

Some Basic Observation on Contradictory Representation of Women in Indian Perspectives

QUELQUES OBSERVATIONS ÉLÉMENTAIRES SUR LA REPRÉSENTATION CONTRADICTOIRE DES FEMMES DANS LES PERSPECTIVES INDIENNES

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Abstract: It is true that technological innovations have brought about a radical change in standard of living of people but simultaneously it has degraded the social environment. Society of the past, although not developed from this point of view but was gentle, polite, descent in manner and character. But at present , the touch of modernization through different adverse forms have lowered the taste, elegance and morality of common people, the result of which social degradation has been taking place. Indecent representation of women in various media is one of them .Such type of undesirable, shameful representations of women through advertisement, Cinema, Television, Newspapers, Magazines etc. have been attracting people to perform offensive activities which are introducing social and moral disaster. Although there is no any scarcity or deficiency of Govt. rules and regulation including Indian Penal Code, but unfortunately, such types of unwanted representations are going on due ever increasing consumerism.. The paper tries to highlight the nature of indecent representation of women as an emerging social issue, correlate the facts with deterioration of social environment and criticizes its adverse impact with some remedies.

Keywords: Indecent Representation; Social Crimes; Advertisement; Globalization; Consumerism; Self Control and Respect

Résumé: Il est vrai que les innovations technologiques ont entraîné un changement radical du niveau de vie des gens, mais en même temps elles ont dégradé l'environnement social. La société d'antan n'a pas été développée de cette façon, et elle a connu un développement doux et poli. Mais à l'heure actuelle, les impacts de la modernisation à travers de différentes formes défavorables ont réduit le goût, l'élégance et la moralité des gens ordinaires, dont le résultat de dégradation sociale a eu lieu. La représentation indécente des femmes dans différents médias est l'un d'entre eux. Ce genre de représentation indésirables et honteuses des femmes dans la publicité, dans le

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cinéma, à la télévision, dans les journaux et les magazines ont attiré les gens à exercer des activités offensives qui pourront causer une catastrophe sociale et morale. Bien que les règles et les réglementations gouvernementales, y compris le Code pénal indien n'ont pas de lacunes ou d'insuffisances, ce genre de représentations indésirables continue à exister malgré un consumérisme croissant.

L'article tente de mettre en évidence la nature de la représentation indécente des femmes comme une question sociale émergente, associer les faits à la détérioration de l'environnement social et critiquer ses effets négatifs à certains remèdes.

Mot clés: représentation indecent; crimes sociaux; publicité; mondialisation; consumérisme; contrôle de soi et respect

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, changes are prevalent everywhere, from infant to aged, from country to country irrespective of sex, caste, religion, race and so on. But it is really controversial that how far these changes are improving environmental quality, whether it is physical or social. There is no satisfactory answer regarding it and no one can deny that despite changes have brought some positive impact in the living standard among the people, these have resulted undesirable physical and social problems to the mankind. Among those negative aspects, indecent representation of women is most shameful which one of the emerging social issues is at present. This representation does not only degrade the quality of them, but simultaneously encourages antisocial activities and crime related to women. Such type of disgraceful representation is prevalent in newspapers, advertisements cinemas, magazines, even in different T.V. channels. The result of this sort of violent representation has been increasing rape, eve teasing and other forms of exploitation of women. It is pathetic that where we are emphasizing on women empowerment in civilized society, their willingness or obligation to this unfair representation have been resulting what we are not expecting in reality.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the paper are manifold and following-

1. To highlight the nature of indecent representation of women.
2. To find out the causes of such representation.
3. To find out the adverse impact of this representation.
4. To suggest a few outcomes to tackle this emerging social issue.

ANCIENT PEOPLE AND INDIAN CIVILIZATION: A LUCID PICTURE

There is no doubt that in the pre historic period, people were fully naked. In the phase of Homo habilis and Homo erectus, despite their physical and life style development, they did not use any type of clothes. Only in the Neanderthal phase, it has been noticed at first that people used skin of the wild animals as apparel. Among Homo sapiens who lived in Europe, also known as "Cro-Magnon" (30000 BCE to 10000 BCE) had comparatively decent clothing. In order to protect cold climate and to feel warm, these people began to use soft skin of wild animals for comfort. Thus, with the passage of time of evolution of human civilization, people have gradually been using dresses to prevent their shame.

