

## **RAPE SCENES IN MOVIES AND LITERATURE- ITS IMPACT ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SOCIETY**

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### *Abstract*

Literature and Films are the fast selling mediums of entertainment in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And entertainment can include genres such as action, horror, sci-fi, drama, romance, thrillers and much more. One of the most best-selling techniques in the entertainment sector is the introduction of a shade of obscenity into the medium along with the normal content and presenting it to the world at large. The researcher through this research focuses on bringing to light the positive and negative impact of this shady content on the society; which includes people belonging to different age groups with the help of an empirical study.

### **How are Rape Scenes in Books or Films Formed?**

For more than a decade, the importance of having a hobby to relax in our leisure time has been a matter of discussion. It begins from having a book to read, movies, video games, learning to play an instrument to having a YouTube page for pleasure. These have agreed to fulfill the objective of relaxing our minds in our busy schedules. But with the introduction of advanced technology, the accessibility and restrictions to the content that is available is limited, which paves way for introduction and normalization of obscene contents also in the society. Obscenity includes all acts that disturb the moral values depicted by the society during this period of time. As obscenity shall not be showed in its raw sense, it is shown as a reaction of a particular behavior which may be good or bad depending upon the story that the medium depicts. Another advantage to this grayish effect is that it would easily escape from the laws of obscenity and thus not finding it difficult to publish, circulate or even market such contents in the society. The major factor which has not yet

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been looked upon is the impact of this normalization of the contents in the minds of the individuals in the society including that of the millennium kids. Does it pave way for normalization of rape? Does it portray heroism rather than shame in involving in activities of rape? How does it impact the young generation? Does it re-define the moral values of the society? Does it impact the behavior of the adults of the society? etc is some of the common questions that are to be answered for having a deeper understanding on this subject of study.

There are no particular methods on how a rape scene to be portrayed. Therefore it is completely left to the discretion of the makers on how the scene should look like. It is known as the Creator's freedom on his work. The makers have the liberty to either glorify the scene or make it look like the most heinous act of human kind. It is influenced by the maker's mindset and values in-built in him; the society's moral values and its expectation from a work and the need of the story to attract the audiences. The portrayal of an obscene act is often confused with that of an act of Seduction or an act of Rape. Therefore the surrounding element of the book or a movie plays an important role in understanding the context in which the act should be taken by the people receiving it. Commonly a rape scene is associated with involving an element of force in it. The heinousness of the act is depicted with the help of background score tools, creating a grayish environment, disturbing visual images accompanied with loud cries of the victim in case of a film and in the case of a books; the authors writings involving in-depth detailing shall elevate the scene. These scenes may vary from one book to another, one film to another depending upon the gravity of the event and the background of the story. It may vary from one rape scene to another. The effects added to a rape scene committed to a young child, to a teenager, an adult or even sex workers shall be shown with reference to the background of the story that it depicts and the moral values that the movie likes to put forth. Thus the visual medias and books indirectly reflect the society we live in and the path with which the society shall connect to its people.

The question of debate in this context centers on the perspective of the audience towards the display of such scenes; whether human minds perceive them merely as a mode of entertainment to relax their brain or do they attempt to practicalize the content by applying them to their lives without understanding the consequences of these acts. The new crimes existing in the society reflects as to how far these Visual Medias and Books have impacted the society.

## **Impact in the Society**

The societies we live in are evolving at a fast phase. The technological advancement is one of the prominent reasons for this rapid evolution of these societies. Movies and Books have always acted as a medium for reflecting the ideas and views the society possess at that time. Therefore it is easy to understand the culture, ideologies of the society by viewing movies or books of those times.

