SEXISM AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS RAPE VICTIMS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ms. Blessy Vincent   Dr. Archana Jose

Lecturer, St. Thomas College, Pathanamthitta   Consultant Psychologist, Kannur

Abstract: Violence against women, especially rapes, has been a pervasive problem in the society. It is well documented that victims of rape not only experience serious short and long-term psychological harm as a direct result of the assault, but may also be stigmatized by others   (e.g., be blamed for nor resting). Because of the increased incidents of rapes in the recent past, it becomes increasingly necessary to understand the attitude people form towards rape and rape victims. Thus present study research endeavor was aimed to study sexism and attitude towards rape victims among college students. The sample of the study consisted of 60 post graduate students (N=30 males, N=30 females) from Kottayam district, Kerala. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and the Attitude towards Rape Victims Scale Questionnaires were used for collection of data. Pearson's correlation and t-test were used for the analysis of data. The resulted indicated that there is significant difference in hostile sexism on male and female post graduate students. The result also revealed that there is significant difference between male and females in benevolent sexism. The result further revealed that there is no relation between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims.

Keywords: Sexism, Sexual violence, Rape Myths, Attitude towards rape victims

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence against women is deeply entrenched in the feudal, patriarchal Indian society. Section 375 of

Indian penal cord(IPC) reads as follows : the offence of rape is one which is committed (a) by a man who has a sexual intercourse with a women against her will (b) without her consent or even with her consent when that consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or hurt , (c) when by fraud when he is not her husband , he obtains her consent by making her believe that he is another man to whom she is a wife or believes herself to be Sexual violence against women is deeply entrenched in the feudal, patriarchal Indian society. Section 375 of Indian penal cord(IPC) reads as follows : the offence of rape is one which is committed (a) by a man who has a sexual intercourse with a women against her will (b) without her consent or even with her consent when that consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or hurt , (c) when by fraud when he is not her husband , he obtains her consent by making her believe that he is another man to whom she is a wife or believes herself to be lawfully married , (d) when she is intoxicated or (e) when she is under sixteen years of age irrespective of her consent. Section 376 of IPC reads , a man convicted of an offence of rape is punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but may extent to ten years or for life and shall also be

liable to fine. According to section 376 (2) whoever commits gang rape , shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than ten years but which may be for life and shall also be liable to fine.

In India, while judging the latest rape statistics released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) annual record, 24,923 rape cases are reported across many the country. According to 2018 records, there is an increase in the number of rapes than before. The global prevalence of child sexual abuse has been estimated at 19.7% for females and 7.9% for males.

Regressive attitudes towards women are rooted in India's deeply traditional and conservative culture, in which women embody a family and community's honour. In India, many consider the rape victims as 'monsters'. Our society is misled by rape myths prevalent on a large scale which affect the attitude of the people in general and the rape victims in particular. The victims of rape tend to withdraw from social surrounding fearing reprisals from the neighbours.

1.1 Sexism

Sexism has been conceptualized in different ways over time. Sexism is thus considered as a reflection of hostility towards women. Writings define sexism as negative attitude or discriminatory behaviour based on the presumed inferiority or difference of women as a group (Cameron, 1977).

The theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Lee et al., 2010) posits that sexism comprises hostile sexist attitudes and benevolent sexist attitudes. Hostile sexist attitudes and behaviours are open, visible and explicit, while the attitudes and behaviours encompassed by benevolent sexism are more subtle and less visible.

1.2 Attitude towards rape victims

What is the role of culture in sustaining attitudes and beliefs about sexual assault? Due to the pervasive stigma surrounding sexual assault and subsequent low reporting rates, it is difficult to gain a complete understanding of the prevalence of sexual assault across cultures. According to a report from UN women (Turquet et al, 2012), it is estimated that only 11% of sexual assaults are reported worldwide, although this varies by country. One factor that has promoted the stigma surrounding rape is the acceptance of rape myths, which are a set of attitudes and opinions suggesting victims are at fault for having been raped (Brownmiller, 1975). A number of factors, including attitudes toward women (Costin and Schwarz, 1987; Das et al., 2014), influences rape myth acceptance.