The description of Adam and Eve as mentioned in the holy Bible as "*the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them*" (THE HOLY BIBLE, 1980, p-3, RSV Old Testament ABS, New York), it has been found that Lord God gave garment of skin to them to prevent shame.

The origin and genesis of Earth and Mankind as mentioned in the stories of several "*Puranas*" (Indian Philosophy). It is found that despite a little similarity between *Manu – Satarupa* (Indian Philosophy) and *Adam –Eve, Manu-Satarupa* was not 'naked'. It seems while the said *Puranas* were written, the concept of "*Shame*" was among the people of that time although dynamic developmental processes were going on.

Therefore it is clear and evident that resistance to shame in the ancient Hinduism was emphasized at that time.

Indecent Representation of Women

It is a known fact that women are the symbol of beauty. Past events and records reveal that from ancient time man worshipped women as “*Aradhana of Sakti*” (Worship of Power) and at the same time there were very few indecent representations of women in those days, rather they were almost decent in manner and clothing. In ancient time, there were female dancer in the King’s palace to provide enjoyment to the king and Courtiers. They were also graceful and enough decency was in them. May be, there were few indecent representations of women at that time, but not rampant as are found now a days. It can not be denied that our society was purely male dominated in the past and since then it is found till today , although the male dominance is not so acute at present. Interestingly, when women are being empowered by different ways, they are representing themselves disgracefully which are debasing their character and honor. Consequently, social crimes have been growing rapidly.

Reasons behind such type of objectionable representation have been identified as follows:

Poverty- Poverty is the main cause of this type of representation. In India and abroad, still a number of women, particularly young girls with intolerable economic misery are compelled to represent themselves in different forms of uncultured version for survival.

Hobby- Preference is the taste and elegance of personal choice and attraction to a particular trend. Lots of women particularly belonging to rich and creamy layer represent themselves just to get mental or psychological satisfaction through modeling, front page sensational attraction in different popular magazines.

Globalization- Globalization is another factor responsible to this crime. Transfer of western culture and civilization has at present overlapped on the traditional culture and taste of the native people in so many developing and third world countries. Being attracted to that culture, teenager girls have been adopting western style in their garments and manners and hence, they have been losing their own culture and tradition, social values and moral character.

Betterment of living- This is another aspect which very often inspires to earn more and more economic comfort through earning huge amount of money via participation in cinema, advertisement, media or personal interview. A group of people are being economically and mentally satisfied by these activities although they are economically and socially enough established or empowered.

Consumerism- Consumerism refers to individual well being with satisfactory consumption and the purchase of material possessions. Of late, companies whatever small or big, have realized that rich consumers are the main targets and influencing factor for marketing their products to gain maximum profit. In addition, the taste and elegance of elite class is considered as a standard which all consumers seek to accept. A consumer can have the instant tendency and gratification of purchasing costly items that will help improve their social status. Thus, ever increasing consumption of people is another cause of such representation. Much consumption means much economic profit which a group of people highly want. Ways to achieve economic comfort are reflected through several processes whatever those are good or bad. Here, indecency is not controversial matter rather the theme is confined amidst maximum profit and maximum demand of the people.

External causes- This includes newspapers, advertisement seekers, publishers , common readers, audience and viewers, who inspire beautiful females to engage them by digesting cordially such representation by paying huge amount of money In addition, as ‘*opposite sex always attract to each other*’, common young male generation, being mentally and psychologically enthused , have been accepting these unfair representation warmly and ultimately applying those unfairly , the result of which is today’s social and moral demotion.

Nature of Indecent Representation

It is really too tough to find out and analyze the causes and consequences of such representation in our society as there is lack of data that how many women below creamy and non-creamy layers of economy are

engaged in such types of indecent representation. But it is clearly realized that the main root of it is to obtain economic empowerment. Similarly, the cause and effect relationship of it in societal perspectives is impossible to access but it can be realized from the incidences highlighted in different media that these sorts of shameful representations by women have been bringing about degradation of social environment in the form of ever increasing women related crime and violence. However, Indecency can be categorized by a means of ways.