The Incorporation of Obscene Scenes such as that of a rape scene is not a new concept. Old movies and books always have tried to incorporate these elements to connect the work to the people and the surroundings, but moreover it was left to the imagination of the audience to apprehend such actions and is often not depicted in the big screen. They had their boundaries fixed to what should be made available to be read, and to be shown to the public. The prioritization of the impact on the audience and the rating of the movie rather than that picturization of the movie have gained popularity. Entertainment for the audiences ranging from small children to elderly people are focused to generate more revenue thus they focused on making movies or books accessible for everyone. Later came the stage of having restrictions on what shall be made available and accessible to children and what shall not i.e. creation of separate sections on movies and books such as child-friendly section, adult movies etc. hence, limiting the accessibility of these contents to the hands of the children. Then came the era of internet exploration where everything is available to everyone. Here the barriers have been taken away so accessibility is not a problem in this era. This accessibility concept has both positive and negative impact on the society which are discusses as follows;

## **Positive Impact of Accessibility to Movies and Books**

- **Defining Terms**

The introduction of rape scenes have created a space for women to talk and learn about those concepts such as virginity, rape, sex education etc which were not a usual topic of

discussion. The researches indicated based on a survey conducted on young women and men on their consumption of movies with obscene events, indicates that they are active consumers of these movies. It is found that individual uses these films to improve their interpersonal relationship with one another and also learn about those concepts and fantasize about these experiences. Thus, enhancing their sexual relationships also.

- **Transmitting Cultural Scenarios**

Mass Media plays a major role in transmitting cultural scenarios for sexuality. These images reflect the prevailing values and behaviors of the society in which they are created and help to reproduce those values and behaviors. Many adolescents report that some of the behaviors they see in media are later assessed with their own beliefs and actions. Surveys also points out that teens use these movies or books of race relations and sexuality not only to reaffirm their existing beliefs about race, gender and sexuality but also to question those beliefs and to entertain these perspectives. Thus media plays a very important medium in reinforcing their roles in sexual socialization, existing beliefs and values and sometimes to explore new approaches also.

Moreover, Visual Media holds the responsible for objectifying women through Shows and Advertisement. The studies indicates that viewing non-violent pornography is positively co-related with rape being belittled and loss of compassion towards victims are objectified and rape is downplayed across various forms of media thus enhancing the rape culture's myth. This is one among the reasons for large number of women to experience sexual violence in their lives for which only a few disproportionate numbers of attackers are being prosecuted. Media maintains rape culture in the society and ultimately silences the victims and protecting their attackers.

- **Bringing Social Problems in front of the public**

The writers use the medium of social problems to connect with the people. They may refer real life instances or stories in their works and add their point of view or outlook to those issues so that they are addressed in the society. Thus contributing on to take any measure against the social problem or using their platform effectively in putting forth those

problems before the people. One of the main drawbacks of this can be that it may be sometimes one sided, stereotyped or may come up with an unrealistic solutions. Therefore the writers should be conscious about how they are going to portrait this social issue in their movie. The writers are pressurized to not just bring these social issues but also to portrait it in a healthy way so that it does not offend any individual in person to a particular community.

- **Addresses those issues which are not normally recognized.**

These novels, books or movies paved a medium for addressing the existence of those offences which are not normally recognized in the society such as male abuses, marital rapes and assault on LGBTQ community etc. Karin Lawachee's book named War child, addresses male abuses which is an eye opener for those who have been experiencing and have not figured it out as it is an offence and for others the knowledge that male abuses also exists in this society. Not only that these medium also paves way for reducing the gap between the generations, thus making the terms familiar to the elderly generation. It also gives the elder generation opportunity to recognize those offences which were not considered an offence at their times and is an offence at this time, thus making them understand the developing society in a much better way. Surveyors have also put forth a comment over the book "Privilege of the Sword" by Ellen Kushner where he talks about the normalization of the concept of 'Date Rape' and brings to the light the typical attitude of the families. The book is an eye opener to the offence of date rape and makes the audience think for themselves whether it is right or wrong.

- **They are seen as MODELS**

Sometimes, books and movies can provide solutions to those problems to which legislature have failed to. It plays a model figure for dealing with those issues; suggests measures that can be taken and indirectly providing a solution to these problems while being faced in real life. Moreover, there are some shows which are made for the protection of women, providing awareness about the crimes existing in the society and providing appropriate measures to solve these problems. And there are some books and movies which talks about

the survivors of heinous offence, and providing motivation for the victims to enhance their lives.

