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Rape: An Analysis of Youth's Attitude

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Abstract

Attitudes may be described as general, relatively stable and enduring cognitive tendencies to respond in a certain way to a variety of social stimuli. This research study is an attempt to study attitude of youngsters towards the social stimuli of rape. Rape is horrific for society. The mere thought of rape causes anxiety, aggression, concern and rage in people. It was primary aim of the study to explore the attitude of rape and its various trajectories among the youngsters. 150 youngsters (aged 17-23, male and female) were asked researcher made survey questions about rape and their responses were analyzed with content analysis method to yield and conclude the results.

Keywords: Rape, Youth, India, Attitude, Perspective, Psychology

Introduction

As researchers who would like to eradicate rape from the face of the society, we hold the ability to accomplish such a change with researches on the concept and causes of rape. India is a developing country with remarkable developments in the field of technology, finance and economy. Unfortunately, India has also witnessed a remarkable setback with the development of crimes as well. Rape has been perceived as the most brutal crime against women that affects not only the physical being but also the psychological being of the victim ¹. Over the years millions of people from all over the world have actively come together to express their opposition towards rape. Contemporary studies on rape have seen various viewpoints on its causes and impacts. Rape has been actively studied from cultural, criminal, social and many other perspectives.

The field of psychology has available literature on the topic of rape, which is mostly influenced by foreign countries like that of America, Europe etc. Literature focusing India in the concept of rape is somehow limited. Rape researches being conducted in India are found in finite numbers. To get to the roots of rape incidents, it is important to unfold the psychological perspectives of both rape victims and convicts.

Rape is likely more common, however, because rapes often go unreported. Researchers estimate that 67–84% of rapes are not reported. Most incidents of rape are never reported to the police ² and, of those reported, less than 10% result in a conviction. Abel and Rouleau (1990) ³, therefore, correctly concluded that “the majority of sex offenders are not within the prison system, but “on the street”. Although other forms of rape occur (e.g., male– male rape), this article focuses on the rape of women by men. Rape is typically defined, and defined in this article, as the use of force or threat of force to achieve penile-vaginal penetration of a woman without her consent ⁴.

Attitudes and Beliefs

Of the cognitive determinants of rape, attitudes toward women in general and attitudes concerning intergender relationships, violence, sexuality, masculinity, rape and rape victims have attracted the most research. Studies with samples from the general public indicate various attitudes towards rape. Studies indicated findings of attitudes like that of rape myth acceptance, victim blame, macho attitudes and authoritarian attitudes⁵.

A very little research studies have been done in India regarding rape which makes review of literature rather difficult. This research study is an attempt to understand the concept of rape in context of Indian youths.

Method

PURPOSE: To understand the perspective of youngsters towards rape and its paradigms.

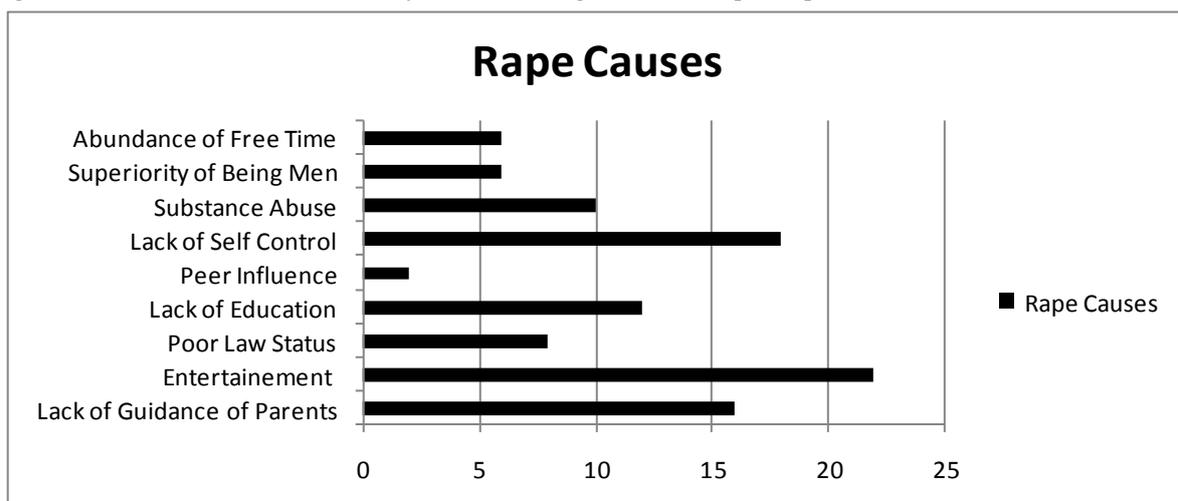
SAMPLE: 150 participants aged 17-23, participated in this research which included both males and females. All the participants were enrolled in Undergraduate and Post Graduate Degree programs.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: This study has been divided in two parts. For the first part, participants were asked to express their written viewpoints on rape. Content analysis of the participant's written data indicated their viewpoints on- Causes of Rape Committed by Youth. In the second part, participants were brought in together and their views were shared verbally with each other on Rape as a concept and attitude.

