly, limitations of the study and ethical concern related to data collection and analysis were discussed.

Chapter Two explores the findings of Research Objective One with an aim to highlight the nature of fashion modeling as an occupation from the perspective of fashion models. Chapter Three takes up Research Objective Two and presents the ways aesthetic labour is applied by fashion models and how their bodies get affected by the disciplinary power mechanisms. Also it identifies the situations in which fashion models employ different dimensions of emotional labour and how the process leads to commodification of emotions. Chapter Four focuses on Research Objective Three which analyzes the potential gender discrepancies between fashion models in regards to disciplining of body, working in an occupation that is highly feminized, application of emotional labour and its impact on them.

Chapter Five concludes the thesis by presenting a summary of the findings with a focus on three research objectives of the study. Lastly, contributions of this study towards future research work are identified and acknowledged.

CHAPTER 2: PERCEPTION OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

This chapter demonstrates the findings relating to Research Objective One. It aims to explore in an in-depth manner, fashion models' perceptions of fashion modeling as an occupation. Specifically, the researcher examines variations in study participants' perceptions of the fashion industry and their work, and explores factors that may influence their interpretations.

2.1 Nature of work

Fashion modeling is a form of aesthetic labor, unstable and freelance labor, common in secondary employment and service sectors with their emphasis on 'soft' skills (Mears, 2011). There are two types of modeling- Runway modeling and Commercial modeling. Runway modeling is a type where models are expected to walk in a narrow flat platform called ramp, usually built on a higher ground, between sections of seating arrangement for the public to see the models display clothing and accessories during a fashion show. Commercial modeling is a generalized type which includes modeling for commercials, television, magazines, advertisements, billboards and so on. Print modeling which falls under the commercial modeling category does not adhere to a height requirement as is demanded in runway modeling. But in no way it implies that commercial modeling does not give emphasis on aesthetic appearances and body. In runway modeling, fashion models are not hired because they are conventionally beautiful. They are expected to look quirky or unconventional so that the display of products gains more focus rather than their faces, unlike in commercial modeling where the conventional mainstream good looks are more likely common.

Fashion models are associated with roles for promoting, advertising, displaying of commercial goods mostly clothing apparels, accessories, cosmetics etc through fashion shows, catalogues, advertisements or billboards. Models are associated with lending their bodies as mannequins to the designers or photographers to display their products and strike poses for them. Consumer culture has given ideal versions of bodies through media that being fair, thin, having flat stomachs and so forth have successfully attained utmost importance. As the models have to

produce appearances at every stage that would appeal to the employers and clients, their aesthetic labour remain at play. Shruti, a female model who has been working in the industry for 4 years, shed some light upon the nature of work:

> "People used to tell me that I have height and a modeling face. They think that the work is easy. But that is an illusion and not true. The work is laborious, not easy at all. We get bruises and bristles when our hair is pulled or we had to fit in tight dresses, wear high heels and uncomfortable shoes."

Ankita, one of the professional models the researcher met elucidated on similar lines:

> "You know to get one perfect picture; you have to be shot around 60 times. It is painful to spend the entire day standing without consuming real food and with that same expression. Sometimes an entire day goes by in a shoot to get 2-3 perfect shots. It is so difficult. We have to also look glamorous in the meantime. Our legs give up; back gives up. At the end of the day we get so tired and upset about the work. But that is how it is for everyone."

The body techniques involved in the profession is necessary to be considered here to help identify the ways their performances are shaped. The fashion models are recruited initially based on their appearances, height, body features and so on. They are required to keep maintaining their appearance to keep getting work. Dia, a 27 year model, shared:

> "I have to stay fit, keep myself in ways so that I can fit into designers' clothes. I worry if my tummy is growing or fat disposing in wrong places. I am in constant tension about it. It is my job so I have to maintain myself in and out of the workplace. I have started to work on myself from before entering the field and continuing to do so more rigorously."

The researcher got similar line of responses when talking to the male models about it. Deep, one of the male participants with a fairly thin body frame stated:

> "We male models have to possess a good body frame. I am lean so I am told repeatedly to gain weight so that I look better. I joined a gym, taking dance classes and eating healthy to build an acceptable body."

Hence, models not only have to create an 'appearance' adhering to the standards of their work to gain employment, but they also need to put a lot of 'labour' into maintaining that 'look'. Looking good is an attribute and a skill which the models must attain to stay employed in their line of work.

Models are entailed to put up a public façade masking their actual feelings in order to develop impression management skills. They do this through the mechanisms of emotional labour, by controlling their feelings, expressions and gestures to create the 'right' impression for their clients and employers, depending on what is expected of them.

The participants explained during the interview how they have to handle difficult situations such as criticisms, judgments and scrutiny hurled on their bodies and appearances. The designers, organizers, choreographers and groomers can be rude and outright insult them or the makeup artists or hairstylists can make them look bad but the models still have to deal with them by being passive and respond with gratitude and warmth. Strategic flattering and flirting is also a necessary part of the job which is done via emotional labour. As Dia recounted:

> "You might dislike them, they might dislike you. You might say ill things behind
> their backs but on the face you have to be sweet. Butter them up, flatter them and
> stay on their good side. That is the key to build your repo and maintain your good
> name in the industry. I know I am being judged so I channelize it positively. I was
> once told that there is nothing good about me which sent shivers down my body
> but I consoled myself by saying they are superiors and more experienced than me.
> I decided to work better and prove myself."

Fred, a male model shared his ordeal of 8 years experience in fashion industry:

> "I get criticized a lot for being bald. I had hair before but now I don't. Some
> people accept me, some do not. My legs are considered muscular, body is
> sometimes considered too muscular for modeling. I get work depending on the
> demands and choices of industry people. I spend a lot of time, money and energy
> into maintaining my 'look' to get criticized for it. I do not know what can satisfy
> them, it is very frustrating. But I cannot show that. I have to be polite and of
> accepting nature. That is what going to keep me in this field after all. Please and

flatter people to stay on their good side. Over time it becomes your habit and you don't feel like it is hard work anymore."

They take the burden of appeasing everyone for that is what going to keep them in the good books. The make-up artists, assistants, choreographers for instance have the power to ruin the reputation of a model if they feel displeased which can hamper their work progress. Apart from the insiders, the models have to go through stereotypical views of the public as 'someone who just puts a lot of make-up and get paid in huge amounts to be on television and magazines'. Their work is not taken seriously and passed as a hobby or a leisure activity. When asked about it, Mini, an ex-model responded:

"Our job is compared to a hobby that would pass with time. We are considered less educated or dumb by many people as we invest time in maintaining our outer appearances so we do not need our brains right? That is what others think."

The models become the receivers of such judgments not just from the outsiders, but also become targets of the insiders. Mini continued:

"We know our families and society judge us, but the insiders also do the same. Their treatment towards us is not always positive. We are spoken badly to, ill-treated and also become the bearers of internal clashes. I was once called '*kunja* (hunchback)' by a senior and got scolded by her in front of everyone for not being able to give her the pose she asked me to. We become victims of ill-treatment and cannot do anything."

Yami, a fashion model who has moved to Delhi for better prospects and was one of the gold medalists in her veterinary college added:

"My medals don't matter here, nobody cares about my brain. It is quite discriminatory. They just see my pretty face and toned body and that is how they define me."

To do their job professionally and handle their outbursts by controlling their emotions and adhering to the expectations of their occupation, the fashion models therefore engage in emotional labour via mechanisms of surface and deep acting as suggested by Hochschild

(1983).A model's work involves the concepts of aesthetic labour and emotional labour working together to create a form of 'work' for them to sustain in the industry.

2.2 In-job training

The models are demanded to work on their bodies as aesthetic laborers to produce appearances in ways that would appeal to their clients and employers. But they are expected to possess some suitable attributes and features to fit in the physical criteria set to be eligible for an audition of a beauty pageant or casting of a fashion show. But after entering the field, the path isn't set easy for them. The models have to maintain the 'look' by taking up activities like dieting practices, work-out exercises, gym, usage of supplements and steroids, cosmetics and so on. They also have to go through grooming lessons where a groomer teaches or trains them on how to stand, walk and pose for cameras. They are taught to keep their postures straight while wearing high heels without any sign of hesitation on their faces. The respondents shared their experiences about the in-job training they receive before a pageant or a fashion event. When asked about the training provided to the models before any show, Sumi a model-turned-groomer with 12 years of experience replied:

> "The newcomers do not know how it is out there. When I was a newcomer I was taught how to walk, move, smile, and convey my gestures and expressions. Those arethe basics of being a model; you know it while being in the job. I make sure models learn it well so with experience they attain perfection."

Fashion designer Pooja asserted it by saying:

> "I have to know if my models would pass across my products to the audience efficiently. For that matter, I need to know if they are groomed well, a newcomer or an experienced model. So for my show a groomer or choreographer is always hired to teach them the standards of how to be when in stage, be it their walk or facial expressions or the way their personalities reflect out there."

Many models join modeling courses these days to learn the guidelines of the profession. Mini was one of the models who took up modeling course in a fashion institute to learn the basics on

how to be a model. In her words it helped her in learning how to maintain herself and the dos and don'ts of the job. She also got some recognition as she started getting shows organized by the head of the fashion institute.

Even though the models are told to maintain their appearances, it is difficult for them to sustain in the industry with a large number of individuals entering the field thereby increasing the competition. The industry is guided by the 'floating norms' implying that there are no fixed standards for models to measure against as it changes with time and market demand. These models have to adapt to the fluctuating aesthetic trends and different clients and commodify themselves in the absence of a corporate aesthetic (Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006).They are asked to find something unique in themselves, an added factor which would longer their run in the industry irrespective of the changing norms. That added factor is what they must be able to find themselves because of the freelancing nature of the work, and it comes with no guarantee that it would work for them. Yami said:

> "People get bored of the same face all the time. So you may get replaced as and when a new face comes. So to be in the game, you have to be prepared and find something unique in yourself to keep getting work. That is difficult and uncertain."

Models when entering this profession lack the capabilities on how to interact and deal with their employers. They end up learning it from their experiences in the field. They are expected to be passive, obedient, outgoing and easily adaptable to change or mould their behavior as per the demand of the situation. Models are demanded to present their bodies as mannequins for designers to put on their products on it for display, for makeup artists and hairstylists to put the style of makeup and hairdos asked by the show-runners. As one of the participants, Shruti expressed:

> "We cannot tell them about what style we want. It is decided by the make-up artists or the designers. So we have to go with anything they give us or make us, as it is not up to us to decide and we do not have the right to demand."

The judgments or scrutiny the models go through, the surveillance and the gaze they have to undergo at every stage is normalized and made neutral by the industry runners. They are taught

to take things in a professional manner and work on it to be a better version of themselves. The verbal training is provided to them on how to deal with the comments or the opinions thrown at them and take it as motivation. When asked about how a model deals with it, Mini responded:

> "When you are a newcomer, if it is about payment or being commented badly; everything is justified as something you would get to hear more or in worse versions in future. So we are told to chin up and take it with a smiling face. When you become an experienced model, you get to hear demeaning comments if you make a single mistake which is not expected from you and that is justified as well because you are in the industry for long so you should know how to work better. Everything is normalized in the industry and the models are told in every step to take it as a constructive criticism and work harder."

Mrs Mitali, one of the fashion promoters the researcher met was very clear when discussing about this point and claimed:

> "They are like our children so we have the job to teach them on how to be better versions of themselves. It is just like a parent-child relationship. A parent can scold his/her child for not taking proper care of hair or skin, similarly we teach them on how to retain their desirable selves and it is better if done with criticisms as they would remember it well."

The personalities of models are moulded in the process of rigorous exposure to similar situations and experiences they gather over time. An alternate self gets created which they carry forward from their public to private domain as well. In case of fashion industry where fashion models are in freelance labour and do not have a fixed organizational criteria, in-job training they get from their groomers and through their experience in the field helps them learn the dynamics of their work and prepare them for the better.

2.3 Workplace

This theme focuses on the space used by the fashion organizers to carry out fashion events. It involves describing the areas which are significant to the models such as the ramp, the dressing

room, backstage etc. Additionally, the different occupational roles and interactions taking place in their workplaces will also be discussed.

Fashion modeling does not have a fixed location as workplace. Different cultural auditoriums, hotel lobbies or closed areas are usually booked for a fashion event to happen. The stage (other than in auditoriums) is built temporarily for the event with ramps and seating arrangement done accordingly. Starting from the audition process to dress fittings and the final show, different venues are generally booked for separate phases to happen one after another.

The researcher had the chance to be a part of an audition process for East India Fashion Week (Season 2) held in Guwahati. The audition was held in Nyx Lounge in Hotel Palacio. A higher ground inside the lounge was used as a make shift ramp for the models to come one by one and walk in front of the judges. The seating arrangement for the judges was made at one end of the ramp from where they could observe and judge the models' postures, walk, gestures and expressions.

(**Picture 1**: Model walking in the make-shift ramp in the audition of EIFW- Season 2, in front of the judges and getting clicked by the official photographer)

The lower ground area of the lounge had chairs and couches which was the waiting area for the models to sit and wait for their call. The researcher after sitting and observing the ramp area moved to the waiting area to observe and find opportunities to converse with the models coming in one after another.

(**Picture 2**: Participants can be seen sitting in the waiting area while the judges are seen in the picture–*right* on the higher ground)


(**Picture 3**: Participants gathered for the audition)

A fashion show does not start with an audition and end the very next day with the final show. It goes for 5-6 days including dress fittings with the designers, taking grooming lessons from the

groomers, even rehearsing with the choreographers and so on. Kakoli, a student who works as a part-time amateur model, added:

> "Every show or event takes almost a week or sometimes more than that because it includes the audition day to dress fittings to grooming lessons, rehearsals and then the final show day. It is hectic for us. We have no fixed workplace and no fixed time so we end up traveling from one place to another at odd hours which is difficult and tiring."

The dress fittings for the Fashion Week were organized in Hotel Gateway Grandeur in Guwahati along with the other activities.The final event was held two days later at a 5-star hotel Vivanta by Taj in Guwahati spread over two days. A Grand Ballroom named Joysagar was allocated for the fashion week to take place. Starting from morning 10am, exhibition stalls were set up for the designers to exhibit their products. The main event was scheduled to start at 1pm afternoon after the inauguration ceremony by an ex-Chief Minister of Assam, Mr Tarun Gogoi. The researcher first observed the front area of the event where the ramp was set up with seating arrangement made on both sides of the ballroom. The DJ and the cameras were set up at the front end of the ramp where the models would walk up and pose for the cameras.
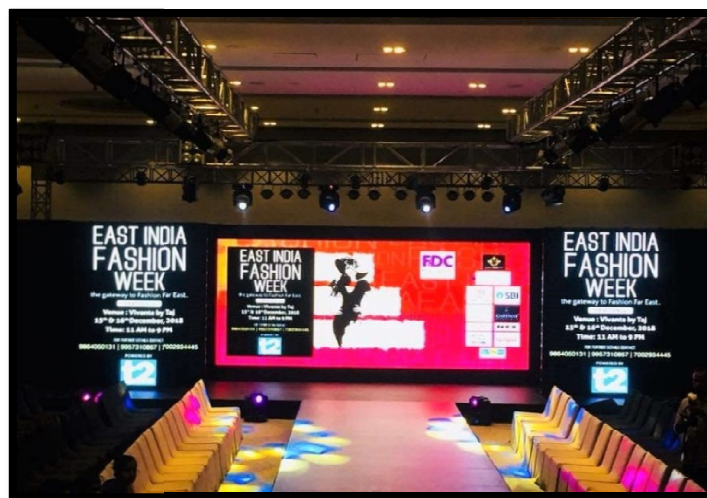
(**Picture 4**: The ramp built with big screen and seating arrangement done on both sides in the lobby of a 5-star hotel)

Behind the make-shift stage, there was the backstage which gave a different view to the researcher. From the researcher's own observation, she noticed that the backstage do not have any sitting arrangement for the models.There were some chairs placed inside the big dressing room where the models had to change clothes and also get their makeup done one after another. Other than that the models were seen rehearsing with the choreographer in between shows, rushing from one point to another while eating their limited lunch on the go. The designers and the guests on the other hand were relaxed and moved in and out of the area after every show, chilling and laughing with fellow individuals on the outside lawn. The backstage looked fussy and rushed compared to the front stage which was laidback, filled with glamour and music playing in the background, and of course the eager audience.