1.3 Rape myths and related attitude

Sociologists, Schwendinger and Schwendinger in 1970s, first introduced the concept of rape myths. It can be defined as, a complex set of cultural beliefs that serve to continue male sexual aggression against women by acts like blaming the victim and shriving the perpetrator. Common rape myths suggest that women often falsely claim being raped and only 'certain kinds of women' are victimized. It is her fault if her partner forces sex on her, men from nice middle class houses never rape! These ideas refuse the fact that sexual victimization is widespread and deny the personal vulnerability of all women. It

has also been observed that rape victims are often blamed for rape (Campbell et al, 2001) and such blame reactions further intensify the feelings of self blame.

1.4 Attitude towards women

Cultural differences in attitudes toward women exist especially when our country India is included. Attitude towards women , gender equality and the reduction of gender role stereotyping have always been central to women's rights movements , which occur worldwide though often take culture specific forms (Baird and Obaid –Chinoy ,2004 ; Crawford , 2003). Gender roles is defined as , expectations applied to individuals based on their biological sex and attitudes toward women or gender role ideology as individual views of appropriate roles for men and women (Boehnke, 2011).

1.5 Aim of the study

The present study aims to understand sexism and attitude towards rape victims among post graduate students.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Hypothesis

H1: There will be significant gender differences in hostile sexism among college students

H2: There will be significant gender differences in benevolent sexism among college students

H3: There will be significant gender differences in attitude towards rape victims among college students

H4: There will be significant relationship between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims among college students

H5: There will be significant relationship between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims among college students.

2.2 Research Design

The selection of an appropriate method is one of the most important tasks while conducting a

study. This research study followed a quantitative design.

2.3 Sample

In order to meet the objective of the study a total of 60 students were selected. This included 30 males and 30 females respectively. The participants were selected from kottayam district in Kerala. They students were presuming different courses. The age range of the participants was between 18-28 years.

2.4 Measures Used for the study

Since the goal of the study is to analyze sexism and attitude towards rape victims among college students, valid instruments that accurately examined the variables were used. They include: Ambivalent sexism scale , Attitude towards rape victims scale.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

Statistical data analysis is a procedure of performing various statistical operations. Data in statistical analysis consists of variables. Depending upon the number of variables, the researcher performs different statistical techniques. Statistical techniques used in this study for analysing data were Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test.

1. Independent t-test

2. Pearson's product moment correlation

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Hostile sexism among females and males

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P
HS	Males	30	35.60	4.368	3.320	0.02
	Females	30	31.03	6.139		

Significant at 0.02 level

The mean value of hostile sexism among male was found to be 35.60 (SD 4.368) and that of females was found to be 6.139 (SD 6.139). The t value obtained was 3.320 and the p value was found to be 0.02. There is a significant difference between the hostile sexism of males and females (0.02 levels). The results clearly indicated that there were statistically significant differences between females and males in hostile sexism at 0.02 levels. From the figure it can be identify that males have higher hostile sexism than females. This might be due to males have more social interactions and social groups for share their feeling and thoughts. They are spending more time than females in social group interactions and activities. The alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference between hostile sexism of males and females is accepted.
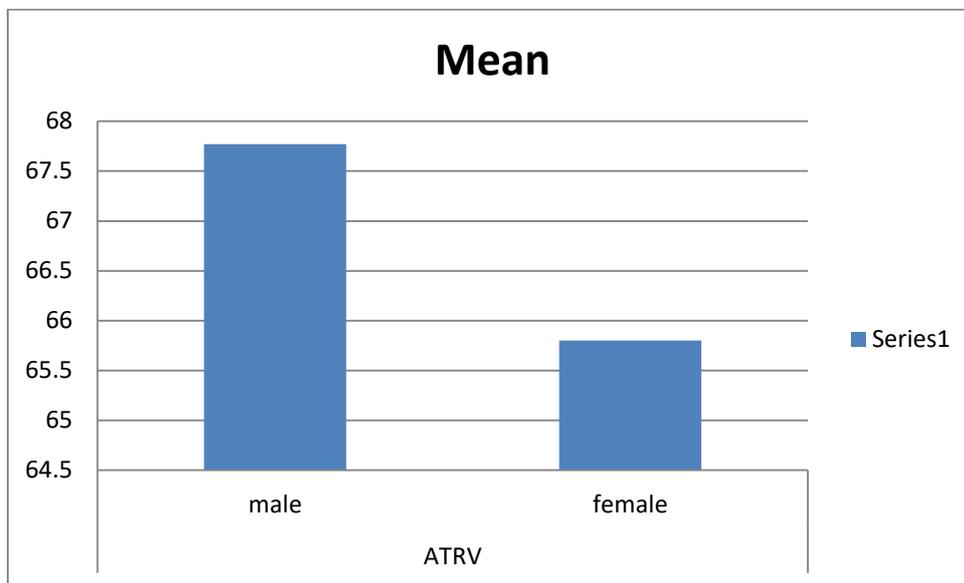
Figure 1mean difference in hostile sexism of males and females

