

## Practice of Rape: Power vs. Sexual Drive

Susan Sarkar Niku\*

### Abstract

This paper will explore how ideas about gender, power and masculinity influence rape. Performance of masculine power and the violence it conditions in men is toxic for women who become their victims. This seminar is an attempt to find out the answer by exploring and investigating upon the question 'Is rape a product of sexual desire, or the exercise of power?' The paper will attempt to define the concept of 'rape' and provide evidence by using theoretical and criminological literatures. This will provide a descriptive analysis and perception of the concept and present an understandable insight towards the question. Rape is an act of male aggression which can no longer be justified as a primal urge. It seems that the best way to go against it is to redefine our limits on gender roles. Men who are hyper-socialized in masculinity gravitate to fraternities and sports groups where their sexually aggressive attitude is not challenged. They then learn to find these behaviors to be normal while their female victims have been socialized to feel too ashamed to report the crime. He does not care that she may never heal. I believe this attitude is reflective of society, which tells men constantly that women are their possessions. Women's bodies are used to constantly; I guess I just assumed that the males would be more educated and less likely to accept rape myths and that many that have been accused of rapes and gang rapes are still allowed to remain a fraternity.

**Keywords:** *Gender, sex, masculinity, power, desire*

### 1. Introduction

Why men rape women is a question that people throughout the world would like to know the answer to. Many People think that rape is caused by some psychological illness within the offender. Some believe that rape is due to an expression of gender inequality while some

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Department of English, Gono Bishwabidyalay-1344.

\* Corresponding Authors email: susanniku@gmail.com. Phone: +88017986569010.

sociologists believe that rape is attributed to permissiveness, sexually, within society. Outside of law, the term rape is often used interchangeably with sexual assault, a closely related form of assault typically including rape and other forms of non-consensual sexual activity. There is something fundamentally wrong with men who rape. It is a maladaptation of sex, a manifestation of psychopathology, a sign of being a sociopath, a tool to garner control, and an outward expression of deep internal anger and resentment. It is arguably the most dehumanizing problem we have today. It is one of the cruelest weapons of oppression and dominance used by a wide variety of offenders and purported by enablers. However, it is a problem that receives various levels of empathy ranging from “they were married, there can be no rape within a marriage” to “she provoked her rape by wearing the kinds of clothes she was wearing” to “let’s hang all rapists” and anything in between. The mild sentences handed out to rapists maybe add to the misunderstanding of rape, and prevents rapists from thinking about it as aberrant and abnormal behavior.

Rape can no longer be justified as a primal urge. Rape must now be accepted as something we need to repair in society. It seems that the best way to do this is to redefine our limits on gender roles. Men who are hyper-socialized in masculinity gravitate to fraternities and sports groups where their sexually aggressive attitude is not challenged. They then learn to find these behaviors to be normal while their female victims have been socialized to feel too ashamed to report the crime. Once we also understand these men's ideas of consent and fair play sexually, there is another cause for alarm. He does not care that she may never heal. I believe this attitude is reflective of society, which tells men constantly that women are their possessions.

### **1.1. Scenario**

This paper will explore how ideas about gender, power and masculinity influence rape. It will also focuses on the consequences of adherence to gender roles. I intend to show that performance of masculine power and the violence it conditions in men is toxic for women who become their victims and for society. My main focus is to show how the stereotypical mentality fantasies sex in rape and how the practice of rape is the ultimate outcome of showing power rather sexual drive.

### **1.2 Research Problem**

What is the stereotypical behavior around rape and why rape is considered as the power of man and how sex becomes rape and finally about how power is used as a form of dominance in the practice of rape.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

To find out the changing perspective, to identify the root cause regarding rape, to identify about how to reverse the tide of violence and finally to establish the ultimate truth that rape is all about the abuse of power in patriarchal political system rather than sexual gratification.

### 1.4 Research Statement

Why rape is considered as the normal male behavior and how the stereotypical mentality fantasizes sex in rape, how the act of power is more influential in the practice of rape than the sexual drive and how this traditional concept can be changed through the changing perspectives.

## 2. Methodology

This seminar presents the research methods and techniques used for the data collection. Quantitative and Qualitative data were collected by following the methods.

The library research and online analysis is the prime materials that are used in terms of completing the seminar. Some websites for a better research on rape has been used from the internet.

The main concern of completing this was studying books, watching movies, in gathering knowledge and analyzing the information from the library.

The first step was to collect information from various kinds of books and internet. The next step was case study and survey based. The third phase was to process the data and analyze the information.