(**Picture 5**: A glimpse of the backstage in between different designer segments)

The researcher did witness commotion as she could not get a single model to talk to her in the backstage because of how occupied they were; focusing on getting ready with their make-up and hairstyle while changing clothes, and with the rehearsal going on for the next show. As Mini stated:

> "There is a lot of hustle everywhere behind the stage. Who would get their makeup done first, who would get their dress first; all of these keep happening leading to a lot of hue and cry."

(**Picture 6**: The models getting their make-up and hair done in a backstage room)

The event on the first day lasted till 9pm at night but the models selected for the final round to be held on the second day had to stay back till 11:30pm late night for their rehearsals with the famous choreographer from Mumbai, Mr. Neeraj Gaba. On the second day, the schedule of the event started just like the first day but it ended at around 10pm after the finale show with an after party held later for the models, designers, choreographers, organizers and other members who were associated with the fashion week.

(**Picture 7**: The models posing for the cameras on the runway)

The examination of this fashion week event gave an insight into the workplace of the models which is neither fixed nor set beforehand. It was one of the many different fashion events the models had to do and observation of this event gave a proper glimpse of how their workplaces are formed and helped to understand the dynamics of their work. It helped the researcher gain a first-hand experience and get familiar with the details of their workplace shared by the models.

2.4 Wage Determination

The models in this industry earn their income in different ranges. When new to the fashion industry, they sometimes have to work for free willingly or not. Either the lack of awareness or to build contacts, the models in this manner get exploited by the industry people as the latter take advantage of the newcomers for their own profit. All of the participants shared similar views when talking about their payment as a model in the fashion industry. Dia narrated:

> "The pay range depends on the budget of the show. When you are a newcomer, you might not get any payment but it gets better over the years but it is not enough at all. The organizers give us opportunities I agree but they make more profit so they must pay us. That does not happen. Too many negotiations happen and excuses they give. We anyway get payment only for the main event whereas we have to spend money at our own expense for fitting days or to go for rehearsals but they make issues in that too."

Mini recounted:

> "There was no money in the start when I entered the field. But after I joined a fashion institute for a modeling course, I used to get 1000 rupees per show. It is too less for the amount of work we put in. Photoshoots pay well than fashion shows. Also we are sometimes paid in kind such as clothes or other stuff rather than money."

The lack of agencies in the North East region of India is an issue for which the models have to suffer. They have to negotiate with the employers for the payments and struggle on their own. Yami shared:

"I am with an agency in Delhi and it is better. They charge a percentage of my income so they would do anything to get my money. So I do not have to negotiate for money and I am assured that I would be paid."

Another factor regarding the payment issue is that fashion designers in Assam think more of their profit rather than the quality. So anyone with low pay demand becomes their first preference. Models also get ready to do shows for free to get some publicity and contacts. Number of models entering the field is on the rise so if a model demands an amount worth her work also, she may lose on it because designers have other cheaper replacements.

Ankita, a full-time professional model expressed her views:

"Our pay does increase with time and with our experiences. Initially as a fresher I worked for free in some shows but now I do not. But for the amount of time, energy and labour I put into my work; I am being paid peanuts. Sometimes for an entire day shoot where you literally have to stand the entire time wearing high heels and uncomfortable clothes or eat next to nothing while getting clicked for like 100 times, 1000 rupees payment makes no sense. But what can we do? Can we demand? No, because I did free shows when I was a fresher so there are my replacements, huge number of freshers waiting for this opportunity with no demand for payment."

The fashion designers and organizers lure several newcomers with promises of giving shows and providing publicity to them. The newcomers get influenced with the idea of name and fame and end up doing several shows with very less pay or no pay at all.

Fashion promoter Mrs Mitali said:

"Many new faces are entering the field these days. The pay is less here; also many agree to work for free. This gives chance to many designers and organizers to make profit out of it. We had a meeting few months back regarding an increase in the pay range of the models. Some of us agreed to pay them minimum 3000 rupees per show but majority opposed it so we ended up agreeing on a bit lesser

than that. But nothing changed as the models still get paid around 1000 rupees. I try to pay them as much as I can; minimum 2000 rupees per show at least."

Pinak, a male model the researcher interviewed talked about doing favors in the industry. He shared his frustrations about the *'bhaichara* (brotherhood)*'* excuse used by the designers to escape from paying their model 'friends'.

> "I have made some designer friends over the years I spent in this industry. At one time this supposed friend of mine called me for a show in Dibrugarh, another town in Upper Assam. I agreed to do it and he told me that the show is for two days so altogether I would be out of Guwahati for five days including the time of journey. I agreed and asked him about the payment. He said that I am like his brother, so we would do something about it. I respectfully told him that this is my profession so I need to know the pay before I can sign up for anything. When I told him that as a friend he can give me 5000 rupees for two day show and it would include my lodging, fooding and travelling expenses too, he got highly offended and started hurling abuses at me for being a bad friend. This is my bread and butter, they must understand right? If I start doing free shows as favors to my friends in the industry, I would have to sleep with an empty stomach."

The models are required to maintain their body and build themselves to fit into the ideal version set for them but the payment they receive is never enough compared to the money they put into building themselves. These extra expenses go from their own pockets, most of the times putting them in a great loss. Deep lamented:

> "Most of my money goes into building the body frame I need to be in the industry. I have joined gym, started taking supplements and protein which are given to me by my trainer. It takes a huge toll on me because I need to borrow money from home to pay for it as I do not even earn a half of what I am charged here."

Dia declared:

> "I have spent so much money on cosmetics and body shop products that I have lost count. Also the number of times I have to spend money on hair and skin treatment for the chemicals and cheap products used on me, I am left with no savings at all."

It was observed after conducting the interviews that all the participants had similar narratives to share regarding the pay in the fashion industry. They are frustrated and dissatisfied with the returns they receive from the amount of work they put into it. Majority of the participants of the study work somewhere else as the income they earn from modeling profession is not sufficient enough.

2.5 Stigma

Fashion industry is associated with certain stigma and stereotypes which weigh on the lives of the fashion models. Modeling work requires the models to create illusions and being a model is incorporated with stereotypical views of just about a pretty face and a slim body (Mears and Finlay, 2005). The female models are considered 'brainless bimbos' by the people, stereotyped as unintelligible but attractive women. Their looks are considered as selling point in the field and prioritized more than other things. Modeling as a profession is not looked upon with dignity or respect as other occupations from the outsiders and models remain at the bearing end of it. Sumi shared about how parents react to their children pursuing fashion modeling as a career option:

> "When you tell or explain it to your family they are like okay, they think that it is like a hobby to us just like playing basketball or tennis and then we would eventually get bored. I faced outrage from my parents when I told them. Their reaction was how I can be a model as it is not socially acceptable so they could not digest it. It is the same with most parents. People do not respect models; mostly because they think they know but do not really know what we do."

Dia expressed her experience along similar lines:

> "My graduation degree does not matter here. Also my family has judgmental opinions regarding this work. We are not just about makeup and fashionable dresses. I try to change these views of my relatives. People just see front side of our job, not behind the scene actions. People see the occupation in a stereotypical way, which is hurtful."

The stigma is correlated with the labour and sexuality in this industry. A model is placed in between spectacle for clients and media where she is persuaded to present herself as a subject of desire but public, even family, relatives and community as a whole criticizes her for the same (Bhattacharya, 2018). She tries to avoid the stigma by covering herself to avoid the stares or any sorts of embarrassment by hiding her makeup face or outfit while going for auditions. The plainer they look, the easier it is for them to avoid the stigma. They also use emotional labour to get past these stereotypical ideas and find dignity in work which otherwise reduces them to mere facial value.

For male models, the stigma is more or less associated with the status of men in society which restricts them from getting involved in 'feminine' work. Modeling is considered dispro-portionately a 'female job' with a concentration of women and a non-traditional job for men (Entwistle and Mears, 2012).As it is related to fashion which values body, beauty, appearance and aesthetics; investing time in these sections is considered unmanly and unfeminine. Also societal pressure forces them to take up profession which focuses more on rational actions, mindful and technical planning rather than a line of work which is not acceptable as per societal standards. When asked by the researcher, Ricky, one of the male participants who have taken up modeling as a full-time profession, responded:

> "The number of criticisms and opinions I get to hear from my friends and family is never-ending. I have been in this industry for 3 years with no support from my folks. My friends mostly laugh or tease me for taking up modeling. Why? Only because I am in a profession which is about glamour and fashion, so I am a laughing stock."

The experiences of stigmatization of fashion modeling are different for men and women as their encounters are shaped by the societal norms and socialization process which guide their actions differently. The in-depth comparison of the state of male models in comparison to female models is discussed thoroughly in Chapter 4.

2.6 Future plans

The models working in this industry are employed as an amateur model or a professional model. An amateur model is someone who takes up this occupation as a part-time hobby or a job to earn some pocket money or do it out of passion. A professional model is the one who takes up fashion modeling as a career option thinking of working in this field for long and giving most of their time and energy into being a successful model.

Most of the models enter this profession looking at the glamour and fascinated by the idea of gaining popularity and fame. They do not see this profession as a long-term deal for several factors associated with it. The number of amateur models in the industry has increased over time in Assam because individuals cannot fathom to take it up as a full time profession due to several factors.

Age is one of such factors as there is an age limit set for the entry and exit of the models in the industry. The entry into the industry is somewhere between 15-16 years old when young female models enter the field mostly as amateurs, many even progressing into being professional ones.

When the researcher asked Mrs Mitali, a fashion promoter regarding the age criteria set by the industry, she responded:

> "See what can we do? Designers demand young faces to represent their clothes as they have more appeal in the market. Also many young models are joining the industry so eventually the common faces run its course and lose their place. There is less work but more competition. It is just like any other job where age limit has to be set to give chance to everyone."

The duration of modeling career is short-term as fashion modeling forms a part of the 'style market' which involves aesthetic labour and focuses mostly on the idea of 'looking young'

especially for women. Usually the exit age is set between 27-28 years old for female models unless they look young. If a model looks young for her age or the aging does not appear on the face, she can continue working in the industry. Many even hide their real ages to keep getting work. The female models the researcher met were mostly young or at least looked young for their actual age. The ones, who were near to 30 years, were either looking for other profession or already engaged with different things. Dia, 27 years old model, shared:

> "I am 27 years old. I am at the peak of retiring from modeling so I am looking at other options. But as I look young for my age, I still get shows but limited, not like before. But why should age matter right? If I can still flaunt and look good in something, then why shouldn't I get the job? I started out when I was 23 years old which is pretty late to enter this industry as a model. So I missed out on several beauty pageants and assignments as age criteria are always given beforehand and I did not fit into it. There is no age limit if you do not look old for your age as thenyou can hide your real age. Also there is another thing if you have good contacts in the industry, you would get work."

Yami who is also 27, added:

> "I look very young for my age so I am still getting work. I can hide and deceive people about my age, that is what my agency in Delhi tells me to do and thankfully it is working. Or else I would have been out of work by now."

It is the female models who usually come under the age factor because for male models, age factor is more or less absent. As most men look manlier and fitter with age, they usually enter the field late and sustain for long if not for other factors. Pinak said:

> "Can you guess my age? I am 28. I look young I agree so people usually get surprised when they come to know my real age. But in the industry nobody is interested in my age anyway. It is the females who are mostly asked about it. For males it is not an issue, probably because I am told by many of my industry friends that men get better with age."

Other factors for exit of models from the industry would be less pay which makes them take up other profession, stigmatization of the profession in the society, stereotypes and family pressure. The models get paid very less for the amount of work they put into this job. Most of them cannot afford to continue this career as a full-time profession because of less money in this unstable and insecure line of work. As the profession comes with a considerable amount of stigma and stereotypes, the female models have to bear the smear comments of being a 'bimbo' stereotyped as someone with just a pretty face but no mind of her own. Their looks are given the utmost priority as they are taken on their face value. Also for the societal idea of 'marriage material', modeling is a profession which is not considered as respectable and honorable as other professions. They have to endure criticisms for wearing short clothes, working odd hours late with strangers thereby putting them under pressure of family and acquaintances to quit their job. Yami shed light on this:

> "I am a model so how can I have brains? That is what everyone thinks. My parents hate it. So I get to hear a lot of things from them. I am a veterinary doctor and finished my masters before taking up modeling as a full-time profession. I am trying hard to make it in this field but without much support from anyone. They initially thought it as a time pass option for me, but when I left everything to be a full-time model, there were so many tensions and arguments and it is still not over."

For male models, the societal norms force them to take up a settled profession and impose a burden on them to make a career which would provide them with respect and allow them to take care of a family. Modeling career in this case becomes an inconsiderate choice in the eyes of other people and familial pressure put them in a critical position. Abhijit, another male model based in Guwahati conveyed his experience:

> "You know my parents were never supportive of me doing modeling. They were always asking me what I am doing and why I am doing it. We used to have a lot of arguments regarding it. I was doing my graduation when I joined the field and last year after getting my masters degree, I joined a college as a part-time lecturer. Now my parents do not say much because I am exploring other options as they see. Or else I would have never heard the end of it."

Along with the age discrimination, stigma associated with this profession and less pay; lack of appreciation and respect in their line of work from insiders compel the models to end their modeling career for better options which come their way.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter summarizes the understanding of fashion modeling as a profession from the viewpoint of the fashion models themselves and describes their workplace and work processes as observed by the researcher. This particular profession demands the models to adhere to the rules set by the fashion and beauty industries. They are required to discipline their bodies by putting it through strict self-regulation and self-disciplinary mechanisms. They are constantly placed under the gaze and surveillance which make them go through rigorous work routines organized around floating norms of body, aesthetics and emotional ideals. To adhere to these norms at all times, the models are burdened with taking care of themselves, if necessary by going an extra mile for it and spending extravagantly on themselves. The respondents while narrating their stories sounded displeased and considerably upset over it as the returns are not adequate enough as compared to their investments.

The models go through several insults and criticisms for their body, facial structure, height, weight, postures, way of talking, behaviour etc as the nature of work demands them to fit into the idealized version. Their bodies are out for display to the industry runners who select or reject them based on it. They are treated as ornamental objects to be worked upon by make-up artists, designers, hairstylists and so on. Models are placed in several vulnerable positions throughout their work period in the industry. They have to strategically flirt and please their employers and clients to maintain the social contacts which are a vital part for them to attain work in the field. They have to be the recipients of several stereotypical ideas and stigmatization from the public which affect their lives.

They conform to the fact that their work involves hard work and difficulties as they have to toil vigorously on their appearance and body and also get condemnation from the tastemakers in the industry for it. The models end up being the worst bearers of the clashes between the industry people as they have to take the burden of appeasing everyone no matter how they are treated, to

stay in the good books as their reputation is always placed on a thin ice. This leads to commodification of their aesthetic and emotional labour as they are expected to act professionally by being passive and accepting everything that comes their way in a positive manner. The models agree that their job is tiring and the amount of stress they have to withstand is noticed by many of the respondents but majority have taken it as a usual part of interactive service sector.