The illustration presented in Figure 1 clearly indicated that males have higher hostile sexism than females.

Table 2

Benevolent sexism among females and males

	gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
BS	**Males**	30	32.73	5.271	3.393	0.01**
	Females	30	38.00	6.670		

**significant at 0.01 level

The mean values obtained of the benevolent sexism of males was found to be 32.73 (SD 5.271) and that of females was found to be 38.00 (SD 6.670). The t- value was obtained as 3.393 and the p value as 0.01. Independent sample t test among male and females in their benevolent sexism clearly indicates that there were significant differences exist between these two groups at 0.01 levels. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference between benevolent sexism of both genders is accepted.

Females show more benevolent sexism than males. This might be due to their ability to cope with the situation effectively. Females are more capable of managing their emotional side.
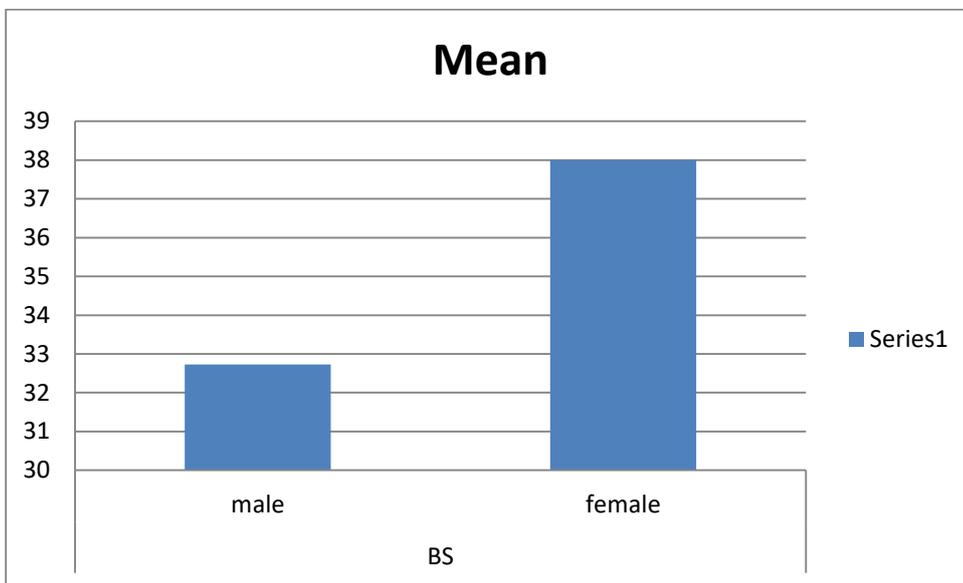
Figure 2 mean difference in benevolent sexism of males and females

The illustration presented in Figure 2 clearly indicated that females have higher benevolent sexism than males.