Representation through Advertisement

Of late, the escalating introduction of a number of advertisements of different companies in television , magazine , T.V., Cinema, Newspaper, Cartoons, painting and even in Internet are introducing changing face and form of young girls to attract customers to their products from different age groups in order to achieve profit maximization.

Representation through Television- Now a days, almost each and every home has at least a television as common minimum requirement. There is a lot of representation of women in advertisement through T.V. which affect common people and children adversely, although impact of it can not be assessed based on any formula or technique. But it is obvious visual indecent representation of them has been perverting psychologically all youth. In addition, there are some advertisements also, which are being displayed on the T.V. screen normally, but the appeal behind the advertisement may introduce vulgarity.

Representation through Newspaper- Newspaper is another source of representation in indecent manner. Readers from almost all age group are intensely influenced while observing and reading those undesirable advertisements.

Representation through Magazine- Similar examples will be cited in several advertisements in several reputed magazines where the honor of women have not only been despoiled simultaneously people are being psychologically endangered . But interestingly, by virtue of human instinct , neither presenter nor consumer is realizing its adverse impact.

Other forms of Representation- Let us discuss other forms of uncultured representation which we can find rarely but have both internal and external effects on common people. Despite fewer in number, such representations are noticed in different sorts of paintings, hoarding hanging or fixed in cities and towns, and even displayed in Internet. Painting of undesirable quality is often displayed in cinema hall for greater publicity. Similarly, a lot of painters draw naked or half naked figures, which may have inner good meaning, but it is a matter of question how many people are finding that inner good meaning and how many are taking those adversely, where the numbers of wise intellectual persons are few in countries like India.

Representation through Audio and Video Mode

Another category of indecent representation is through audio and video mode. In case of audio mode, there are so many songs in different regional languages which if heard properly, one can find its inner meaning which is shameful. The word, version of language and the sensation behind those songs are, no doubt, regrettable and one of the causes of socio environmental ruin.

In case of Visual representation, the problem is so acute that is indescribable. One can find a great difference between today's and past movies. In the past, the representation of women was decent, gentle in movies, but of late, that representation has crossed the minimum limit of decency. Thus indecent image has become a fashion and a tool of income by destructing societal harmony.

Adverse Impact Analysis

1. Ever increasing rate of women related crimes such as rape, eve teasing, sexual harassment etc have been increasing. On the basis of data given by NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau) 2007, it is noticed that women related crimes have been tremendously increasing (Table-1, Diagram-1)

In addition, a tendency has come to forget decent, tradition based culture and to acquire western, ultra modern culture and activities. It is being realized recently that youths are wearing indecent dresses imitated from western culture like young girls often use tight jeans with short tops etc., even in the educational institutes also to make themselves attractive to opposite sex. . Simultaneously the rate of physical illegal sexual relationship has been mounting day by day among the teenagers. "*Teen pregnancy has doubled in*

the last five years. Middle and upper Middle class girls often fall into the trap.” (Kapadia P, January 26, 2009 , p-60 , OUTLOOK magazine).

Table 1: INCIDENCE AND PATTERN OF CRIME COMMITTED AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA IN 2007

States	Rape	Kidnapping and Abduction	Molestation	Sexual Harassment
	20096	19173	37722	10738
Union Territories	20737	20416	38734	10950
Total	40833	39589	76456	21688

