

WHY SO MUCH SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN GLOBAL INDIA?

COMMENTARY

HARASANKAR ADHIKARI

Abstract. This commentary examines women's behavior and activities in terms of their dress and conditional consent to sexual relation. The women are victims of gender practices in our patriarchal system. It looks women as sex object and historically the status of women is limited within this periphery. But women's education and participation in workforce in global India are basic instruments to change their status. The work on gender justice and women human rights it has failed to look the women beyond sex objects. The rampant sexual violence against women reminds us that there is a problem in root. In this case women are also to some extent responsible for this. Their body revealing dress and sexual relation with male partner are significant. They have also some behavior problem when they usually compete with male in terms of their freedom to daily acts. So, we need change in our gender practice and the family should come forward as correctional home. It might reduce violence against women.

Keywords: Violence against women, body revealing dress, sexual relation, gender practice

In Rigveda and other scriptures women held a high place of respect in Ancient India. But later on women lost their status and were relegated to the background because of social, political and economic changes (Goel 2004). The patriarchal politics tied them to the boundaries of the house with many evil customs and rituals. Thus there was a prolonged history of women deprivation. But in global India statistics show the changes in declining sex ratio, health status, literacy rate, work participation rate and political participation among women. On the other hand we find that social evils like dowry death, child marriage, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, exploitation of women workers are rampant throughout India. Humiliation, rape, molestation, kidnapping, torture, etc have grown up over the years (Singh and Chowdhury 2012). So, is it only the backdrop of the stereotyped attitudes towards women in our society? When the feminist movement and Govt.'s development policy and practice deal for gender equity and women's empowerment, it happens to be excluded to look it through a 'sexuality lens' (Cornwall and Hawkins 2013). And women's empowerment turns to sexual empowerment and it becomes a scope of sexual exploitation and harassment to male. The discussion in this paper has been concentrated on women's behavior and activities in terms of their dress and conditional consent to sexual relation.

The issue of women dress

It is commonly viewed that the cultural practices constructs women as sexual object (Berger 1972; Fredrickson & Roberts 1997; Kuhn 1985; LeMoncheek 1984; Spetizack 1999). The

objectifying images like exposed body parts, seductive appearance and tempting behavior of women project their sensuality and an eager readiness to consent to all men's sexual advances in all times. Such depiction of women has increased dramatically over the past decades, becoming particularly common place in Indian society. This widespread sexual objectification of women transmits certain messages to men and it influences the expectation regarding the interaction between sexes. This objectifying representation operates undoubtedly to turn the female body into a willing target for male sexual lust (Spitzack 1999). Women dress in body-revealing clothing for variety of socially dictated reasons that require in order to be socially valued. Considered attractive, both self and others and it is to feel good themselves. The primary reason for wearing it is the social, interpersonal and personal advantage of such clothing in terms of attractiveness and desirability. While men's attributions of motivation for this sexualized look is different as conveying an interest in sex and their perceptions are for temptation and seduction (Peter and Valkenburg 2007).

After all body-revealing wear may be a stimulus to men and the sexually objectifying representation of women is the very purpose of the sexual excitement and stimulation of men. In present social context female beauty is constructed in sexual terms. In fact sexualized representations of female beauty pervade almost every form of expression in present day and the media that has spread worldwide is saturated with sexualized depictions of women in tight body-revealing clothing and exposed body parts (Aubrey 2006; Engelin-Maddox 2006). To be considered attractive in the present social prism they must remain to these dictates and adopted the sexualized look. In addition to this the contemporary pressures coercing women into the sexualized are the current objectifying fashion codes that have turned the body-revealing attire into standard female

appearance, to which all women are expected to aspire and adhere. Thus present mode has turned women into more of an object and less of a person in the social prism and valuation, at the very same time that it has made it almost impossible for them to avoid wearing this type of clothing. The women are valued primarily on the basis of their looks which women lack tangible power of their own. Their sexualized appearance becomes one of their very few assets in present social milieu (Fedrickson and Roberts 1997; LeMoncheck 1985; Muehlenkamp and Saris Baglama 2002). So there may be a relation between provocative clothing and rape/sexual assault.

Conditional Consent to cohabitation

The social value of women has been determined in terms of sexual object. In many cases the women of varied age group take it as a tool of benefits. Among such conditional consent to sexual relation is one. It becomes a method of sexual exploitation when they fail to fulfill their promise after the act. The law and order authority takes it as granted to punish the male counterpart for breaking of a pledge. But the consent to sexual relation “is an act in which one person alters the normative relations in which other stand with respect to what they may do” (Kleing 2001). That is their rights, duties, obligations, privileges, and the like. It can transform a harmful action to a non-harmful action. It is sufficient to legitimize interaction for mutual benefit (Fletcher 1996). A person could choose to interact with others in a way that benefits them yet is to his own detriment, so long as the choice is clearly voluntary. But if people typically consent only to those interactions that will

improve their expected welfare and if people typically make fairly good judgments about such matters, then consensual interactions will leave both parties better off than they otherwise would be.

The voluntary co-operation may explain in terms of an ethics of autonomy which also has two dimensions- positive and negative. Sexual relations are legitimate if female's consent is to endorse the positive dimension of autonomy, the notion that people should be permitted to seek emotional intimacy and sexual fulfillment with willing partners (Wertheimer 2003). So, only for some material gains the women would not break the ethics and first they should depend on their own value and respect. Own potentiality would be the instrument to come out from male's provocation. Otherwise they would be abused and it would cultivate a stigma in their rest life.

Conclusion

The feminism has broken the hetero sexual association of female sexual awakening with dependency on a man. But women's sexual fulfillment without man is unnatural according to antifeminist view(Adhikari 2013). So in patriarchal society where the women's body considers as sex object, the women's sexual exploitation is common. The women's empowerment would not be promoted in terms of sexuality. There should be a line of control to place them in respected manner where their sexualized look would not be parameter of their social value. The rectification at their own level might be reduced violence and the correction from family might be started to look women not as sexual commodity. Their potentiality, skilled and creativity would place them to a respectable

position. It would be the right step to move towards equity and justice. Anyway presentation of or self-use as sex object would never be stopped sexual violation.

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