## **Negative Impact of Accessibility to Movies and Books**

- **Lazy Writing**

To connect with the audience, the writers often tends to use the element of rape into it which has two fold advantages, one is its ability to connect with the audience at an emotional way, and another is by providing an element of rape to fill the gaps in the story. The surveyors suggest that most of the authors use rape as an easy tool to continue the story when they get stuck, which has resulted in reducing the interest of the readers. The surveyor remark about the book “the two Pearls of Wisdom” by Alison Goodman, adds on that as the author has already created an alternate world, people and problems of their own, he should have avoided sexual violence in it. He also questions that why imagination should also involve the atrocities of the real world.

- **Tends to Normalize Rape**

The author uses rape or attempt to rape as a tool to define the character of the villain, sometimes as a quality of the villain. The rape attempts are glorified to an extent they are made equal to hero. Sexual violence is explained as a tool used by villains to show their power and to harm the hero and his family, which may infact influence the behavior of teenagers to use violence to show their anger at someone. The new crimes set an example of this kind of teen behavior. The surveyors suggest that the authors could have used other tools to explain the character of villain such as my describing his looks, environment, attitudes etc thus making the book more interesting and not sticking to the social dilemma already existing in the society. They also points out the use of rape jokes on prominent movies (*Meesha Madhavan, a Malayalam movie*); the concept of marital rape being normalized, when the family of the husband supports such behavior by preventing the

victim from approaching the court or police and asking her to ignore the heinous act and excuse the husband's behavior and thus supporting marital rape;(*Kettiyolaanu Ente Malakha*, a Malayalam movie); songs with obscene lyrics (*Choli Ke Peeche Kya Hai*, song from movie *Khal Nayak*);etc as examples of different ways in which obscenity is projected in the movies and thus normalizing the concept of rape and sexual violence to the younger generations in the society.

- **Sometimes paves way for violence in the society**

The authors of the books or movies also tempt the audience to take revenge or exhibit violent behavior towards act of sexual violence against them. Some books in which were the story revolves around the concept where she takes revenge on those men who have abused her or have sexually tortured her, it shall pave way or put ideas into the real life cases where they shall tend to take revenge,which shall result in practices of street justice or any activity against the existing law prevailing in the country. The movie *22Female Kottayam*, (a Malayalam movie), the story revolves around a women who have been raped twice by the same man with the support of her boyfriend, have been denied justice in court and later ends in killing those two men responsible for spoiling her life. This is the thread of another Hollywood move, *I spit on your grave* based on a novel, where violence or revenge is projected in the movie as equal to attaining justice. It can influence the mindset of the youngsters and thus, involving them in activities of crime, without realizing the consequences of their act.

On the basis of my survey on this topic by collecting 240 samples from individuals belonging to different age group ranging from 18 to 50 years, around 95.7% of the students claim to have read, and seen the presence of obscene objects mostly from prominent movies and best seller books across the world irrespective of language, genre etc. 82.6% of the samples claim television to be the most prominent medium through which they saw these obscene elements for the first time, followed by 10% on books and the rest 8.7% on different social media platforms. These factors may be because of the different age group, the technological advancement, family background and financial capacity of the social background of these surveyors. In spite of all these barriers and

differences, television and prominent movies turned out to be the most prominent accessible source for obscene materials brought before them. These may have negative impact on the character building of the children as they are not properly taught about the obscenity and the platform in which they see this i.e. the television, on which contents including rape jokes are glorified. The samplers suggest that either these contents should be restricted in public platform or on mediums which is accessible to all, or sex education should be made compulsory on all schools and thus educating the generation so that they could identify what is right and wrong and thus not get influenced by what they see on screen.

Even though everyone have seen obscene elements in their life though one medium or another, 91.3% of the surveyors state that they don't enjoy watching these scenes unlike the rest 8.7% of the surveyors. They believe that the presence of obscene elements in books or movies are for entertainment purposes and hence need not be connected with real life events or lives of people in the society. They also claim that audience have the capacity to understand, realize and take what is necessary and leave the rest and have a broad and open mind to not to be influenced by whatever they seen or read on the screen and hence movies and books never influence the people in their daily lives. This opinion is opposed by more than 60%of the surveyors as they strongly believe that the presence of obscene elements in books and movies will strongly influence the thought process of the audience in the long run. They mind not be influenced by reading one or two books or movies, but when this is seen in every or most of the books or movies, they watch there is a tendency for them to believe it to be true. Some of the surveyors states that these movies have been successful in inculcating an element of fear towards certain situation and has also highlighted the necessity of having self defense mechanism to be prepared for all the situations they might face in future; and they claim that these thought process is a reflection of the influence of media or books in their lives.

