

THE EFFECT OF RAPE SEXUAL AND MAN WISHES RAPE ON WOMEN DURING COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS

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Abstract:-

An experiment was conducted to assess whether the judgmental effects of inadmissible evidence would vary as a function of type of rape. Subjects (predominantly Caucasian) read rape scenarios that depicted either an acquaintance rape or a stranger rape, which contained information implying that the victim had a promiscuous sexual history. In one condition, subjects were instructed to disregard this information (inadmissible condition), while in the other condition, subjects received no such instructions (admissible condition). The results indicated that (1) males perceived that there was a higher probability of victim enjoyment than females, (2) perceptions of those in the admissible condition were less favorable than those in the inadmissible condition, and (3) perceptions of those in the acquaintance rape conditions were less favorable than those in the stranger rape condition. The results also indicated that perceptions of the probability of victim enjoyment did not vary as a function of type of rape when the information was admissible. On the other hand, when the information was inadmissible, perceptions of the probability of victim enjoyment in the acquaintance rape conditions were higher than those in the stranger rape condition. The possible basis of these findings are discussed.

Introduction:-

No crisis, it seems, can stem the flow of hate on online networking platforms — or in the real world, for that matter. As a humble microbe brings humankind to its knees, many Indians on social media have kept up a tsunami of virulent Islamophobia against Muslims at large and in particular the anti-CAA protest — forcibly discontinued by the police just this Tuesday — in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh. Some are demanding communal profiling of those testing positive for the novel Coronavirus. Meanwhile, our fellow-citizens from the North East are facing hostility based on uneducated assumptions about their racial links to China from where the first cases of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) were reported.

You might imagine that trolls are too pre-occupied with their Corona-related bile to care about everyday misogyny. Wishful thinking. Since the hanging of the four men convicted in the 2012 Delhi gang rape this weekend, the Army of Animosity has found time to pop open bottles of virtual champagne to celebrate the rapists' deaths while also turning on those who oppose capital punishment for rape.

Not everyone in favour of the death penalty indulges in vulgar displays of joy over what should instead be a sobering moment for all of us, but it is a peculiarity of those who do, that while they claim to stand for women's rights, they respond with misogyny to any dissent from women. The aggression this time round adheres to the template that is fished out every.single.time there is a nationwide discussion on capital punishment for rapists.

'COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE'

Newspapers can easily excuse themselves by saying that if they were to cover every rape case in the country, reports of rape would fill up all their pages. But dailies also let go of numerous rapes that deserve coverage given

the interplay between sexual crimes and caste dominance. When they do cover such stories, they place the news half-heartedly only to fill empty spaces in a lean news season.

Disease outbreaks like COVID-19 threaten the health of all. But women and girls are disproportionately affected. During epidemics, the very measures taken to protect populations and keep health systems afloat leave women and girls especially vulnerable to violence.

Sexual based violence is a hidden consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. As communities around the world are forced to stay at home, women and girls are at a heightened risk of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, and other forms of sexual based violence.

Because disasters exacerbate pre-existing gender inequities and power hierarchies, violence in the home may worsen as prolonged quarantine and economic stressors increase tension in the household. Women and girls are isolated from the people and resources that can help them, and they have few opportunities to distance themselves from their abusers.

During epidemics, it's harder for sexual and reproductive health workers to appropriately screen for sexual and gender-based violence. And referral pathways to care are disrupted.

This focus was important, but protocols were never established to protect girls and women from violence during the outbreak. Quarantines and school closures were put in place to contain the spread of disease. This left women and adolescent girls vulnerable to coercion, exploitation and sexual abuse.

There is already concern that COVID-19 is leading to an increase of sexual based violence.

EMPATHY

Our responses are imbalanced, too. Our apathy is likely driven by economic and cultural differences with the victims. The psychology behind empathy explains why.

“When given a choice to empathize with strangers, and share in their experiences, people tend to avoid empathy because of its perceived cognitive effort (emotional hard work),” according to a report published in Psychology Today. We empathize easily and naturally only when we have a sense of social, cultural, and economic affinity with a victim.

In Kenya, cases of sexual, gender-based and domestic violence have increased significantly since the country began its response to the virus. In China, domestic violence reports nearly doubled after cities were put under lockdown, with 90% related to the epidemic. Helpline calls have increased in Malaysia, Lebanon, France, Argentina, Cyprus and Singapore. A sharp drop in calls in Italy suggests that the lockdown also prevented many women from seeking help. According to the World Health Organization, 35% of women around the world have already experienced some form of sexual based violence in their lifetime. In some crisis settings, this number skyrocketed to more than 70%.