Results/ Research Findings

Young adults were asked "Why there is a growth in youngsters committing crimes. What can be the causes for this noticeable growth?"

Following causes were found on content analysis of the data gathered from participants:



Characteristic phenomenological citations of the causes:

1. **ABUNDANCE OF FREE TIME:** Respondents mentioned that youngsters have lot of free time on their hands which results to their mind being wandered. Respondents quoted "Khali Dimaag Shaitan Ka Ghar Hota Hae".

2. **SUPERIORITY OF BEING “MEN”:** This cause was basically responded by the female respondents. They argued that guys want to show power and control over girls, they use sexual harassment to show that power and control.
3. **SUBSTANCE ABUSE:** Respondents agreed that use of alcohol and cigarettes clouds the judgment of youngsters and influences them to take bad decisions.
4. **LACK OF SELF CONTROL:** Respondents mentioned the lack of self control as a part of self control of sexual desires and aggression. This lack of self control results in sexual violence.
5. **PEER INFLUENCE:** Respondents agree that bad influence on youths can be bad peer influence.
6. **LACK OF EDUCATION:** Respondents responded that most of the youngsters who commit crimes belong to low socio economic status. They attributed this data to the lack of education. Poor quality of teaching and lack of educational tariffs for low socio economic status population.
7. **POOR LAW STATUS:** Low crime reporting and conviction rate has been attributed as a cause of youth committing crimes. There is no fear of law enforcements amongst youth.
8. **ENTERTAINMENT:** Respondents agreed in majority to point entertainment as one of the major causes. Entertainment included materialization of women in Hindi songs, movies, magazines and porn sites.
9. **LACK OF GUIDANCE OF PARENTS:** Unavailability of parents to rear their children with good values and morals has also been responded as a cause of young convicts.

In addition, the written data of the respondents also yielded some major themes towards their attitudes on rape. They are:

1. **GENDER REACTIONS TO RAPE:** Participants wrote their exact feelings when they read about a rape incident in a newspaper. Females expressed they feel unsafe, angry and insecure in society. While males expressed they feel guilty of not being able to help and protect, shameful, unsafe of sisters, sad and angry. Both genders were unanimous towards concern for depleting society values.
2. **IMPACT OF RAPE:** Participants shared that impact of rape lies in the attitude of society and family towards females. More and more parents don't want to take responsibility of a female child and girls are being forced to sit at home and sacrifice their education and career.
3. **PREVENTION OF RAPE:** Participants emphasized on strict laws and punishment for rapists, compulsory sex education, public awareness, women should actively pursue self defense measures, respect to women and parental guidance and support to children.

In the second part, participants were actively asked to express their views on rape verbally. This part was conducted after a week of written viewpoints phase to ascertain the authenticity of their attitude and observe the gender difference. This session lasted for one hour where various recent rape cases (Delhi rape case, Mumbai reporter rape case, Asharam Babu

Rape Case, Infant/Child rape cases) were discussed. It was observed that their written viewpoints were consistent with their verbal sessions. It was also observed that females in the group appeared to be hesitant to express their views freely, while males were at ease with their attitude. This hesitance can be attributed to the cognitive conditioning of the females to keep quiet in times when you are not supposed to speak, a derivative of a patriarchal society norms. In addition females were also empathetic towards rape as a crime; they showed a connection with the rape victims and their psychological wrath.

Discussion and Conclusion

These youngsters are a part of the young and new India, their attitudes towards a sensitive issue like rape matters a lot. In this research youngsters are actively concerned about the high deterioration of the societal norms and morality. They understand the impact of internet and importance of education and sex education in India. Males were found to be more vocal and liberated towards their viewpoint on rape. On the other hand females were cautious towards what they are about to say, however their written data were more expressive than verbal communication. It is important for the parents to raise an empowered daughter who can speak and take care of herself when time comes. This social-cognitive schema of “women are supposed to be under protection” has to be changed to prevent rape.

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