Source: National Crime Record Bureau

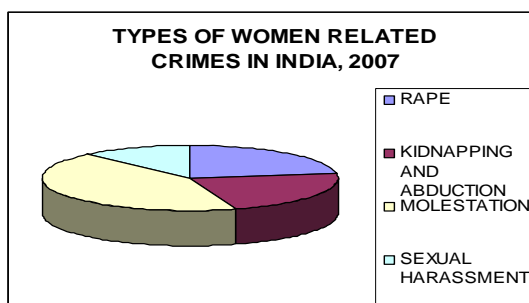


Diagram 1

2. It has been estimated that Mumbai, Kolkata , Delhi, Pune, Saharanpur, Gwalior etc. are the major hotspots of sex industry of India which include two million females and numerous male sex workers. Among them about 50 % of Mumbai female have HIV positive values. Similarly at *Sonaghachi*, Kolkata, there are 5000 female prostitutes still working illegally. Consequently, sexual contact is increasing with sexual transmitted diseases like AIDS. Therefore, this is a significant contributing factor to the spread of diseases like AIDS in the region and the country.

3. Social gap, unwanted unsocial relationship, social freedom, loneliness, tendency to chat with boyfriends are increasing day by day (“*When Komal Moorjani, 43, walked into daughter Pooja’s bedroom unannounced a year ago, she found Pooja visiting sex-chat rooms on the internet.*” (Kapadia P, January 26, 2009 , p-60 , OUTLOOK Magazine). In addition a number of such cyber crimes have been reported in reputed regional and national newspapers, even in the form of rude messages with picture through mobiles and other such media.

Ultimately, Social environmental set up is being structurally and behaviourally deteriorated. The entire result is destructive and social degradation has been taking place. This type of evil aspect has been motivating young generation in our society and they are, being psychologically and mentally influenced, engaging themselves to do offensive works.

Acts to prevent Indecent Representation of Women

To think about the decency of Indian culture and morality, relevant laws like IPC and several acts have been introduced in India. The law of obscenity has been mentioned in Secs. 292, 293 and 294 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Similarly, Section 67 of the I.T. Act is the most serious legislative measure against pornography. This section reads as follows "*Whosoever publishes or transmits or causes to be published in the electronic form, any material which is lasciviousto the prurient interestcorrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it, shall be punished*". Despite these provisions, there is ever increasing picture of indecent representation of women, particularly in advertisements.

It has been stated in the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 that -"*No person shall publish, or cause to be published, or arrange or take part in the publication or exhibition of, any advertisement which contains indecent representation of women in any form.*"

The act as mentioned above has been enacted by the parliament in the 37 years of republic of India. Despite this prohibition, it is interesting how are these crude representations are going on? The answer is certainly monetary exchange oriented and has been intentionally unveiled. However, the emerging problems related to this issue are acute and definitely shameful in the gentle, civilized society.

In case of social welfare or relating to that, if there is any indecency, the act will not be applicable considering its good inner meaning. But in most cases, it is found that women have been presenting themselves indecently vibrantly only for commercial purpose but not for welfare of the society. As a result, nasty roaming of both sexes is evident here and there without any hesitation.

CONCLUSION AND REMEDIES

The human mind is the combination of both good and evil sides, but interestingly people are by nature sometimes diverted and lost their good ways of lifestyle. In addition, at present, in the era of mechanization people remain very busy for themselves, therefore they remain reluctant to interfere as well as to bring those diverted people in good ways they have lost. So, the first solution is to find out the ways to control this sort of indecency.

Firstly, Keeping in mind about the value based Indian tradition and culture, Govt. acts as mentioned earlier should be properly and strictly implemented.

Secondly, new innovative decent presentations of women, based on Indian distinct culture and society through media must be introduced, simultaneously, western indecent culture should not be imitated despite accepting dynamic globalization processes.

Thirdly, inattentive views of parents or guardians to their descendants particularly in the nucleus family should be controlled and the mentality “*whatsoever our offspring want, we must give*” should be given up. Side by side, Parents have to realize and observe the sexual consumerism of their children so that their children are not diverted in the wrong way.

Fourthly, women engaged in offensive representation for economic well being should be realized that empowerment given to them does not mean unwanted social activities those are harmful to society.

Fifthly, Common people, who are still on the safe and away from this evil aspect, have to take the responsibilities to bring those diverted people in the right way.

Lastly, a cultural movement regarding the adverse impact of indecent representation of women is required in society. In addition, self realization to feel good and bad, legal and illegal, self control and respect to the womankind is also essential and necessary.

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