Table 3

Attitude towards rape victims (ATRV) among male and females

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
ATRV	Males	30	67.77	7.981	.626	0.534
	Females	30	65.80	15.246	.626	

NS: not significant

The mean value of attitude towards rape victims among males was found to be 67.77 (SD 7.981) and that of females was found to be 65.80 (SD 15.246). The obtained t value was found to be .626 and the p value was found to be .534. The results indicates that p value is higher than, 0.05, the significance level. So findings in the Table 1 show that there is no significant difference between males and females in the component attitude towards rape victims. The alternate hypothesis, there will be significant difference between males and females on attitude towards rape victims is rejected. The independent sample *t* test revealed that there was no significant difference between the males and females on attitude towards rape victims.
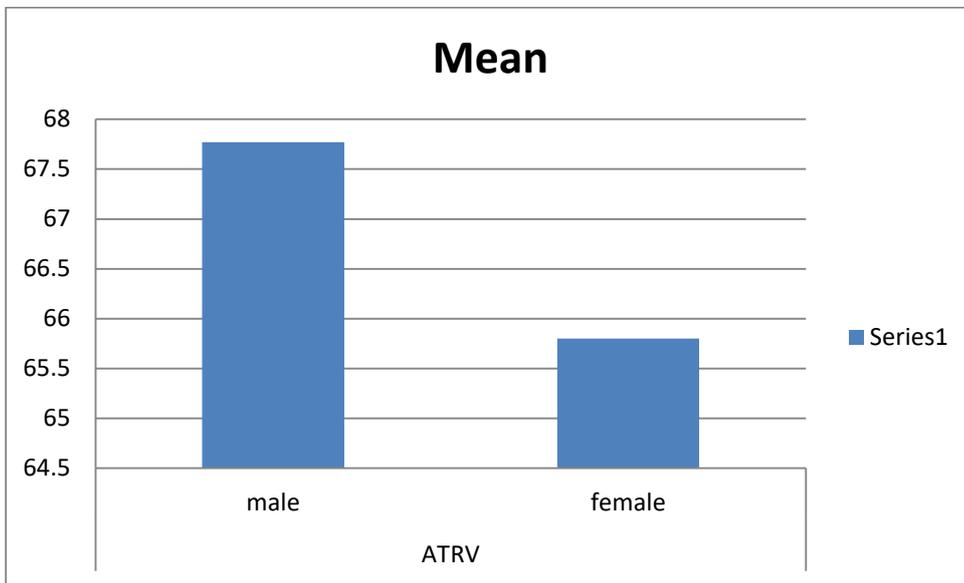
Figure 3 mean difference in attitude towards rape victims in males and females

The illustration presented in Figure 3 clearly indicated that males have higher attitude towards rape victims than females.

Table 4

Correlation between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims(ATRV)

		Hostile	ATRV
Hostile sexism	**Pearson Correlation**	1	- 0.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.498
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1958.983	- 366.883
	Covariance	33.203	- 6.218
	N	60	60
ATRV	**Pearson Correlation**	- 0.089	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.498	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	- 366.883	8646.183
	Covariance	- 6.218	146.545
	N	60	60

The Table 4 shows the correlation between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims of post graduate students and it is evident from the table that there is no correlation between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims. Which is not significant as the r-value (r = - 0.089); which is not significant). Thus, our alternative hypothesis which states that, there is significant correlation between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims of college students is rejected.

Table -5

Correlation between benevolent sexism and Attitude towards rape victims

		Benevolent Sexism	ATRV
Benevolent Sexism	**Pearson Correlation**	1	0.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.990
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	2511.93	7.76
	Covariance	42.57	0.132
	N	60	60
ATRV	**Pearson Correlation**	0.002	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.990	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	7.767	8646.183
	Covariance	0.132	146.54
	N	60	60

The Table 5 shows the correlation between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims of post graduate students and it is evident from the table that there is correlation between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims , which is significant as the r-value (r = 0.002 ; which is significant). Thus, our alternative hypothesis which states that, there is significant relationship between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims of college students is accepted.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study show significant differences in hostile sexism among male and female students. There are also significant differences in benevolent sexism among male and female students. There is no significant difference in attitude towards rape victims among male and female students. From the correlation analysis hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims has negative correlation. But in the case of benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims, they have positive correlation.

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