To the question of whether strict restrictions should be put on small children on their access to these obscene content, 56.5% agree that strict regulations are to be followed on what to be shown and available to children and what not. The content should be made in such a way that it does not obstruct the moral behavior of the society and importance must be given to not spread any wrong message to the children in the society, whereas the rest 21.7% of the surveyors suggest that since



the country is not providing any sex education or other awareness classes on these in the society, let these medium pave way for the children to have a curiosity to know or talk about these topics at least in their close circle, to have some enlightenment in this topic. They believe that some knowledge is always better than no knowledge. They add on that this may also create an opportunity for educating the boys and girls from younger age about safety, consent, concern, sex education etc.

Around 52.2% of the surveyors claim that western culture and Hollywood film industry has played an important role in bringing these contents into the other film markets whereas 17.4% of the surveyors suggest Korean industry being the cause of the introduction of these concepts in other industries, the rest of the surveyors suggest that obscenity is protected in the medium is a reflection of the cultural practices of that society, which varies from one society to another therefore it is hardly impossible to say whether an industry have an influence on other film industries. With respect to Indian Cinema, they say that the bollywood film industry, being the largest producer of films per year, have been influenced a lot by the western culture and their practices. Surveyors suggests the following reasons to be factors behinds the Indian film industry for the introduction of obscene content in their films which are:

- To increase the rating of movies, thus increasing the profit margin generated from the film. The introduction of adult jokes, rape jokes, and sexually offensive comments has proved to have a market in the society, which is known to the producers of the movies. Thus to bring more audience to watch movie, they introduce these contents into their movies.
- Some movies are created for spreading awareness on some particular social issue which is to be brought before the eyes of the society. Films, because of its accessibility and acceptance shall be used as a medium to promoting awareness or an element of fear or caution towards certain offences or even suggest measures to any particular social offence which shall be adopted in real life. Sometimes awareness are being spread based on the story of a survivor to the offence intending to motivate the other survivors of those offences to lead their life in a better way.
- Movies also reflect the masculinity existing of the society and shall be an eye opener to the patriarchal practices prevalent in the society. It shall also include the family's collective

attitude towards gender discrimination, sexual violence, concepts like date rape etc, which are gender bias and thus providing a moment to think about their activities. Thus it can pave way for the families to treat men and women equally and educate men on expected behavior towards women. Thus movies shall include these contents to not to be enjoyed by men but for enhancing humanity, mental health and learning about how one shouldn't behave in the society.

## **CONCLUSION**

The researcher has put forth a detailed understanding on how far the use of obscenity has increased in the society and to what extend it has influenced the mindset of the individual with the help of an empirical study. The study suggest that obscenity is not an unknown concept in the society and the lack of proper sexual knowledge is the reason for the misunderstanding and violent sexual behavior of younger generation which are the upcoming new offences existing in the society. The researcher suggests;

- The need for introduction of proper sex education classes at the school level so that they shall be made aware of the sexual and physical changes happening in the society and thus providing a solution to reduce the impact of these obscene content on the mind and behavior of the audience.
- The authors of books and films must keep in mind the audience also while creating their art work. They should enhance the quality of their work by focusing on new ideas, point of view and expression rather than focusing on upbringing the existing problems or obscene content to increase their selling value. Thus the quality of work should be improved for the betterment of the society.
- The need for introduction of platforms to discuss about these concepts in the public to spread proper knowledge on these topics which have not been discussed loud and the

platform for addressing these violence are to be also created and the existing body should be enhanced in an effective way to reduce the crimes existing in the society.

Thus, an effective study are to be made on this topic, and necessary steps shall be taken by the government and other respective authorities to address these issues and thus, enhancing the brains of tomorrow.