CHAPTER 3: DISCIPLINING OF BODY AND ENGAGEMENT OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

This chapter presents and discusses the findings relating to Research Objective Two. It focuses on the ways the aesthetics and emotions of the fashion models become commodified labour and affect their performances in the workplace. The focus here is mainly on the female models who are at the centre of this study as women have been the consistent victims of the objectification process over the decades. Fashion modeling being a female-dominated profession enhances this process as the body aesthetics play a vital role in it. Issues with male models are discussed briefly when and where it makes a relevant point and carried forward in the next chapter when discussing about their plight in the industry as compared to female models.

The interview data were focused on two main related topics- (1) how the disciplining of bodies and power relations function in the fashion industry and (2) understand the ways in which the emotional labour gets commodified in the industry. The emotional labour which is prominent in this occupation often goes unseen by usually the ones who perform it, so this chapter also aims to highlight the ways models perceive it and conduct it.

3.1 Disciplining bodies and power relations

The ongoing consumer culture asks people to take an instrumental attitude towards their bodies, to scrutinize themselves for imperfections, to measure up ideal bodies presented in media, advertising, models, celebrities and beautiful people of leisure (Featherstone, 2010). Fashion culture contributes in setting the standards of beauty and body image, and the fashion models work as measuring sticks for the general collective. In this process, the models being the impuissant individuals in fashion industry become patsies who go through a lot of processing and manufacturing themselves. Aesthetic labour consists of development and commodification of embodied 'dispositions' (Warhurst et al., 2000), and fashion models are expected to possess such dispositions on their entry into employment. Their bodies are considered as objects to be

scrutinized and judged as they are placed under the gaze and endure several restrictions and risks to reach the 'perfect' body image and construct a beautiful appearance leading to a beautiful self.

Models are constantly under surveillance, a pair of eyes always scanning and judging them. Their bodies are exposed as objects to others for inspecting, criticizing, judging and making the models mould their bodily capital as per standards set by the bookers, employers, clients, and photographers etc, thereby controlling their bodies in the process. Following from Foucault, the bodies here are contemplated as docile bodies which are like the pliable objects on which disciplinary action can be taken and power can be organized. The docile body is subjected, used, transformed, improved, and controlled by the methods of discipline which underlines the docility-utility relation. The economy of body is the focal point, how it can lead to production of activities. Thus, a model's body is treated as an object which retains one of the most important roles in her work. It goes through rigorous scanning and subject to changes for the betterment. Their bodies are expected to be engaged in activities all the time to maintain them in a way that would help them gain validation and keep them in the competition. The modality of control shows the coercion that acts on the body through disciplinary mechanisms. The 'ideal' body set by the representation of images through several media forms and by the tastemakers in the industry can be achieved through strict regulation of self-disciplinary actions. As Foucault asserts, power is dispersed throughout society, embedded in a network of institutions, technologies and micro-practices of everyday life. This power operates on the body and regulates it through self-disciplinary actions which are adopted by individuals with consent, thereby subjugating themselves in the process. The individuals want to conform to the discourse of the norms created by the dispersed power in the society and voluntarily allow to control themselves by conforming to it through self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices, especially regulating the body via dietary restrictions, exercises and so forth (Foucault: 1977, 1978).The constant surveillance which a body confronts, leads the models to internalize the power of gaze which puts them through scrutiny and make them a self-policing subject. It makes them see their body as an unfinished project which needs to be worked upon to attain the beauty ideals as per cultural standards.

One of the senior models, Sumi shared her experience with her body when she joined the industry 12 years back as a newcomer:

> "I was very plump and not a makeup person when I joined the industry. I went to an audition by mistake and was asked to try out because I had good height. I thought of giving it a go but I had to endure a lot of criticisms on my body. I weighed 63kgs and the comments from people in the industry made me see how ugly I am. For a teenager me, to realize that I am not pretty or good enough to be accepted and people giving me dirty looks for working in this industry was too much to handle. I went through acute depression but the person who asked me to try out modeling, told me to take and nurture it positively. A person from Femina Miss India came to Guwahati to see the modeling scene here and sat with a group of models to discuss. He liked me and another girl but he was very particular about my fatness. I understood I am fat when I went to Femina Miss India contest as they gave me a diet plan on how to fix my body. I became conscious about my body when I came back from the contest and started taking swimming lessons to make it better."

The criticisms hurled on the body make a lasting impression on an individual's life. A model's work circles around her facial features, body size and the aesthetic appearance she has to prolong by all sorts of beauty products and cosmetics. The consumer capitalism through media, advertising, magazines represents 'ideal' versions of bodies which are 'thin', have 'fair skin', 'flat stomach', 'high breasts'; thereby showing how bodies could and should be. Women must get as close to this 'ideal' version of body to be 'beautiful' and 'valued'. Various procedures like surgeries, cosmetics etc have taken hold of every other person's life making them yearn for the 'perfect' body type. The depressing aspect of women is the cultural spectacle through which they see and judge themselves, as increasing number of women go for implants and surgeries without considering the health risks for what they believe would heighten their self-esteem and market value (Bordo, 1993). The women end up relying on the cosmetic gaze that shows them the possibilities of incorporating into the beauty ideals to rework and repackage the physical body and the self.

As per Foucault's analysis, modern power is encoded in social practices and human behavior as individuals give consent to regulations and expectations implanted by the social order. As models adhere to these ideas and try to manage their bodily capital by indulging into activities which would bring them closer to the 'ideal' image and keep them in business, they subjugate themselves to the practices and self-regulatory mechanisms. This capitalist consumption provides self doubt, self hate, shame and obsession with bodies among both men and women. Taking from Bordo's perspective, the mass cultural representations of beauty, masculinity, femininity create homogenized images which get normalized among the individuals and function as version against which self is continually measured, judged, disciplined and corrected (Bordo, 1993). Contemporary makeover culture emphasizes on the technologies that simplifies looking at and understanding the body as a screen. These body screens are creators and receivers of a makeover self that strives to 'carve out' a better version of itself with the assistance of makeover practices. The gaze used in this process enables to look at itself from inside out, but it uses the imagery of 'ideals' which the culture sells and reflects the self onto its body screen on how it is 'supposed to be' (Wegenstein, 2012). Cultural representations teach women to doubt themselves, to be insecure about their bodies, and monitor them for signs of imperfection. Sumi recalled:

> "When I was new to the industry this Bollywood movie named *Tashan* came out and Kareena Kapoor in a song displayed her zero-size figure which did set goals for women that time. Every magazines and news articles were focusing on her 'sexy' figure. Thin isn't healthy but people did not realize that. When I went to Femina Miss India and they put me on a diet, I lost a considerable amount of weight. So when I went on stage, with the makeup and costume, lights on my face, cameras from different angles; I looked surreal in the pictures but when I looked at myself later without make up and costumes I realized that the picture me is not the real me. I was super thin and looked ugly. Those people do not realize that it was unhealthy for me. Their agenda is 'dress good, look good' but at what cost? If we complain, then we are asked to leave the profession."

Another senior model named Prerna who has been working in the industry for many years narrated:

"I have a moderately dusky skin tone and chubby cheeks, for which I used to get teased a lot by boys in college and I disliked it. When I joined the industry I was fascinated with the clothes, hairstyles, makeup. I bought a considerable amount of personal cosmetics and started applying it at all times whenever I used to go out. I applied makeup in a way that would make my cheeks look less plump. I considered surgery too but I could not afford that. Anyway with the passing time, I became so used to beauty products that now when I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do before going out of my room is to put my makeup on. I do not want anybody to see me otherwise. I lack confidence without it."

Prerna has judged her physical attributes on the basis of sneers she received from others. Makeup is a solution for her to gain value for her body and face in a male's eyes. By modeling herself to the cultural standards of the society and giving the power in the hands of others to manipulate her, she gave birth to self-doubt and low self-esteem thereby allowing her self to take the subordinate position willingly. Her self is moulded by the action she has taken and makeup is the only way through which she gains self-confidence to face the world. As Beauvoir said that if one loses confidence in one's body, she tends to lose confidence in herself[7](1949).

Women's bodies have always occupied the central place and treated as objects to be consumed by men. Power relations at a discourse of time penetrate the body like in the Victorian period when 'corset' was vehemently used to make women look more attractive or curvaceous. But in 21st century it is replaced by the consumer culture which has made sure women adhere to the 'ideal' body image presented to them and strive hard to attain them (Foucault, 1977). Fashion models being at the centre of the industry which thrives on aesthetic appearances go through a number of pitfalls and face objectification at every step be it in or out of their workplace. In service industry, where the hierarchical structure is maintained with employers telling the employees how to dress, behave and conduct themselves, it is all about regulating the individuals efficiently. As Foucault argues, in the capitalist consumer culture there is a new kind of investment which is not controlled by repression but through stimulation (1977, 1978). The portrayal and making of women's bodies is maintained through discourses and controlling

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[7]Beauvoir, S. 1949: The Second Sex. New York: Vintage Books

mechanisms of exercise, diet and cosmetics. Following Shilling's words, such labour of aesthetics involves models taking long term commitments to body projects such as weight management that requires an extended dedication and time to develop a body type that is desired to keep up appearances at work (2003).

Many a time the clients or employers make it a point for the models to apprehend that their bodies are something that can be modified or changed as per the former's demand as and when they would feel like exerting their power. As one of the participants, Kritika shared an incident where a fellow model who had stretch marks on her back that she got from chicken pox disease was not comfortable in wearing a backless dress. When she asked for a different dress from the fashion designer, the latter outright said, 'why are you in this job if you cannot wear this? You are paid to wear this; you are like a doll who have to go there wearing whatever I feel like giving you'.

It is evident that the designer thinks that as the model is getting paid against her body, the former has the right to control the latter. The model is shown her place and the analogy made with a doll commodify her body as an economical product which she is lending against the payment made to her. The models often end up seeing their bodies as commodities as evident from the narration of one of the participants, Shruti who highlighted how the focus she received on her body initially made her see it as a product that she has to put on display and earn money for it.

Anna has been a professional model based in Guwahati for many years now. She has done many shows in the region so when talking about it she let out her frustrations:

> "I have oriental features, look at my eyes they are small and I cannot do anything about it. But this designer I was doing a show for once told the makeup artist to do my eye makeup in a way that would highlight my eyes. When I saw the result I loved it, but that wasn't me. The designer made me change my identity."

While Anna's irritation was clear when talking about herself, she made a body-shaming remark when talking about other women:

> "The kind of women entering the occupation these days you won't believe; fat, short. I do not know who gives them chances; they should work on themselves and look better before coming to this industry."

Her undignified remark about other women's bodies conveys the type of thought process she attained from the process of socialization she went through over the years. Our culture stresses on the idea of slenderness. As Bordo dissects, the tyranny of slenderness has oppressed women from post 1960s. The female hunger is socially controlled and the female bodies are trained with knowledge of their possibilities and limitations. Denying food to oneself, a micro-practice becomes a practical disciplinary mechanism to educate the body of self-restrain and self-worth (1993). The concept of slenderness is equated with self-control, competence and intelligence in our culture so being fat is abhorrent if one wants to climb the ladder of success. Fashion has placed an increasing emphasis on slenderness for the past years and though the plus size models can be seen in the fashion scene today, it is very limited and not without cultural criticisms. So for Anna, the idea of being fat is despicable and hence women who do not fall into the conventional 'thin' category is considered vile and need to work on themselves to be better. Power is discreet here and works through several mechanisms as identified by Foucault (1977). Individuals are socialized through discipline from their tender age via mechanisms which are broken into different methods of control like school for example. It has embedded the seeds of culturally dominant bodily ideals in the individuals who are themselves placed in the hegemonized state.

The models even after going through the criticisms and hardships to maintain the type of body accepted in the industry have to look unique and have an extra factor to stay in the run. They are aesthetic labourers who do not have a fixed set of guidelines set by a particular organization. As their work mostly involves freelancing there is no particular set of look they need to follow as it fluctuates from one client to another. The aesthetic demand for a 'look' is not fixed but market-oriented. The demand for a particular 'look' might be in trend now but can become outdated next season. The models are therefore measured against the 'floating norms' of body and feeling rules, those which are uncertain (Mears, 2008). The female models have a short span of time in the fashion industry and as the flock of women entering the occupation increases year after year,

it becomes difficult for them to sustain without that added essence which would score them high against the measurement and help them maintain a firm ground in the industry.

Yami is a model who is now based in New Delhi and working with a prominent modeling agency there. She started her journey in modeling from Guwahati few years back. She is a tall girl with oriental features and a thin body structure which makes her look younger than her age. She was sporting a straight fringe hairstyle when the researcher met her. She stated:

> "I joined this new modeling agency in Delhi few months back and did 2-3 shows with them. But the person who is the head of the agency asked me to bring something extra when I go for an audition next time. I have changed my hairdo and sporting this new look. I do not know what she is going to say about it but I hope it works. I do not know what else I could do."

She was asked by her agency head to sport a look that would bring a hint of freshness and change in her but rather than helping her find it, the burden fell on the model in finding it herself and clouded with uncertainty of acceptance or rejection.

3.1.1 The silent judgment and the validation

In every phase of life a woman goes through a situation where she is grasped by others as an object. She is constantly under their gaze, followed by eyes; her body is subject to comments. Models are in an occupation which asks them to display their bodies as a mannequin to public eye. Her job is to look good and be quiet while products are displayed on her body. Models work in a disciplinary regime of surveillance and objectification, in which the female body is broken down by a ubiquitous gaze and put on display for unspecified judgment (Mears, 2008). When the researcher had the chance to observe the audition of East India Fashion Week- Season 2, she gained first-hand experience to witness the process. The dress code for female models was shorts and white crop top with stilettos, and for male models- jeans and white t-shirt. The models were asked to walk in a make-shift ramp synchronizing with the music playing in the background in front of the four judges. As the models were walking, the judges were scrutinizing them for their walk, appearance, expressions and jotting down points in sheets of paper. Each model was asked to walk twice, first- walk towards the judges, and second- turn and walk away from them. After 3 hours of auditioning, the results were declared. The names of the selected models were

announced but the reasons for the rejected ones were not disclosed. They were silently deemed unworthy and told to leave.

When the researcher met the models and discussed about their bodies being always exposed to scrutinizing gaze, there were two different tracks of responses. Some of them were cynical about it. Ankita, a professional model, shared her account:

> "I had unibrow and moustache. Puberty hit me hard. But when you do not feel confidence about how you look, you consider yourself ugly and misfit, the phase I went through. I started to feel conscious and awkward. My confidence level went down, I was depressed. People judge us but they do not have the right to make us feel bad. It is disturbing."

Mini was one of the professional models who quit the industry four years back. When the researcher sat with her to talk about her experience, she shared:

> "I always had good metabolism rate so I did not have to restrict my eating habits. I have never been told to check my weight but I have been told once or twice to gain some. Previously I have been criticized for my skin quality. I got depressed as I did not know what to do about that. I am dusky so ended up relating it to my complexion. I even went to see a skin doctor and used medicines for it."

Yami being working in Delhi as a professional model was also one of the four judges in the audition of the fashion week the researcher attended. She talked about the silent rejections she went through in her initial times:

> "I used to send my portfolio to agencies and they either used to reply back with vague answers or ignore me completely. I used to go through anxiety and stress. I know I look good; people stare at me, compliment me, like me but then why do I get rejected constantly? You start self-doubting and thinking that you probably aren't good enough for it. As a judge I try not to do that but then not all organizers want to reveal the reasons to the contestants, it takes up a lot of time and the newcomers tend to break down at times as well which gets difficult to handle."

There were few others who justified it as a part of their profession. Sumi also one of the judges in the audition took a different stance and stated that if she was not criticized for her overweight, she would not have been able to improve it. She justified it by saying:

> "You get commented in every different phase of your life. Judgments are normal; objectification is everywhere when we are in the main frame. We must take it positively then it would make us strong. We should not over think it or it will push us in a bad place. If you are in this profession, you need to deal with it."