In Delhi, case of Radhakrishnan tweeted just hours after the hangings, “We are not at war. The state should never kill,” her timeline was deluged, not with polite disagreements but with sexist jibes and sexual assaults. The rapists “should be allowed to roam free so that they know where you live,” said one chap called Sid. But the vilest was the Twitter handle @HeyBhardwaj run by a fellow identifying himself as Manish Bhardwaj, “Sanyaasi CEO” and New York City resident, who wrote (warning: graphic imagery coming up), “Stick a couple of rods into yourself and twist them around, then take your intestines out and place them on the road.. Your thick skull will finally get it.” A man wishing rape on a woman who objects to the death penalty for rape because he advocates death for rapists as a means to end all rapes — can there be a greater irony than this? If ever there was a perfect illustration of patriarchy at work, it is this. Activists in the field have cried themselves hoarse for decades explaining that the death penalty does not deter rapists, a certainty of conviction does. Feminists have also underlined the phenomenon of people demanding town-square justice for rape in a bid to satisfy their own bloodlust rather than from any particular empathy for rape survivors. This explains why many of those who cry “hang the rapist” ... “no trials for

rapists” ... “let the public lynch them” ... “they should be stoned” ... “hang them in public” feel comfortable also directing verbal brutality, including rape threats, at women who disagree.

For men like the troll who spewed venom at Radhakrishnan, women are a protectorate, a group that requires protection and control in equal measure. By their logic, rapists must be hanged for the good of women, and women who are against these hangings — read: women who do not know what is good for women — must be shown their place, if necessary with the very violence that is sought to be ceased by the capital punishment these men recommend.

CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL COVERAGE

Violence against women has been socially justified, romanticized in the classical arts and contemporary cinema to such an extent, that those who subject women to violence — emotional, verbal and physical — and seek to restrict women’s freedom in the guise of fighting for them, often buy their own patriarchal propaganda. In her book *Fearless Freedom* (Penguin, 2020), political activist Kavita Krishnan speaks of “the dominant discourse around women’s rights, which coded ‘women’s safety’ as curtailment of women’s mobility and autonomy, confinement of women to homes or hostels, and subjection of women to a relentless regime of surveillance and control.” This includes thought control and curbing the articulation of opinions — again, for her sake, of course.

The troll who attacked Radhakrishnan does not see himself as an attacker at all: he is really guarding a woman from her stupidity because obviously he knows what is in her best interests, and if she does not, she needs to be set right as society tells us an errant sister/wife/daughter must be. On being inundated with criticism from activists and other members of the public, he got further abusive, explaining that he spoke from anger against “rapists and their leftist enablers”.

Ironically, women are not the only ones at the receiving end, nor are men the only ones who get personal in such circumstances. There is a template too for use against men who are anti-death penalty — their critics rarely send them rape threats or wish rape on them. The standard response was in evidence when Debraj Mookerjee, associate professor at Ramjas College, Delhi University, wrote about the Delhi hangings. “No noose is good noose ... I remain opposed to the death penalty. I’m all for justice. But I’m against enforced death. Especially state enforced,” he began his long Facebook post on the subject. As if on cue, a reply came from a woman who identifies herself as a member of the French faculty at Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) — she asked Mookerjee to use his imagination to put his own daughter “in Nirbhaya’s place”.

Conclusion:-

This kind of commentary can only come from a society that views women as the repositories of men’s honor, standard-bearers of family and community honor, and rape as the destruction of a woman’s izzat (honor). In such a scenario, telling a man that a woman he loves is — or might be or could someday be — a rape survivor or a sex worker is seen as the ultimate insult to him. That such a distasteful remark should come from a woman is a reminder — if any were needed — that women are often conscious enablers and/or unconscious participants in patriarchy.

Once you delve into his mindset and the socio-political context in which he operates, his disturbing behavior should come as no surprise. After all, when the rape of women is not your actual concern, when your focus is your own thirst for blood, when your goal is pleasure-seeking through retribution, it is not unexpected at all that you would commit sexual violence — verbal or otherwise — against a woman who does not back your solution to the sexual violence you claim to oppose.

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