Ishani, a freelance model and contestant in the same audition shared her opinion similar to Sumi:

> "When I get rejected for my height or weight, I understand it is their job to tell us and they are right. I have to wear their clothes or walk in their shows and they have that power over me to tell me what is wrong with me. If I am called ugly, I would accept it because it is my job. I feel bad initially but then I make sure I work upon it and be a better version of myself. I am doing it for me. It is not labour for me, I would rather call it a 'work out'."

Luna, a freelance model with an experience of two years conveyed similar outlook:

> "It is a part and parcel of this job. You get rejected constantly but that makes you work for better. The industry people guide us to be strong and help us keep working on ourselves to compete with others."

Cahill pointed out that being seen and treated as an object, that is a body which is an object of desire, can be both pleasurable and enhancing to one's sense of self (2011). Along the same lines Bordo highlighted that women eventually learn that being gazed at can feel sexy and make one feel more aware and somewhat addicted to the experience giving them a certain kind of pleasure (1999). This leads to the gaze conquering them with their consent. The fascination of glamorous pictures, of being in the limelight, wearing designer clothes has put a partial veil on the models as they can see half of the story but does not see the latent effect it has on their lives. It has made them oblivious to the commodification of their bodies and harm it has endured in their lived experiences. Anna was skeptical about the industry and dissatisfied with the way things run, but in her own words:

"When I see myself in pictures after shoots or fashion shows- I look so pretty. I
end up forgetting my worries and get the boost to work harder. Me and my friends
get excited to share them in social media."

Along with the validation for their working conditions and the labour they put into their bodies to
sustain in the industry, their choice to join gym, do yoga, follow a strict diet, intake of
supplements, take dance or swim classes; every action is validated by them giving way to the
myth that it is an admissible care of the self. The self ends up getting contrived in the process of
self-monitoring and self-subjection. Kritika, a female participant, added:

"I have always been into yoga, it is good for everyone. It helps my body to stay fit
and always prepare me for my job as a model. I also buy and use a lot of
Ayurvedic products to help my skin stay fresh and glow. It is good for me."

Not only restricted to female models, the male models also endorse them as a rational action
taken by themselves for their own betterment. Pinak, a male model of 28 years old working in
this industry for 3 years, stated:

"I love going to the gym. It frees my body and helps me gain confidence about
myself. Along with the protein shakes and supplements, my gym trainer helps me
take care of myself and attain the body I want."

Ensuing from Bordo's own actions when she validated her choice to diet as conscious and
rational response, it deceived her into thinking that it is her own feeling to enhance her physical
comfort and power, and that she is not servicing an oppressive system (Bordo, 1993).In a much
similar manner, the models justified their action as something they do for themselves and their
own satisfaction. They believe that they do not adhere to the rules blindly set by the industry
runners but invest time in making oneself be a better version leading to enhancement of one's
own comfort and transfer the power to one's own hands. This ideology is nothing short of an
illusion as they subject themselves to the oppressive clutches of the system without realizing it.

3.1.2 The tastemakers and the protégés

Along with the influence of consumer culture in shaping the opinions of the models, they are
also shaped by the influential people of fashion industry who run it as per their standards. The

normalization of the gaze is done by them for they have the power to guide the models. They make the models adapt to the situation and provide them with a notion that if they do not adhere to the rules of objectification and adapt it silently, they might lose on the jobs. Ishani, who joined the industry recently few months back, narrated:

> "I went for a shoot on World Photography Day where I was asked to wear a tube bra and drape my body with a piece of cloth. I have never done any shoot or show before where I was given such a see-through attire so I was very uncomfortable thinking about being photographed wearing next to nothing. I was unsure about it but then there were two senior persons in the room who came to me and made me understand that this is my work and I have to go through such situations in future therefore I cannot let it affect me. I have to get used to it to sustain in the industry."

Commodification of the bodies is normalized in the industry by the tastemakers and accepted by the models who are treated like protégés without any power of their own. As majority of the models disregarded the idea of being commodified when the word came up in the interviews, it has become easier for the tastemakers to run the industry by putting a false consciousness of fame and name which attract the models to keep working in this industry without raising their voices.

One of the fashion organizers in the course of interview quoted saying:

> "The models should work on their bodies and have right attitude on stage. They are like 'product with good packaging'. The ones having proper and attractive packaging with the right ingredients inside will last long."

By his statement the models have been reduced to a state of market product which must be packaged in a right manner for their longer demand in the market. The subjective human form of the models is discredited as the industry focuses more on the economy of the body.

The researcher got to interview Mrs. Mitali who shed some light on the demands and expectations from the models in the fashion industry:

"The number of females entering this profession has increased tremendously over the years. Glamour, recognition and fame pull them towards this industry. The requirements for models are tall, thin with an adaptive personality who can learn the basics easily. But North east people are not that tall so it becomes difficult for them to make a mark in the national scene. There are new faces which come up every day, what can we do? The competition is tough so to sustain in the industry, they must bring something unique to the table. Some of them are so obsessed to make name in this line that they are ready to go to any extent. I end up scolding them or telling them rudely at times because I can see they do not have that thing to make it to the top."

Fashion designer, Karan just before his show made a statement to the researcher:

"The harsh treatment makes the models work efficiently otherwise they do not pay attention or work sincerely. They are idle and slow. These scoldings discipline them to work better and teach them efficiency and order."

The entire idea of using harsh tones or mean words is ingrained on the grounds of making the models ready to face the real world or show them the truth. It is also justified on the pretext of teaching the models on how to work productively by disciplining them with berating. Pooja, a fashion designer justified their position by saying:

"We would definitely want models who would make our clothes look good. So if we want thin and tall models what is the harm in it? Our entire goal is to enhance our productivity after all. Models are given clothes and their job is to present it like the way we want. If they are uncomfortable or complain about it, they are in the wrong job."

When talking to the models about the hold in decision making power, two contradictory views surfaced. Priya, an ex model agreed with the view presented by the fashion designer Pooja. She added:

"It all depends on you; you got to make a choice for yourself. Whether you want to do something you are not comfortable with or wear something you are uncomfortable in. Do not be in this line if you cannot. Do not compromise if you are going to be unhappy about it. It does depend on the models really, do it or do not. It is your decision to make after all."

Yami sounded bleak while talking about it:

"I was once given such a short skirt that my buttocks were showing. I had to wear it and walk in front of so many people on a ramp which was on higher ground. I was conscious and uncomfortable but what could I have done. I do not have a choice. If I complain I would be replaced by someone else, if I stay quiet, suck it in and do the job then I get paid and have a job. I have no choice but to pick the latter. If I was some supermodel, things would have been different though. They are sought by big clients and agencies, not us."

Priya is oblivious to the powerlessness a model feels probably because she was among the lucky ones who did not have to go through similar situations. Yami's account gives us a clear picture on how it seems models do have a choice as they willingly join the field but in truest sense, they do not. They are bound by the clutches of their body ideals set by the culture, by the desperation to earn money, by the hopes that someday success would come to them and power would come along with it.

3.2 Commodification of emotional labour

Emotional labour describes the things the workers in service industry do that goes beyond physical and mental duties. As many roles require interaction with public in a service economy, the workers are expected to regulate their emotions while at work. They have to carry the burden of appearing in an aesthetic way which would be appealing to the clients, manage their emotions and constantly be polite, show genuine concern of client's needs, smile and maintain eye contact in a positive way, which are critical aspects of their employment (Hochschild, 1983).Models manage their bodily capital by subjecting themselves to intense self regulation and perform emotional labour to sell themselves to clients and agents, create illusions for observers and

camera, and find dignity in a job that is often humiliating and degrading (Mears and Finley, 2005). The fashion models go through a number of emotions while dealing with the people in their workplace starting from the designers, make-up artists, hairstylists, choreographers and the fellow models. A fashion designer can give a model any garment of his/her choice to wear, even if the latter does not like it or not look good in it, she has no other option but to put it on and do her work. Her hair gets pulled while the hairstylist tries to give her a new hairdo or when the makeup artist changes her look by putting tons of makeup on her face that she fails to recognize herself in the mirror. She cannot do anything about it nor can complain because it is expected from her to quietly let her body be used as a canvas to be worked upon. Ankita was considerably upset and frustrated while talking about it. She recounted:

> "We show the good stuff to the public, but what happens behind the scene is something only we know. It is a difficult work, our hair is pulled repeatedly, and layers of makeup are put in our faces. We have to change a lot of clothes and wear 6 inches heels and stand or walk around for hours. We are never asked what we want and how we want it."

Ananya, a journalist who also works as a print model in her free time gave a similar insight:

> "I am a print model and I have the job to look good as per the standard requirement set by the photographer or the client. I am like a dummy who just sits in front of the mirror while makeup artists and stylists work on me. I am worked upon like a unmoving mannequin who cannot wince even if it hurts."

The researcher observed the workplace of the models while attending the fashion week. She noticed that during rehearsals, some of them were lining up as the choreographer from Mumbai (a popular name in the fashion industry) was calling their names from the front stage. The models were running from backstage to front stage as fast as they could as soon as their names were called. At that time, the researcher witnessed one of the models stumbling off from the stage and twisting her leg. Soon after she somehow managed to get up, put some pain relief spray and started doing her work. The other models were eating fruits and small sandwiches in a rush while lining up in a sequence for the rehearsals. The choreographer was ordering and yelling at the models for their postures and walks.

When talking to the models, the researcher asked them about the treatment they received in their workplace. The participants more or less justified the behavior they faced. Shruti, one of the models opined:

> "Amidst the chaos it is difficult to keep concentration so it is actually helpful when choreographers, designers or whomever from the organizing committee sternly guide us. I do not take it as humiliation but as a guidance to be better at my work."

Sumi harbored similar thoughts and related it to the work of other people engaged in the process:

> "The makeup artist, designer, backstage manager or choreographer; I believe everyone of them is under stress when doing their job so it is fine if they yell at us, I understand they are frustrated too and I cannot take it personally."

3.2.1 Management of feeling

Fashion industry is a kind of service industry that is set in a situation where models have to come face to face with their employers, clients and face the public eye. They are expected to interact and behave in a certain manner no matter what their true emotions are. The models must perform emotional labour for the management of their feelings, and create a publicly observable facial and bodily display that is demanded from them. In-job training is provided to the models via grooming lessons before beauty pageants and fashion shows and those who take modeling courses in institutes. They provide grooming lessons and training to the models on how to walk, smile, pose and act. Erving Goffman's idea of the presentation of self highlights how individuals orchestrate their appearance in order to present a particular kind of self when they encounter other people[8]. Much like Goffman's idea of presentation of self, Hochschild's surface acting is defined as when an individual fakes an emotion to meet work rules. On the other hand, Hochschild's deep acting is either done when one tries to suppress an emotion or induce a particular emotion by invoking certain thoughts or memories. The memoriesare used by the individuals to stimulate them emotionally and legitimately feel those self-induced emotions to present a specific kind of self (1983).

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[8]Goffman, E. (1959).The Presentation of SelfinEverydayLife. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

The participants talked about their management of feelings in place of work, and how they comply with the display rules. Like one of the models, Ishani who is fairly new to this occupation said:

> "It is my work, not my real life so why should I invest my emotions into it? I go to work, do my thing, smile and interact but then I return home to my actual life."

Anna shared:

> "We have to keep impressing our clients and be on good terms so we cannot be truthful to them about our actual emotions all the time. So we pretend that we like them."

Surface acting is a form of impression management, just like Goffman's dramaturgical analysis (1959) of daily encounters as illustrated in above mentioned instances on how the models comply with the use of this mechanism. It is directed toward an individual's outward behavior.

The other way of how the models meet the work rules of display is through deep acting. The models initially empathize with others in their workplace and justify their actions in relation to their position. They alter their emotions consciously and act accordingly (active deep acting). Sumi shared:

> "It is not just models, but a fashion event depends on a lot of other people working together. We have to understand they are stressed too so we cannot show our tantrums to them. I empathize with their situation and act accordingly"

But with their investment of time in the industry, the emotions start to comply with their work norms unconsciously (passive deep acting) as they continue to perceive the social world around them and react to it in a similar way on a regular basis.Yami lamented:

> "We have to do the same thing repeatedly, hide our true feelings and behave in a manner expected from us at all times. I was a sensitive and emotional person but now I do not have an option to be like that. People reject me all the time on the basis of how I look, walk, talk and so on. Everything is judged here. But we must adapt to everything that comes our way, suck it in and do our job. Over time it has

embedded into my personality and now it all starts to come naturally. We carry
our burden of emotions and over the years it automatically starts to appear"

The models have been involved in this industry for so long that they have formed a type of habitus[9] which leads them to take it for granted. Yami's experience helps in understanding how the embodied dispositions and skills get embedded in their self and with time they do not realize the work they put into it. The transition to passive deep acting as the alteration of feelings starts to happen naturally leads to manipulation of people by them without even realizing they are doing it. Their self gets compromised in the process and the effects doextend from their workplace to their private sphere.

Though there are few models who do see the underlying impact it has on their self, but as the job demands them to carry it forward; they cannot do anything but justify it and tries to channelize it in a positive way. Priya expressed her opinion along similar lines:

"In this profession, looks are given so much importance that you get criticized heavily for it but are expected to take it in a healthy manner. This job wants models to be under the gaze. Over time we become habituated, get used to it and end up developing a thick skin. It simply gets embedded in our personalities I guess. The reactions and the behavior that is expected of us start to come naturally and don't feel like hard work at all."

The models work in an environment where their flow of emotions is placed in a vulnerable manner. They have to undergo various situations of scrutiny, criticism, rejection and humiliation but have to bear it with a passive attitude as expected in their line of work. Shruti recalled:

"Passivity is the key to sustain here. Bear the criticisms silently. Take in the insults that are thrown your way with a smiling face and you would gain appreciation and work. I have been told that my teeth are not good enough. I started hiding them, I even changed my way of laughing. Now they tell me why don't I show my teeth? Why don't I fix my teeth? I do not want to do it so I just ignore their comments. They say 'you would look pretty once you do it'. Do I

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[9]Habitus, a concept used by Pierre Bourdieu, implies the deep-rooted habits, skills and dispositions individuals attain from their experiences (1984).

look bad in my natural way? Initially the comments did hurt but we cannot hold onto it. We learn to deal with it eventually so now it does not affect anymore."

In the entire course of interview Ishani kept validating her work by repeatedly saying that it is her passion and she is motivated to work harder by all the comments or judgments she receives. She justified by saying:

"Even if I feel low after being told something harshly, I regain my confidence by thinking that I am doing it for myself and it would help me in the future. Also the pictures come real good so I cannot complain."

The models are repeatedly told by their groomers or employers to be tough and take everything that come their way in a light-hearted professional manner. Deep, one of the male models whom the researcher got the chance to meet during the auditions of the fashion week, was told by one of the organizers sternly in front of all the other people to gain 5 kilograms and come again next year. He flashed a smile and hung around the audition area till the results were announced. When the researcher talked to him few days later, he recalled this incident and positively justified the reaction of the organizer by saying:

"It does hurt to be told like that in front of so many people. But after a while you learn to take criticisms. I do it by validating their actions most of the times. They prepare us for the better. I am told that I have to get used to it as I would be hearing more hurtful things in the future. I am glad they are not sugar-coating things for us. It has actually helped me in controlling my feelings and I can maneuver it toward other meaningful work."

Following from Hochschild's idea it is clear that feeling is treated as an object here which can be moulded as per individual's will and it receives validation from both ends of power relations. The tastemakers justify it as teaching and preparing the protégés for the difficult road ahead, and the protégés substantiate it as a learning lesson even if it had to be dealt at the expense of one's own true feelings.

From the researcher's presence in the fashion week, she could observe the front stage on how the models put up their performance in front of so many scrutinizing eyes and the lenses which are

ready to capture them. Everything that happens on that ramp is an act which is put up to please the public eye. Nothing goes missed when the spotlight is on them while they 'do' their walk on the runway. The models wearing different attires and shoes, variety of accessories, makeup and hairdos walk the ramp with confidence and style while the cameras click them from different angles. The researcher sitting in the second row could see every minute thing and observe them in detail just like the other people present there. Their walks were choreographed; even the gestures of hands, movements and the facial expressions were learnt and gained over their experience gathered in the field.


[Image courtesy: DK Studios/FNDC]

(**Picture 8**: Models grooving on the runway as choreographed by the segment choreographer)

The researcher who had been in the backstage and the front stage on the same day could analyze the difference vividly. The backstage scene was full of chaos with the models eating their lunch while running from one point to another. They were rushing to the front stage as soon as their names were called, few first timers with nervousness showing on their faces and trying to follow the experienced ones. Even the experienced ones laughing nervously and being cautious about every movement they make. The choreographer shouting and hurling comments like "you do not deserve to be here", "what kind of walk do you think you are doing?", "if you were in the corporate sector, you would have been thrown out this instance" and so forth.

This scene made the researcher recall the conversation she had with Yami a month before the event. When asked about a similar situation Yami gave a shrug and answered:

> "You learn to deal with it; you know you have to be in the game. There are really rude and unkind choreographers who would call you dumb and say that you do not deserve to be here, will throw remarks like '*kya sabji lene aaye ho?* (did you come here to buy vegetables?)'. But you cannot say anything. If you do, you would be thrown out and replaced by another face. You are out of money and job then, so you have to grind your teeth quietly and get going."
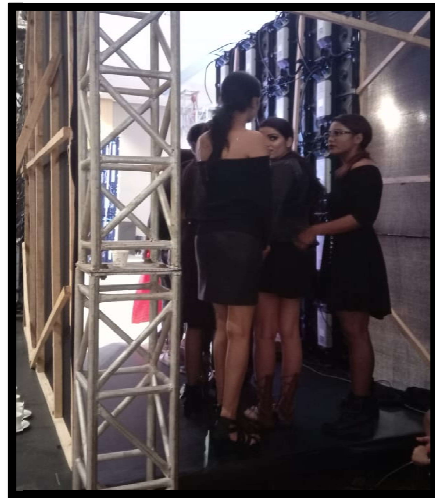
(**Picture 9**: Models standing in a queue waiting for their call during rehearsals)

(**Picture 10**: Models standing on the stage during rehearsals)

After observing the backstage scene, the researcher moved to the front stage area where the next segmentstartedabout15-20 minutes later. It presented a different view altogether. The models who were rushing to do makeup or trying hard to remember their sequence numbers, eating lunch in a hurry or were stumbling; all of them were presenting a different self on the front stage. There was attitude and glamour; their faces had no sign of worries or nervousness or pain as they gracefully walked the ramp, posed, got clicked by cameras and made their way back. The Grand Finale round was based on wedding season choreographed by a big name in the fashion scene of India. There were 24 female models chosen for that show. They had to wear wedding attires and look all chirpy, walking and dancing on the ramp. Every laughter, hug or gesture was an act put up by the choreographer which the models had to follow.

[Image courtesy: DK Studios/FNDC]

(**Picture 11**: Models in festive mood during the choreographed wedding act on the Grand Finale show of EIFW- season 2)

The management of feelings was done well as the public got deceived by the appearances, applauded and appreciated the work, but it was not done without certain comments like"that model is a bit bulky", "they have also hired aged models". Most of the people feel that it is justified to comment on the models as it is their job to showcase themselves and they have the right to remark if someone is doing their job well or poorly.

When conversing with Juthika, a professional model, she shed some light over how they handle their emotions and perform well on the front stage:

> "We are just motivated to work well for the people who trusted us with their garments and other products. Also the front stage is so different from the backstage which is so chaotic. But when we step on that stage, it is like a different world where we are the main stars. It is scary but fascinating as well. We just have to do it, I do not know how- probably because I know that if I goof up it is going to be remembered by people, will be recorded in cameras and so on. Initially it was nerve-wrecking but now I am habituated."

Ankita sounded discontent when talking about her experience. She added:

> "I get to hear a lot of stuff from people who do not have a clue about our work. They would come up and say 'your work is easy right, just put some makeup on and walk or pose' but they do not realize the burden we carry to finish the job without a mishap. When walking down that ramp a lot of things go through our mind, remembering the sequence number, following the choreography while managing the clothes and footsteps. It is not easy but we get judged instantly, it is difficult to hold our emotions but over time we learn to take it as it comes and shrug it off. We have become used to it."

Maintaining social capital[10] is another necessary fraction in this line of work. Asking for validation from the seniors or the industry runners, attending parties and socializing to build up contacts comes with the job. Strategic flattering and flirting is also a necessary part of the job which is done via emotional labour. As Dia affirmed:

> "You might dislike them, they might dislike you. You might say ill things behind their backs but on the face you have to be sweet. Butter them up, flatter them and stay on their good side. That is the key to build your repo and maintain your good name in the industry. They have the power to ruin your name you know."

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[10]Social capital, by Pierre Bourdieu is defined as the circle of friends, groups, memberships and social networks (1986).

Yami shared on similar lines:

> "We have to go to a lot of parties no matter if you are tired or exhausted after a day's work. If you cannot build contacts, you are out of your game. So to be in the game you have to be sweet and friendly to the people you hate as well. You also have to flirt with aged pervert men because that is what makes them like you and you need their validation."

Juthika, another participant narrated how she got into an argument with a makeup artist once and he ruined her makeup deliberately after that. He got away with it but sabotaged her image:

> "I got labeled as unfriendly and a person full of tantrums in the social circle. We cannot argue or object to them, nobody wants to sign a person like that. They have the power to ruin our chances of getting work."

When the researcher was on the backstage, she saw 2-3 models walking up to the fashion promoter seeking validation for their posture and walk after a particular designer's show. That seeking out for validation is necessary for them to stay on the positive side, make contacts and seek an entry into the inner circle to keep getting work. Mini who accompanied the researcher to the event added to this entire scenario:

> "This is how it is and it has been like this for many years. A model has to socialize and bond with them for work and recommendations. Flirt and butter them up as nicely as we can even if we do not like them is the agenda here".

While talking to the researcher she continued:

> "If you tell the models that you have been sent by some big shot name in the industry, they would talk to you without hesitation. They do not care about your research but they care about impressing that particular person who sent you and would talk to you in the hopes that it might do the trick."

Mini's words had truth in it because when the researcher tried to approach the models by herself, she met with reluctance and hesitation on the part of the models. But when a fashion promoter with big name in the industry introduced the researcher to them, the latter got contacted by some

of the models as they were all of a sudden interested to be a participant. Also in between interviews, they were asserting concern through statements like "Ma'am saw something in me right to introduce me to you, she thought I am capable enough to help you out."

3.3 Chapter summary

This chapter summarizes the issues surrounding the body ideals and embodied dispositions which are at the focal point of the fashion industry. Aesthetic labour and emotional labour often goes unidentified by the fashion models as the culture embeds them in individuals through socialization process over time. The tyranny of slenderness and body image spreading through cultural representations causes deleterious consequences for women resulting in self-doubt, self-harm, low self-esteem and several bodily and psychological issues. The power relations in the industry through discipline, gaze and surveillance control the activities an individual participate in and validates them into thinking that it is something which they have to do for their own selves, to be better and the best.

The models undergo the pressure of physical, aesthetic and emotional labour all at once to maintain their ground in the industry. The gaze is internalized; the treatment they had to endure at several stages is normalized. They perform emotional labour via different mechanisms of surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting leads them to separate their actual feelings from the pretentious display of feelings. Deep acting helps them to use their in-job training and the experiences they have gathered in the industry to build up apt emotions by genuinely feeling it, thereby affecting and moulding their selves in the process. As it eventually transforms into a habitus, it starts to come naturally to them. The emotional labour gets commodified as the emotions are treated as objects which need to get suppressed or changed to adhere to the display rules which indicate the type of behavior expected in one's occupation.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN FASHION MODELING

This chapter discusses the findings relating to Research Objective Three. Research Objective Three focuses on the factor of gender as it tries to analyze the state of male models in relation to female models in the fashion industry. This study initially focused on the predicament of the female models, but while conducting the fieldwork the researcher came across several individuals working in the industry who highlighted the issues faced by male models. They are seemingly in a more disadvantageous position than their counterparts in this female-dominated profession, specifically in the context of fashion industry in Assam. The study aims to contribute toward an understanding of the discrepancies between female and male models in the same work space.

4.1 'Doing' Gender

In the past few decades, the visibility of male body in popular culture has increased as men have been moderately outreaching toward women in exhibiting their bodies on fashion magazines, catalogues, ad shoots or billboards. Fashion industry is one of the few global sectors that is female-dominated with number of females employed in this line of work higher than the males. As the sex composition in the industry over represents women and gay men, the work conditions for modeling are uniquely gendered. Modeling is a 'feminine' work that prioritizes good looks, posing, caring about one's body that are traditionally unacceptable to conventions of heterosexual masculinity (Entwistle and Mears, 2012). Conventionally men do not live their lives under physical scrutiny as women but in this profession just as women, men are on display for the viewers to scrutinize them. Bordo highlights that as a woman's appearance plays a role for what it is believed to achieve success in life so they look into mirrors and stroke their bodies making sure they are admired for their beauty, a man's appearance is relied on the power he embodies and what he is capable of doing rather than him being self-aware about his appearance (1999). So women ought to care more about their 'look' and 'fashion' and get criticized or mocked as unfeminine if otherwise. For men the case was quite different in the past decades with

them being labeled as 'unmanly' if they pay too much attention to how they appear. But the age of new men has seen a shift from the idea of 'men should not care about his look' to men being 'metrosexual' as taking interest in having a toned, well-dressed and groomed body (Entwistle, 2004). However men in general do not have to deal with being treated as object on display or to be stared at. Several studies have depicted that females are gazed at more than males (Hall, 1984). But in fashion industry the male models have to deal with eyes sizing them upas their male bodies are open to others for scanning, judging and criticizing, all of a sudden making them realize how women feel being judged routinely. Abhijit, one of the freelance models recounted:

> "Being a model gave me a different exposure as I am suddenly in a position where I am being scanned, judged and commented on. I was not used to such scrutiny in my life but joining this industry has given me a different experience altogether."

The male models enter this field without focusing much on their bodies as their female counterparts do. In case of male modeling, there is a demand for a specific type of body that is mostly ascribed by genes rather than achieved by hard work and care (Entwistle, 2004). It can vary from being on the leaner side to being muscular and a height of minimum 5'9"-5'10" is usually a preferred criteria. For women, fashion culture has always placed emphasis on slenderness and made them obsessed with keeping their bodies so slim, young and tight. As female models are expected to have slender bodies, their male counterparts are mostly seen to have a toned one. But their ways of performing work on their bodies differ substantially than women. Their daily practices of management of body and appearance- like their body size, display, behavior and dressing- vary from each other. Following from Bordo, men and women experience the concept of appetite in different ways as men are supposed to advertize diet products keeping in mind their hearty appetites whereas women are supposed to restrict their appetite to maintain their thin stature and most likely making their relationship with food rather alarming. Social control of hunger and denying food is one of the ways for practical discipline to operate on their bodies (Bordo, 1993; Foucault, 1977). From the interviews with the participants, it is understood that both male and female models monitor their dietary habits and focus on maintaining their different body types by self-disciplining themselves. In interviews, the female models shared how they were intrigued with the idea of fashion and positioned themselves as

fashion models from their teenage years and started to discipline their bodies by dieting and exercising in pursuit of their teenage dream of being a model or an actress. Luna, a freelance model who entered the industry when she was 17 years old, narrated:

> "I have always been mesmerized with the idea of being a model right from when I was a teenager. I was more than eager to fulfill my dream so I continued to focus on maintaining my body from my teen years. It became fruitful two years back when I got the first chance to audition for a beauty pageant."

The male models who were interviewed shared how their entry into the fashion field has mostly been a sudden experiment suggested by some friend or were initially in pursuit of earning some extra money during their college days. They did not prepare their 'look' or focused on a specific type of body to get an access into this profession from an early age. Fred shared:

> "I started modeling in Bombay, as few of my friends were photographers and they wanted me to be a model for them as I kind of had a model face.I was unprepared when I decided to take it up seriously. I was criticized for my lean body stature when I first joined the industry professionally. I was very thin so they asked me to gain maturity in my body. So I joined a gym and started to work out to build the body after I was told so. We have to be well groomed and well-built, so we need to maintain that. We have to invest in a good gym, eat healthy, and take care of our skin."

Mini notified the researcher about how she has seen groomers and designers telling the male models to build their body and reprimanded them from castings for being too lean or not having the well-structured body they want in their models.

In the past decade, new markets have emerged that are mostly male–oriented (The Straits Times, 2002 as cited in Khoo and Karan, 2007). There has been a flow of skin and body care products for males with new advertisements coming up to promote men grooming products. The value given to the aesthetic appearance of the body turns fashion modeling into an occupation for men where they have to bear the objectifying gaze consistently (Entwistle and Mears, 2012), shifting their position from being the 'gazer' to being 'gazed'. As the professionalization of types of gender performance, women craft themselves into 'ornamental objects' in modeling (Mears,

2008). Men in general do not consider themselves well-suited to be an ornate object but with or against their will as fashion models their bodies do become commodified objects, something which is put out on display, modified and used. To shape one's image as a model, it requires him to see his body as a commodity which is to be traded to the clients (Entwistle, 2004). But a male model is not expected to be 'too good-looking' or 'too attractive'. Male models believe in spending considerable amount of time to groom themselves and nourish their bodies in a fairly natural manner. Fred, who has turned into a fitness trainer, added:

> "We have to take good care of our bodies for that is the only work we can do. Unlike women who do not use cosmetics or beauty products or are expected to look attractive like the females do. We have to go out there in front of the camera just wearing clothes and our confidence which does come naturally if one is confident about his body."

Age is a factor in fashion modeling but an issue for women rather than for men. For male models it is believed that men grow finer with age providing them with a benefit to enter this field as per their desired time. But for women if they start looking old, they easily get replaced by younger youthful faces. There is a premature retirement age set for them which makes them join the field at a very early age and puts them under constant pressure to keep their bodies young and vibrant. Fashion designer-cum-organizer Mr. Priyam shares how the males have an advantage in terms of age over females in the line of fashion modeling:

> "Male models usually start late, chiefly in their college years. That works for them because they gain more maturity in their appearance and body with age and do not have to worry about retiring early. Their career is not defined by age like in case of female models who have short-lived careers so they start early and last till late 20s in most cases. A few of them do last longer if they look younger or if they hide their actual age well."

The female models appraise their bodies with uncertainties and predictions of how others assess them. When the researcher met the female models for interviews, they shared their uneasiness about the judgmental comments passed on their bodies by the employers or clients; the clothes that can be uncomfortably revealing- short or tight; or the ways they are routinely touched and

measured by different hands. They live in constant anticipation and the pressure of being slim and young making them anxious and jittery. Unlike the female models, the anticipation and agitation regarding their body image was lacking on the accounts shared by their male counterparts. Majority of the female participants were thin and young when the researcher met them but their experiences highlight how the slimmest of them are dissatisfied and anxious about something or the other regarding their body or look. Kritika, a model of slim stature narrated:

> "I have to constantly check my weight and restrict my eating habits even though I know I am not fat. I am too conscious about myself."

Fashion designer Pihu gave her opinion:

> "The female models have unrealistic expectations about their body image as they always have to follow the trend and rules created by the fashion industry. It is not their fault that all of them want to be like one particular body type. So they have to compete with the other hundreds or they are out of the industry."

Fashion models are treated as mannequins by the designers and clients who groom, shape and use them to display their costumes or products. The experience of the bodies, disciplining and monitoring of them is gendered as men and women in fashion industry are faced with multiple nuances. Female and male models are often asked to dress and undress in semi-public spaces with little to no privacy. The male models in particular are often asked to show his body abs, biceps or muscles for inspection during auditions. Ricky, one of the male participants, shared:

> "We are often asked to show our physique to the judges in castings or auditions. They inspect whether our bodies are close to what they are looking for."

In case of women that is a rare situation in castings but that does not mean they do not face similar instances. From an account of a model Mini, it was understood that with women things mostly happen in a more private manner. She shared about an instance when she was asked by a 'gentleman' to share her bikini pictures privately. Also when the researcher visited the backstage of the fashion week, she observed how female models changed clothes in haste in front of their fellow models, makeup artists, stylists and others present there.

Apart from being assessed for their looks, models are also scrutinized for their personalities (Warhurst et al., 2000; Entwistle and Wissinger, 2006). Like in case of employees in service industries, models have to create an acceptable aesthetic look and project a self or personality in ways that it conforms to the expectations. That projection of self or personality happens in distinctive conditions for male and female models due to the gendered nature of their work. Men usually 'pick up' bodily skills for the ramp and the camera over time they spend on this line of work, mostly on their own (Entwistle and Mears, 2012). For women, they receive training from the very beginning on how to walk, put make up, style and maintain their personality on the runway or in front of the camera. While men have to retain their masculinity in their performances by being natural, women are expected to show more feminine traits which involve being sexually appealing and having a passive demeanor. They have to learn their 'catwalk', put on their high heels while maintaining a posture therefore acquiring the techniques of the body. The catwalks of male models on the contrary are more casual and seem more natural as they are simply asked to walk with an attitude and carry their macho personality on stage. Deep recounted:

> "Being a man in this industry which is mostly feminine in nature, it becomes necessary to keep up our performances in line with our maleness. We are just asked to act naturally confident when in front of a camera or on a runway facing the public and that is what we do."

Just as Entwistle and Mears stated in their work that girls are required to learn how to walk but boys just have to walk with their confidence (2012).

[Image courtesy: DK Studios/FNDC]

(**Picture 12**: A male model on the runway of EIFW season 2 - 2019)

The rituals entailed in being a man and woman abides by the cultural norms of heterosexuality as women are asked to dress up and beautify themselves while disciplining their bodies to attain the idealized version of it, making them adhere to the normative pressure of femininity positioning them to see themselves as objects that can be modified. As for men, they are schooled from childhood to keep away from things that are considered feminine as those who are self-aware about their looks like women do are sexually suspected and considered unmanly (Bordo, 1999). Modeling in a way challenges that aspect as both female and male models can be seen as being self-aware about their presentation of body and personality. But men in modeling retain masculinity by doing 'gender' following the normative gendered scripts, by looking manly-growing a beard, building their muscles and abs, and maintaining a healthy body so as to justify it as doing for their own selves, rather than to attain it to fit into any idealized version. The male participants who were interviewed more or less shared about how they hit the gym or take supplements to keep up their healthier lives rather than doing it for their modeling career. The fetishism of muscularity in young men in the past few years have developed as men contributed to the growth of gym culture and how it highlights fitter lifestyles. When talking about the

challenges to maintain their bodily capital, the male participants mostly related it to their nutrition and health, and how it has disciplined their lives. Ricky opined:

> "There is no harm in building your body you know. It is good for your own life. I did not care about my body before I came to modeling. Now I take care of my nutrition by following a healthy diet chart and producing a fit body structure. My fitness trainer helps me with it."

4.2 Power relations and negotiating sexuality

Fashion industry is one of those limited sectors where the sex-composition composites of over-representation of mostly women and gay men. Fashion is predominated by gay men and women who are mostly in positions of influence and power (Bordo, 1999; Entwistle, 2004; Entwistle and Mears, 2012). Starting from famous names in the fashion world like Gianni Versace, Karl Lagerfeld who are openly gay to Calvin Klein who publicly admitted of being bisexual. In the context of India as well, prolific designers like Rohit Bal has never shied away from his sexuality or Rohit K. Verma professing of being gay out in public. The participants from the sample commented that most men in the fashion industry of Assam are gay (openly or covertly) but not the male models themselves who are in majority believed to be heterosexual. The male participants identified themselves as heterosexual, hinting information about their girlfriends and making certain homophobic remarks in the course of interviews. A female participant, Dia shared:

> "This is one of the most adaptable industries as it provides chance to people from every gender without any sort of discrimination. Moreover this industry is usually flocked with gay men-starting from designers to makeup artists and stylists. Women and gay men (either openly or we know through inside sources) are actually the ones holding important positions, sometimes we even find men but the latter is very few in number. Men in the industry are mostly models and that number is increasing with time."

Models have to spend substantial amount of time trying to sell themselves to clients at auditions and castings. Such labour is anticipated from both female and male models. A male model

frequently becomes an object of the homosexual gaze where they become compelled to negotiate their masculinity. The career prospects of a model may rely on his ability to cast sexuality at work in their routine interactions (Entwistle, 2004) where his masculinity is compromised by his identity at work which is connected with effeminacy and homosexuality. Following up from Bordo, the heterosexual man becomes a subject of gaze here contrary to the fact that it is usually him on the other side doing the gazing. Also if the gaze is sexual, it becomes more threatening as the demand to prove one's masculinity gains prominence. This homosexual gaze has the capacity to threaten masculinity leading to a particular effect of feminization in the process (1999).

Female models have to spend routine work days being engaged in strategic friendliness with their employers and clients, channelizing their energy and time towards building an impression while suppressing their true emotions in pursuance of them getting hired (Mears and Finlay, 2005). In a similar way, male models are expected to charm their clients so to make an impression and build their social capital. This involves flirting with both female and gay clients so as to present their sexuality in ways that would emphasize heterosexual performance for one and queer performance for the other. Regardless of their gender, the participants agreed to use their good looks as a tool to woo their clients.

Due to the unequal power relations in the industry, a model has to play his/her cards carefully to sustain and influence their clients or employers. As women and gay men take positions of authority and influence in this industry, it arranges the power relations based on sexuality and gender for a male model. As he occupies one of the lowest positions within modeling career, he has little to no influential power as compared to his female counterparts. They depend on their bodily efforts and performances which according to the heteronormative paradigm are considered effeminate or queered. Such flirting depicts that models accept and adapt to the sexualized essence of the work. Abhijit recounted:

> "It is our position as a male model that makes us negotiate our ways up in this line
> of work by trying to win over the influential people who can help build our career.
> Flirting or being over-friendly and using our skills of flattery are some of the
> ways to charm our clients and other people to be on their good side."

Though the researcher has no evidence of such flirtatious performances on the auditions or castings, but she did observe the models (including females) cozying up to the makeup artists and their usage of honeyed words toward the choreographer who in both cases were evidently gay men. Their art of flattery could also be witnessed with the designers and fashion promoters at every chance they were getting.

But such premises may often lead to a sexual danger where models may find themselves in vulnerable and threatening situations. Entwistle and Mears in their study found that women were less likely than men to unfold stories of sexual advances by clients (2012). When the participants were asked about this side of the story and to share their experiences, female models commented how male models are more likely to be victims of sexual advances as they have hardly encountered such situations themselves. Even the male models in the sample acknowledged it by recalling first-hand accounts of how they were on the receiving end of unwanted advances or shared ordeals of their fellow workmates. Pinak recalled an incident when he was 'felt up' by an assistant stylist while helping him with his *'dhoti'* during a show. Yami narrated:

> "Being a freelancing male model cannot help them reach anywhere unless they are ready to sexually compromise. From my personal experience or from what I have heard from other fellow models, the sexual harassment is far more common with male models in comparison to females. My male friends tell me what a bad place they are in because they did not want to compromise and now they are on the verge of giving up."

Fred described instances when he was the recipient of sexual advances from a well-established male designer after which he insisted on setting up his boundary within which he wants to work:

> "I knew it won't make me happy so I ignored it and let it slide. But then I set my boundary and made it clear to everyone even if it meant that I would be losing on work assignments. I also believe and tell the newcomers to work hard and not fall into such traps."

These occupational hazards do not necessarily relate with the work performances of male models alone but women, being suppressed and universally positioned at a vulnerable status going by the historical trajectory, attain an advantageous position in fashion. There were although two

instances shared by two female participants in the sample where they were lured into such vulnerable situations on the pretext of work assignments. But the narratives of both men and women pointed toward the aspect of male models experiencing such occurrences more than the females. It does not inevitably mean that female models do not go through unsafe situations or are less prone to sexual advances. The reason here for them to less likely recount such instances might probably relate to some being scared of coming forward or they do not consider or realize it as sexual advancement (Entwistle and Mears, 2012).

4.3 Lesser work and wage gap

Fashion modeling being a female-dominated profession finds women employed in this line of work in high numbers as compared to men. It is inordinately a feminine job with mass of women entering this field from a very young age, participating in local beauty pageants to standing in audition lines. During the castings of the East India Fashion Week- Season 2, the researcher saw how there were few numbers of male models coming for it as compared to the huge concentration of women entering the audition scene one after the other. Also the selection of female models was thrice as high as their male counterparts. The researcher when visited the fashion week witnessed the dominance of female models as most of the designer shows were dedicated to women garments. The limited number of sequences which included male attires also witnessed female models overpowering male models in numbers. Like in one of the designer's show, the female models were 6 in number contrary to 3 male models. Similarly in another sequence, there were only 4 male models while female models were twice in number than that.
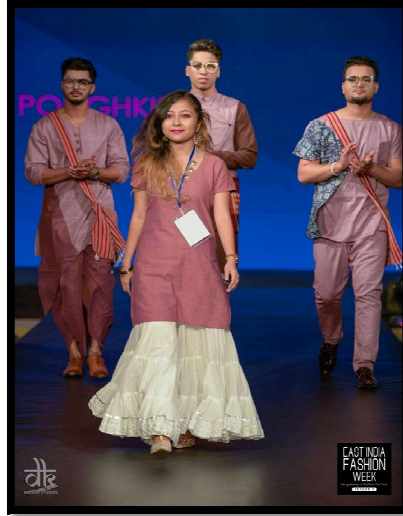
(**Picture 13**: A fashion designer with 3 male models)

When talking about this specific aspect and shedding light into it, fashion promoter Mrs. Mitali shared:

> "There are fewer designers in the region who are interested in designing menswear. In our shows as well there are few segments which include male garments. So male models have to struggle for those limited jobs with growing competition in line."

Fashion designer Karan opined along the similar lines:

> "Female clothing brands have more demand compared to male brands. Therefore most of the designers are involved with designing clothes for women including me. There are designers who experiment with male garments and accessories, but as market demands, supply comes with it. That is one of the main reasons for less work for male models."

The demand for womenswear rules the market and therefore the designers are inclined more towards collections and designs for women rather than being keen towards menswear. As a result female models have more work than male models. Fashion industry is therefore female-centric

with female models gaining a better status than males, which is quite opposite to the gender disparity at work found in other sectors.

The competition is high as the industry sees large number of men and women trying to make it as a model. There is a concept of replaceability which puts these models in a state of uncertainty at work and forces them to compromise on the pay rates. Modeling is one of the rare industries with an inverted wage gap and the difference is striking (Entwistle and Mears, 2012). At every level from catwalks to photoshoots, the rates of male models are far less that what female models earn.

Male models often bewail the fact that a man's rate is below a woman's in every show and they believe that it is the doing of the designers and the industry runners. Fred speaks with agitation when sharing his view:

> "The male models are paid very poorly. There are not too many designers who create or endorse male clothing. In Mumbai or Delhi the situation is better but in Assam or North-East region in general, the designers have not been able to create a brand or market for men and male models suffer due to that."

Echoing a parallel stance Pinak shared:

> "No one cares you know. After all what do the designers have to lose? If they pay us less, it is their profit only. They mostly think about themselves."

It becomes difficult for the male models to sustain on the limited income they earn from this work. They spend a considerable amount of their income in maintaining and taking care of their body and nutritional products. Adding to that their expenses rise up higher as they have to go for several castings and auditions at all times without being paid in return and buy branded clothes and accessories to maintain the standard of being a model. Anna stated:

> "We have to endure a lot of costs in exchange for countable jobs and such less pay. For men it is worse, firstly they have lesser work than us and secondly they are paid lesser than us. They have to spend thousands and thousands of rupees on their gyms, supplements and steroids for their bodies. I have friends who take money from their parents otherwise they won't be able to pay their bills."

Mears highlighted how male models are socially devalued and this devaluation leads to several financial difficulties (2008). The models have to leave their small towns and shift to big cities to find more work, thus adding more to their expenses. So while sharing their grievances regarding the pay and irregularity of work; the male models admitted in pursuing other career options or being engaged in other jobs to sustain themselves. It is a condition applicable to most of the participants regardless of their gender, except the ones who are still students or the ones still trying to establish as a professional model by focusing on one career. As the payment both the genders receive is much lesser than the work they put in and also due to the uncertainty of their jobs, they choose to stay on the safe side by taking up a parallel profession. As one of the participants quoted, "I always suggest newcomers to take up a parallel job to sustain themselves, otherwise they will be robbed."

4.4 Stereotypes and stigmatized outlook

Fashion industry as a whole is seemingly obsessed with certain types of stereotypical ideas and stigma which do not portray it as a healthy industry. It includes body stigma of how one should look or set up a body type ideal leading to a fixation with a singular body type which inevitably contributes to body shaming. Also the obsession with maintaining a specific class 'status' even though fashion models do come from various sections of the society. It constitutes their lifestyles stocked with branded clothes, expensive accessories and of course glamorous parties. All of these paint a picture of fashion industry in an unhealthy superficial manner and gives it a negative image.

Fashion industry is not entirely accepted as a worthy line of work for challenging heterosexuality and gendered norms. The fashion models have to bear the typecast of working in this industry and an occupation which does not fit into the conventional standards of the society. With females being classified as 'imbeciles' having just an attractive exterior that is required in this profession, males face criticisms and judgmental eyes for being entailed in 'feminine' work. The models have to transform themselves into an object of interest for their employers and clients and fit into the standards of the industry needs. But at the same time those things lead to criticisms and judgments hurled on them by the society including family members and acquaintances (Bhattacharya, 2018). Kakoli shared how her relatives always taunt her for working as a model:

"Even though my family is coming to terms with me working in this line, but that does not stop them from nagging me. I also get to hear bickering from my relatives and acquaintances who repeatedly tell me that photoshoots and shows are okay, now what else? They do not understand that this is my job and this is what I want to do."

Priya added:

"My work involves night shoots and several fashion events which happen at night. It requires me to wear short clothes and going out at night. My family is traditional but as I stay alone in Guwahati so they do not see me regularly. But when they visit and I have to work, the complaints do not stop."

Even for males the conventionalized heteronormative ideas force them to be bearers of denunciation for working in this industry. The male model is associated with the stigma of this profession and socially devalued (Mears, 2008). First, because a man is socialized in a manner which develops him as a 'looker' giving him the power of control and suddenly as a model he takes the position of the one being 'looked at'. The participants shared how they themselves had preconceived notions about the industry considering it frivolous and superficial. Fred commented:

"I had my prior conceptions about this industry and the people here before I started myself. So I was skeptical to enter the field when I got the chance. I joined my first pageant as an experiment just out of fun. Most of them think it is all about fashion weeks, glamour and ramp walks. Even I used to be one of them but that is just one part of it. Now I have realized that the outsider's view towards the industry is so narrowly shaped."

Second, it is believed as per societal standards that men must have an active persona and work in sectors that involve physical or mental activity. Fashion modeling reduces them to mere display objects; just have to be on time, wear clothes and pose or walk. So the lack of activity and assumed passivity of the job make it inappropriate for men (Entwistle, 2004). In traditional terms men should get a secured job by the age of 30 so that he can earn a handsome income to get married, have children and run his family livelihood. On the contrary, even though women are

working at par with men they are still considered traditionally as someone who has to take care of her family, rear the children and look after the elders. She is held as the carer of the family and it still continues even in the modern society. The female participants from the sample described the conditions they have to deal with after they joined fashion industry. Juthika shared that her parents more or less termed it as a hobby which would wear out with time, while Yami was asked by her mother whether she wants to be termed as an unambitious person. Not all of them have unsupportive parents or family but majority of them agreed to have heard untasteful comments from people around them in some way or the other. Shruti shared:

> "Nobody knows what our world entails. They see the glamour and assume a lot of things. They see my face on hoardings and magazines and call me lucky but they do not know that to stay employed here, I have to appear for several interviews every day. They think they know us and our condition but I wish they actually did."

For men suffer equally due to the same socialization process but in different terms as they are pressurized to find a job which pays them handsomely and follow the heterosexual norms. They live under constant disapproval and verdict of being involved with fashion which is considered feminine or queer. This occupational line of work is not treated with equal respect when measured against the long-established standards of the society. Fred also shared the stigma he has to face from his family and relatives as he and his fiancée both are working as models. He added:

> "We get to hear a lot of comments from our family and friends for leaving our corporate jobs to work in this industry now. But they do not understand that I was not happy then but I am more content now."

Pinak narrated:

> "My grandfather used to ask me what I do because he did not understand my work properly. But my cousins who belong to this generation laugh and poke fun at me for being a model. Sometimes they tease me by saying that I must be earning a lot and girls must easily get flattered by me. Even my aunts and uncles

pasture my mother by constantly telling her to make me understand to place my

focus into something serious rather than waste my time in modeling."

But the case is not similar with every individual as there are families who have accepted this industry and support their children with their pursuance of achieving the dream of being a model. In the words of some men and women who were participants in the study, many of their kin and families seem happy and inspired to see them on stage, magazines, catalogues or hoardings and try to understand the work from them. But the same could not be said 10-12 years ago when the fashion scene specifically in Assam was not that acceptable or open to the public in general and considered undignified. But with the change in culture and society being more prone to adaptation, the perception is altering gradually though it would take time. While talking about it Sumi detailed:

"Most of the newcomers come to the castings with their mothers. But this was not the case ten years back. I have a cousin who is a fresh face in modeling and her parents are supportive but I see how anxious they feel. It is okay. Time is changing and I am hopeful that the face of industry would transform into a positive one just like any other acceptable industry."

Ankita believes that the view towards the industry and the models is not just the work of the outsiders but the insiders are equally to be blamed for it as the models are susceptible to mistreatments and not given due respect for their work.

4.5 Performing emotional labour

The image associated with being a male is that he must be 'rough' and 'tough' as these are considered to bethe true characteristics of showing real masculinity. An ideal man was presumed to be 'rational' and 'unemotional' as opposed to women who were meant to perceive themselves as more emotional to fit into the feminine ideals prescribed by the society (De Boise, 2015). Therefore men end up taking extra effort to prove they are less emotional therefore hiding their so-called 'feminine' traits. But later works of research has demonstrated how difference in emotions could not be seen as fixed properties of biological sex because an individual's gender identity and behavior is shaped by his/her cultural and social norms. Like how men perceive

themselves as aggressive and women contemplate themselves as compassionate, delicate and empathetic; all reinforced through interaction (Bem, 1974; cited in De Boise, 2015). Emotions are subjective feelings which cannot be measured as objective facts and felt in the same way. Individuals ought to display different feelings in different social contexts in different manners based on their socialization process and interactions. Hochschild established how actors suppress and form different emotional states to abide by the social expectations. When discussing about feeling rules, she highlighted how different social expectations from men and women lead to contrasting display of feelings from them (1983). The employees do it in conformance with the demands of their jobs.

It is uncertain whether men and women experience emotions in a similar way or because of distinct forms of their socialization process, but there is a chance that their emotions may develop in different ways in varied contexts. The old stereotype of men is that they have a hard time expressing their in-depth emotions with people surrounding him (Khoo and Karan, 2007) but in the era of 'new men' where the ceilings of stringent gender norms are being shattered, the old stereotype is losing its grip as well, at least in few sections of the society.

Fashion industry is one of the sectors where men have entered much later than women with a gradual growth of male-oriented markets. Men are being classified as objects just like the manner female models have been over the decades. The gender roles have been reversed as this particular tertiary sector adapts people of different genders who are otherwise considered as disadvantaged groups suchlike women and gay men in general hold influential positions inside this line of work. The male models hold the lowliest positions with little to no power in their hands. Mears and Finley questions whether the male models being in an unfavorable position would perform emotional labour or focus mainly on managing their bodily capital and pay inattention to performing emotional labour (2005).

The varied modes for presentation of body at work for both the genders lead to different association of emotions from them. In interviews when the women narrated their accounts, there was a sort of emotional charge in their descriptions but it was lacking in men's accounts as they handled the situation much distinctively. When the models were asked to share the ways they dealt with the hard situations and how they manage their emotions up to par with the given standards of their work, the responses of the models varied with males mostly letting out their

frustrations by focusing on certain physical activities. On the other hand, most of the female models shared their resentment at one point and justified the same at another. Deep narrated:

> "I have been told at various points that I am too thin for modeling. It does affect me at times and also make me angry but then I channelize it towards certain physical activity like dancing and let it out through my sweat."

The emotional labour is performed by the models through the mechanisms of surface acting and deep acting. Though few female models agreed to faking emotions rather than modifying their feelings internally, most of them admitted to indulge in active deep acting which eventually recline towards passive deep acting as they start to gather experience and deal with similar situations on a regular basis. But male models seem to wallow in surface acting by keeping themselves mostly detached from their work and adhering to the demands of the job by conforming to the surface rules. The male participants talked about the surveillance of their bodies but their accounts lacked emotional indictment that was apparent in the narratives of female participants. In accordance with what Entwistle and Mears (2012) recorded in their study about how the male models channelize the challenges they face toward acceptance and maintenance of their bodily capital, the male participants from the sample gave similar responses on how they seemed cool in accepting it and concentrating on themselves. As Fred stated:

> "I believe it is unnecessary to be frustrated and get upset over something someone said. We are here to do our job so like every job it also has certain rules and procedure. Rejection is simply a part of this work. Like in corporate sectors you get to hear insults thrown at you by your bosses, it is quite similar in this case. It may initially feel bad, but later I either let it out by spending more time on the gym or cool it off by going out with my buddies. After all it is my work and every work has certain setbacks. The key here is to separate your professional life from your personal life. I tell the same to the new models."

Following from Mears and Finley, workdays of models include engaging in 'strategic friendliness' with their clients and channel their energy in ways that they get hired (2005). They do this by suppressing their true emotions and manipulating it to meet the required demands. They need to use their charm and flirt with their potential employers and clients continuously to

stay in business in this not-so-secured job. Male models have to use their charm quite differently than females as they have to flirt with both gay men and women, being an object of homosexual interest in one and heterosexual desire in another. It puts them under a lot of pressure to constantly shift from one to another to keep the high-end important industry people pleased. Ricky smiled when answering this question:

> "You know we do a little bit of buttering I suppose. I mean there is no harm in that right. If they like to be praised for how they look or their way of working and it helps me on the same line, then I think it is for the best. So a little bit of acting is good."

Abhijit commented:

> "It is not just us, even female models do lobbying to build their links. I do not enjoy it all the time because most of the times I am overdoing it starting from flattering the makeup artists to designers or seeking advices from the seniors or fashion promoters. Nobody wants to hire a loner and being friendly with everyone helps. I do not have to like them; I just have to pretend to like them."

Their emotional discharge is not the same as their female counterparts. Probably because of their socialization process which have always restricted them from showing off their innermost feelings mostly if it is not something they consider to be proud of. Throughout the interviews, the researcher could see them indulge into the matter of income or work inequity and the state of powerlessness they feel while recounting their experiences as a model. But in contrast to the female models there was a lack of despair in their narratives. In most cases the act of falsifying emotions is seen by them as a part of their job like any other and as they focus more on the surface acting rather than internalizing and modifying their true feelings, they miss on seeing the underlying impact it can have on their self.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter demonstrated the conditions of male models and their process of work as equivalent to their female counterparts. Even though male and female models both have to encounter

similar situations in their span of work, but their ways of doing gender is dissimilar. That is due to the different patterns of their socialization process and how it develops in distinct ways in different cultural and social contexts. As opposed to the females disciplining and grooming their body to attain a beauty image or body ideal, men usually cultivate a particular 'look' or invest in their body and defend it as a way to promote a healthier and fitter lifestyle. The male models spend much of their time working out, following dietary restrictions and buying supplements- resulting in extra expense than what they earn. They are prone to threats from inside as they have to please influential people- mostly gay men and women in their work sphere. From the male participants of the sample, it could be found that to build a repo and their social capital; they apply the mechanisms of surface acting to strategically woo the industry runners which sometimes lead to compromising situations for them.

Women make for better consumers and simpler to drape, hence fashion market usually focuses on womenswear rather than menswear. Therefore male models have less work and are paid much lesser than their female counterparts. Cheap labour and lowliest standards leave them vulnerable to mistreatments. Discrepancies do exist between men and women when managing their emotions to fit the standards of their job as their emotional lives are created by the process of socialization that has always placed women as emotional sensitive beings while teaching men to refrain from being open about their feelings. Therefore it seems that the male models usually take every instance in a rather challenging way and work it out by undertaking certain physical tasks. As concurred by the participants of the study, male models are rather victims of uncomfortable circumstances more than women. But it cannot be said with certainty that it is the actual order as most women in our society do not come forward with their sexually abused stories in fear of shame or their lack of confidence.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter synthesizes the elements of the research study to address its research focus which is to explore and understand the work of fashion models. It furnishes a summary of the research work and signifies how the research objectives collectively direct towards the overall aim of the dissertation. It started with an objective to examine the nature of fashion modeling as an occupation, mainly from the perspective of the fashion models. Fashion modeling as work involves commodification of emotion work and employment of aesthetic labour with embodiment of bohemian beauty. Constituting both aesthetic labour and emotional labour, the work of fashion models involves maintaining and disciplining of their body aesthetics and emotions which constitute a necessary part of their job.

5.1 Becoming a look: Fashion modeling as image industry

Fashion models are considered to serve as symbols of beauty as they are primary specimens of the ideal versions of 'look' and body for women to follow. The consumer culture predominantly captures the minds of girls and women via advertising and fashion magazines, and makes them think that they can attain success if they are slim, fair and desirable to others. They are acculturated to accept and internalize the outsider's view as primary perspective on their bodies and selves. These external pressures push women to stay preoccupied with their physical appearances and lead them to habitually monitor their bodies. This often leads to shame and anxiety and can have harmful affect on them. Even though fashion models play a vital part in concocting such insecurities, their lives are not out of bounds of criticisms. They are often critiqued for the same thing for which they are appreciated. Their bodies and 'look' are viewed as glamorous and used as a measuring stick by young girls and women in general. But again they are often termed as superficial and fake due to the same thing. Their constant use of beauty products and their thin statures are often termed as unhealthy and they end up being labeled as someone who is shallow and obsessed with physical beauty. On a similar line, their work demands them to maintain their bodies even if it means by going through rigorous dietary

mechanisms or other body techniques which may involve extreme means. The regular management of body and appearance to fit into the fluid standards of fashion culture puts toil on the lives of the models as they habitually invest themselves into it, thereby leaving an impact in their lived experiences. The dietary restrictions leave the models with limited to no choice as they have to consciously maintain their body in and out of their workplace to fit into the set criteria and keep getting work. They have to be on their toes at all times regarding what they can consume and persistently worry about their weight or skin/hair, resulting in most of them following strict diets and submerging themselves in the current phenomenon of fitness culture. As the aesthetic labour continues, it goes beyond their workplace and work hours. It often leads to high level of self-consciousness in them and put them in a spot where they become totally dependent on these products. As freelancers, it becomes their sole responsibility to find ways to manage their body and self to adapt to the fluctuating fashion trends and changing looks to stay in business.

Fashion models work for fashion designers, photographers and organizers who make the headlines and are given creditability for the success of any fashion event or catalogue. But the models who constitute an essential part of the industry get neglected and even if they are mentioned anywhere; it is usually in a homogenous form as a group. The narratives shared by the participants unfold an ambiguity that exists in their minds regarding their work and how it shapes their lives. Both negative and positive implications of working in this industry came to light when they shared about the different aspects of their work scenario.

NEGATIVE

There is a consistent pressure on fashion models to appear in an aesthetic way, pleasing to the eyes of their employers or clients. Their bodies are considered as something that can be modified, used and employed leading to it being treated as a commodity. They self-discipline and self-monitor their bodies which can cause stress and discomfort for them, affecting their personalities as it leads to self-doubt and harm their confidence level. They have to manage their emotions and cope with several criticisms, judgments which they endure on their bodies and physicality. By working in the industry for long the models develop a polite and passive personality, and do networking with people by being friendly and flirty even if it makes them feel uncomfortable. They are not left with much choice but to put their actual feelings in check as

it is necessary to maintain good terms with the influential people of the industry to keep sustaining in this line of work.

Fashion modeling as a profession can be tiring and stressful as it is not a 9 to 5 job but a lifestyle. It requires a lot of focus, commitment, discipline and hard work. The models are expected to work for hours straight without being allowed to eat properly or stand/walk for long hours wearing uncomfortable clothes and high heels. It also gets difficult for the models to work in the industry as the society does not look at this profession with respect or dignity. Though in recent years the idea have been changing bit by bit, but the general consensus makes the models face certain stigmatized views and stereotypes associated with this field. This often leads to strain relations with family members, acquaintances and others as the models are placed at the receiving end of mild stereotypical to even extreme slut-shaming comments. Due to lack of knowledge and awareness, the effort this work involves goes unrecognized and the outsiders often term the female models as 'bimbos' who have beauty but no brains. This thought process make it hard for them to handle and often make them hide their work from the public eye. For male models working in the fashion industry which is considered feminized form of work goes against the cultural standards of masculinity. They face oppositions from the society while finding their place and retain their sexuality in an industry which is predominantly run by mostly women and gay men.

The models are expected to be so adaptable that their personalities can be easily modified or changed to fit into the given requirements. They get reduced to mere mannequins as they are always expected to comply with the designer's choice of garment, the makeup artist's preferred look or the stylist's own manner of styling them. They are treated as mere cloth hangers with no consideration for their choices or feelings as it is considered their job to be aesthetic objects on display. They end up getting taken on their face value while their other traits go unaccounted for.

POSITIVE

Working in the fashion industry also has its perks for the fashion models as it has a positive impact on their selves. It enhances their personalities and makes them more adaptive to different situations. It revamps their public presence and due to the experiences gathered over time, it assists in refining their existing personalities and contributes in attaining a necessary maturity.

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews showed how the fashion models developed more effective social skills; had overcome stage fear and become better public speakers. They also agreed to have gained more patience and endurance which enable them to manage situations in and out of their workspace with more efficiency.

Being in this profession leads to alteration of their personalities as they constantly need to perform emotional labour to deal with unfavourable situations through the mechanisms of surface and deep acting. The disciplining of emotions in workplace also impacts their lived experiences in private spheres, moulding their identities and leaving lasting impressions on their selves.

5.2 Application of Emotional Labour by Fashion models

The advancement of large organizations in the present economy demands for skills in public relations and emotion work plays a prominent role here with its requirement being more standardized and regulated. The middle-class populace, women in particular are mostly involved in these public communication jobs. Fashion modeling is also a part of this categorical job where emotion work is in action at every level, be it when they are on the ramp in front of the gazing eyes and the cameras or negotiating with the clients or employers. Even though they do not interact with the public, they have to carry on with the management of their feelings to endure all sorts of vulnerable and embarrassing situations they go through and deal with industry people who have the power to control their career activities.

As the nature of the study is exploratory, the research objectives were addressed by qualitative data analysis from the interviews. When it came to surface acting, the findings showed that fashion models sometimes perform it as and when they could separate their workspace from their private space. They consider feigning certain emotions if it means getting their job well done. They apply surface acting to keep themselves in the good books of the industry people and maintain their reputation in the industry by being friendly, agreeable and adaptive. As surface acting is sometimes used as a mechanism by the fashion models, the outcome could be draining and emotionally exhausting for them leading to a negative effect on their state. Their involvements with surface acting could make them feel detached from their work and if not

applied properly, they may be termed as a sycophant or bootlicker and that could harm their cause. It could also lead to a feeling of inauthenticity in them due to high emotional dissonance and make them portray a certain kind of self which is not genuine.

In regards to deep acting, it could be found that female models mostly adopt this mechanism as they repeatedly deal with similar situations at work. They perform deep acting to find value in a job which is otherwise undervalued. Deep acting leads them to modify their inner feelings as per the situation and let them manipulate others with genuine emotion display. As they often perform deep acting, it helps them emanate a feeling of authenticity and feel a sense of achievement. It provides the models with a certain job satisfaction and commitment to their work due to alteration of actual emotions and less to no emotional dissonance. They end up sympathizing with the other individuals in their workspace and justify their actions regardless of how they behave or treat them. But deep acting can make them feel perfidious if applied for a long period. In due course of time it has an effect on their self and personality as they carry it with themselves and internalizes the change within themselves. It may leave them dissatisfied with their job eventually, and make them feel burdened and distressed to think that they have lost their own identity from all the alterations. It can lead to self-alienation as they may eventually fail to recognize their authentic self from the manufactured one. It may also lead to impairment of their ability to identify their true emotions or feelings.

The association between emotional labour and identity can alter the way the fashion models see their occupation as emotional labour strategy could help them find satisfaction in a job which otherwise reduces them to mere cloth-hangers by turning them into realizing that they are physical embodiments of ideal beauty and ideal identities. Fashion modeling constitutes more of a secondary employment and several fashion models come from different middle class backgrounds and communities but the profession is in no way falls on the same line with other informal jobs. The fashion models are believed to represent social perfection and are required to maintain high-end lifestyles as their social circle runs within a certain upper-class standard. It alters their manner of presence, physicality, behavior and actions; transforming their identities along the way.

Emotional labour regulates interactions as it helps in making them easier and predictable. It also helps in avoiding embarrassing situations and work in favour of both the parties involved in

interactions. Even though surface acting can cause emotional dissonance among the ones applying it; it could occasionally prove to be a helpful strategy in unexpected and sudden situations. Similarly deep acting may ultimately lead to the process of alienation and make them feel deceptive; but it could still have a positive effect on them and provide them job satisfaction for the time-being. When the fashion models are able to fit into their job and identify with their roles, emotional labour can help affirm their identity influencing whether it hinders or magnify their well-being state.

The study suggested that the realization of the underlying affect of surface acting and deep acting on their selves is somewhere absent among the fashion models as they fail to identify the latent consequences and justify their work by comparing it to any other line of work. The changing and alteration of feelings as per the convenience of the situation leads to commodification of emotional labour as emotions are used and modified like objects to adhere to the display rules expected in one's profession.

5.3 Gender Differences

Men in general do not live their lives under physical scrutiny like their female counterparts but in fashion industry they suddenly find themselves being stared at and evaluated. But still men tend to see themselves being portrayed in media, advertisements or billboards with more emphasis on their facial detail against women who often exclusively find their bodies on the focus. A woman's beauty is usually valued more than a man's leading to discrepancies between them. The cultural milieu socializes women in such a way that they begin to see themselves as objects that can be looked at, scanned and assessed. Being treated as an object does not necessarily makes them feel discomfort or ashamed, rather it contributes in enhancing one's sense of self as female models might feel pleasure and pride for turning into an object of desire for others. Fashion models end up creating spaces of subjective pleasure in their objectification process. The process of feeling 'sexy' or 'beautiful' while being gazed at might make them submit to the encounters willingly. For men, the case is hardly the same as they are not socialized into wanting to feel 'pretty' or linking their confidence with how they look or appear. Men who care about their looks often have to be a subject of ridicule or taunts unlike women for whom looking 'beautiful' is a serious business. The situation is quite different in fashion industry as male models invest in

body products and try to keep a well-maintained body mostly giving in to the fitness culture and investing in it more than their female counterparts.

Male models while working in the industry find themselves as objects of the homosexual gaze which often compels them to highlight their masculine traits. Such negotiation of sexuality often places them in uncomfortable situations and exposes them to the possibility of being harmed. It was established in the study that male models are prone to such unsafe circumstances more than female models as the former find themselves in an industry which is highly feminized and run by mostly women and gay men for a change.

It was acknowledged earlier that fashion industry as a whole is not looked upon as a preferable career prospect by societal standards. Here fashion modeling is not accepted as a viable career option as society asks men to find a handsome job with stable pay and as fashion is mostly associated with being feminine or queer, male models end up being subject of discreditable opinions. On the other hand female models have to endure criticisms and comments that are more or less related to stereotypical ideas of how fake they look with so much makeup on or be recipients of offensive statements that question their character. If a random girl uses makeup or wear bold clothes, she is often taunted by the term *'model'* signifying how people analyze this work in a quite derogatory manner.

Fashion models in general are placed in one of the lowest positions within the industry hierarchy with no power or influence. But female models, who are more in demand and employed in large numbers, are in a better state than male models. Due to the market structure which is more or less inclined towards women products and garments, the fashion biz focuses more on the production and designing of women apparels. Therefore more designers are involved in womenswear rather than menswear. It leads to less work for existing male models; with more competition on line for them as increasing number of men enter the field every year. Due to more number of individuals with less amount of work, their labour is counted as cheap as they are paid much lesser than what female models earn. They end up in the lowliest position with more investment in themselves than their earnings. To manage their industry relations and handle the scrutiny and judgments, they perform surface acting to strategically use their charm and manipulate people into liking them. They often put on their hard selves and take the criticisms in a more rugged manner as they indulge themselves in physical activities. There is lack of emotional discharge in them than

the females which probably has more or less to do with the socialization process which pushes women to be more sensitive than males. Their situation in the industry worsens with time, for which many of them become victims of depression and leave the profession out of no hope.

5.4 Concluding remarks

The state of fashion models is dispiriting as they often face exploitation in the hands of designers or other influential individuals in the industry for their own benefit. They are positioned lowest in the industry hierarchy which makes them powerless and leave them in a vulnerable state prone to risky situations. They adopt extreme diets and invest so much time, money and energy into creating a certain look or body. The struggle is never-ending as the models have to bear constant rejections and keep going for castings in their short-lived insecure career. Regardless of the circumstances they are facing in their own lives, they are demanded to look flawless with an ever-ready photogenic appearance at most times. They end up being a mute mannequin only inhibiting a certain kind of personality which is marketable and can provide gains to their employers/clients or the industry as a whole. They become subjects of spectacle for the media, clients and the public in general on one hand and simultaneously subjects of surveillance by the same public, clients, colleagues, even family, acquaintances or community as a whole. They use their emotional labour to manage their emotions and keep a check on their feelings, and find respect in a job associated with prejudgments and often not taken seriously or credited as more of a hobby. This often causes them to be sufferers of depression and anxiety and even pushes them into habits like consumption of drugs. Amidst all these burdensome conditions the fashion models have to undergo, the returns are not worth it at all both in terms of pay or respect. But still many individuals aspire to enter the field every year and the existing models continue their journey and struggles by holding onto the dreams of becoming one of the top models at some point in future. But the statistics do not seem favourable for all as only a handful among thousands and thousands of them actually reach that position. Fashion modeling does not seem like a thriving profession at the end of the day and to make it one there are several issues that should be taken up and dealt with systematically and effectively.

Assam has a strong base in the handloom and textiles sector and can gain one of the topmost positions for the investment in production of clothing and garments. The primary reason for the

state's fashion industry being still on the glooming side is due to the lack of funds for fashion-related ventures in the Northeast region. If it changes, then local and regional market would expand, and employment opportunities could increase. This would contribute in more work for the fashion models. Also if the market for menswear expands, the designers would shift their focus on men clothing alongside women clothing. It would help male models to get more chances of employment and can bring about betterment in their condition. As models face all sorts of exploitation and undergo risky situations from people inside the industry, it becomes necessary to deal with the inside issues first. There is a need for proper implementation of a union which would hear the plight of the models and unite them to stand up against the exploitation they face. There is also a requirement for modeling agencies in the state to represent fashion models and negotiate on behalf of them just like the ones in the big metro cities. They can build contacts with designers and advertising agencies to provide quality work to the ever growing number of models. The unrealistic fashion and body standards set for models should be restrained. There should be a procedure that requires models to present a medical certificate that confirms they are healthy or not excessively underweight. Also there should be body diversity in the industry with increasing involvement of plus-size models which would help shatter the obsession with the 'thin' body ideal. There should be proper management in the industry with stringent rules and fixed qualification criteria set for models to enter the field like in any other job. This would help in removing certain prejudiced ideas about fashion models having only physical beauty but no intelligence. Awareness about the artistic nature of fashion and the hard work involved in it should be extended among the outsiders who lack knowledge about the fuller version of the work and judge individuals based on their sexist ideas or due to media influence.

As times are changing, society is also catching up to the change. Many families in the present decade have started to warm up and be supportive of their sons and daughters taking up fashion modeling as a primary occupation. With changes inside the field and in the cultural structure, it is hoped that people become more adaptive and accepting of this showbiz work.

5.5 Scope for Further Research

This section highlights the possible avenues for further work on this area. Due to constraint of time and resources, the involvement of male models was limited in this research study leaving a

lot of in-depth exploring to do on how they deal with the emotional and physical strain at work and how they employ emotional labour to handle such situations in both their professional and personal lives. It was discovered that male models are rather easier targets of vulnerable circumstances compared to females as suggested by the participants. But there is a lot left to explore on this thread as it is widely seen that women in maximum instances do not step forward with their sexual harassment accounts out of fear of mortification or fail to recognize it as one; therefore it might be a reason of lesser narratives of abuse on part of the female models.

There are fewer studies on fashion modeling as a profession involving emotional labour and further research is necessary to address various issues associated with this occupation. This study could contribute in understanding how fashion models apply emotional labour and how it impacts their identities. Future studies can involve larger sample size and collect descriptive data to examine the effect of emotional labour on the performances of fashion models and compare it to the key findings of this research study. Future research can also include comparative studies between fashion modeling and other service sector occupations.

This study examined certain situations when fashion models performed surface acting and deep acting but more research is needed to identify why fashion models employ either one or the other mechanism of emotional labour in particular situations. It is necessary to understand different features of fashion modeling within a specific occupational context in India and hopefully this research study will serve as a premise for future research which aim to investigate the aesthetically and emotionally demanding occupation of fashion modeling.

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Appendix

<u>Interview Guide (Models)</u>

- Introduction
    - o Name.
    - o Age.
    - o For how long have you been working in this field?
    - o How did you get into this profession? What interested you?
    - o Describe an average day of work for yourself? What is your schedule like?
    - o How many shows do you get in a month/year? Are you a professional model or work as a part-time freelancer?
    - o What is the income range?
    - o Is this your only profession or are you doing some other job parallely?
- What is it like to be a model, like walking on the ramp or doing photoshoots? Share your experience.
- What kind of skills is required to enter this line of work or to sustain in it? How did you manage to acquire those skills?
- How much time, labour and energy does it take to maintain your body, to fit into the body ideals required to stay in this job?
- Have you ever been told to work upon anything? Did you ever face any issue or difficulty to attain that?
- Do you think the primary requirements of this job as per cultural standards lead you towards unrealistic expectations regarding your body image? Why do you think that is the case? Specifically in case of women.
- What are the struggles you need to deal with to maintain your position in the field? Share your continuous struggles that you still have to go through to keep getting work.
- You are selling your looks in a way, in front of the judges in auditions or castings; how does it make you feel? Do you feel like being objectified as your body is more valued than your other qualities?

- Have you ever been in such a situation where you felt unsafe or exposed in a way when people were commenting, judging you based on your appearance? If yes, please share incident.

- How is this process normalized in this particular line of work by employers, clients etc?

- How do you handle a situation when you do not feel like wearing a specific attire or you wear and feel uncomfortable but you got no say in it?

- How do you handle rejection and criticisms? How do you deal with your emotions at that point?

- Have you ever been asked to compromise or felt vulnerable or unsafe in any way?

- Many consider this work not as respectable as any other job and people do have stereotypical views on how models are not smart. Did you ever face such a situation where you were at the receiving end of it and had to bear the stigma of being a model? Elaborate.

- Sometimes, your actual emotions may not match up with the ones required in your job. How do you manage your genuine emotions so they match with the required emotions in your profession and perform well on the front stage or in front of a camera?

- Do you feel any sort of burden to appear in a way that is appealing to the clients or how do you manage your emotions and keep up your appearances and interactions?

- How does managing your emotions in this way make you feel at the end of the day?

- Your job requires you to be confident, polite, passive, and obedient, keep a smiling face when at work; did it affect your personality in any way? How?

- How do the effects of working as a model in this industry extend to your personal space? How does it affect your time schedules and your relationships?

- Do you feel appreciated enough for the job? Amount of hard work you put into it, do you think that returns you get are sufficient?

- What is the status of male models in comparison to female models in the industry? Share your insights and experiences regarding job security, pay, age, disciplining of body and their position in terms of status, power and respect?

- What are your future plans in relation to this profession?

- Can you elaborate on the factors that make this profession difficult?

Interview Guide (Fashion designers and fashion promoters)

- Introduction
    - Name.
    - Age.
    - From how long have you been in the industry?
    - How did you come to be working in this industry? What interested you?
    - Are you more inclined towards designing male garments or female garments? Or both?
- As a fashion designer/promoter, what type of requirements do you want in your models, both in case of males and females?
- Do you think the primary requirements given in the job; it may have lead fashion models to have unrealistic expectations regarding their bodies, specifically women?
- Does it have something to do with the gender norms in the society; different set of ideals for men and women? Elaborate.
- Is the fashion industry different for male models and female models? Please give reasons for your answer.
- What is the fashion scene in Assam or North-East like? Elaborate.
- Over the years the number of models has increased in Assam, why do you think that is the case?
- There are too many beauty pageant shows coming up in North-East (NE) region, why do you think that is happening?
- How does the process of selection of the models work in auditions or castings?
- How do they usually take criticisms? Do the models go through depression, stress, anxiety after rejection in auditions?
- How do judgments and criticisms get normalized in this line of work?
- What kind of hardships do the models usually go through? How do you see them deal with it?
- What is the pay range of models (male and female) in the industry in NE region? Is it enough according to you?
- What are the factors that make this profession difficult for the models?

- The job has less security, less pay and lack of stability. Why is the number of individuals joining the field still increasing over the years?

- How do the power dynamics work in the industry?

- Why is the condition of models in a sorry state in the region? What can be done to change that?

- The stern behavior against them, how would you describe that?

- What can be done to make the fashion industry improved and better in Assam?