### 2.1 Research Methods

**Quantitative:** case study and survey based.

#### Case study in Bangladesh-

- Yasmin case
- Bidisha case
- Pahari woman case
- Gang rape case by policemen in Faridpur

### **Yasmin case-**

In the context of Bangladesh it is a response to sexual repression, lack of education about sex and appropriate sexual behaviors, and patriarchal values that give men the right to dominate and control women and their bodies.

Still today, many social and women organization across the country observe Yasmin Day to mark the fateful incident of a fourteen year old girl, who was raped and murdered by people, who were in power. The most pathetic fact about is that the offenders were punished but it took more than 9 years.

Now in the case of **Delhi Gang Rape**, which occurred in the year 2002, all the perpetrators were the working class people. But, in Delhi, previously, many horrible incidents (rape, murder, kidnapping) happened but there was no remarkable punishment. Most importantly, in many cases, it was investigated that many offenders came out easily from the rules and regulations of court by applying power. So, here, in this particular case, the practice of power indirectly influences their gang rape attempt.

### **Survey on raped women in Bangladesh (on 100 women) -**

- Had been raped- **25.4%**
- Desire generated rape - **10.1%**
- Power generated rape – **15.3%**

In Bangladesh, **2.5%** men in rural area gave most frequent reasons-

Of cases **73.3%**.

- To show social dominance- **58.7%**

- To punish- **37.9%**

(Source of Survey: Online based)

### **Results-**

1. One in four said they had raped a woman in response of their repressed desire.
2. One in 25 admitted to taking part in gang rape ( majority is power)

### **2.2 Theoretical Framework-**

1. Butler's hypothesis
2. Gender performativity
3. Gender binaries



The idea of performativity is introduced in the first chapter of Gender Trouble when Butler states that “gender proves to be performance— that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed”

According to **Judith Butler**, “where there is a “one” who is prior to gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender decides with deliberation which gender it will be today”.

In “**the perverse implantation**”, the perverts conveyed a sense of “pleasure and power”- this perverseness is totally masculine."There are female infants and children who cannot be impregnated, there are older women who cannot be impregnated.... What the question does is try to make the problematic of reproduction central to the sexing of the body. But I am not sure that is, or ought to be, what is absolutely salient or primary in the sexing of the body." (Butler, quoted in Osborne & Segal, 1994) Butler claims, therefore, that since women are so diverse we can no longer define them as a unified group:"The very subject of women is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms." (Butler, 1990, p.1) A study by Diana E.H. Russell into the relationship between power and rape concluded that "most men have at least some predisposition to rape women" (Bristow, 1997, p.156). Butler, in contrast, argues that such attitudes are self-defeating because they widen the gulf between men and women even further: In other words, if there were no longer conventional roles for either gender, it would not be unusual for a woman to be in a position of power at every aspects of life or for a man to stay at home and look after children. Gradually, the patriarchal society which exists would change to become a truly equal one.

So, “a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of power rather than the desire.”

### 3. Discussion

Usually we as a society assume that the burden of preventing rape, domestic violence, and dating violence largely falls on the shoulders of women and girls. When men cannot get them willingly, they always apply power as the alternative means.

Primary prevention offers men a positive role to play. Put simply, this public health approach is about stopping the violence before it starts. End goals include not only healthy relationships but also healthy communities. Gender-based violence, racist violence, and gay bashing destroy a

community's health. Rape is a crime of violence and domination in which one person forces, coerces, or manipulates another person into sexual intercourse. There are many forms of rape that can occur. The most common types of rape are date rape, acquaintance rape, statutory rape and drug facilitated rape. Rape used to be considered an act of sexual assault—perpetrated by a man of weak moral character and criminal inclination. But this commonsense truth has been replaced with a politically-motivated myth that has had long-reaching, negative effects on both rape victims and society.

Feminism's ultimate objective is tragically paradoxical, because it is living in a traditional patriarchal family that most protects young women from the likelihood of rape, and young men from the likelihood of becoming rapists. To put it simply, a woman's vulnerability to rape is greatly reduced if she lives with a father or husband, and a young man is far less likely to become a rapist if he grows up with a father in his home. Yet radical feminists apparently won't allow this truth to impinge upon their power of political agenda. Society's passions must be ignited by truth. Even though the raping behavior of an individual likely involves a complex intertwining of motivations, the one common and overriding motivation of all rapists is sexual. So some empirical truths about rape that debunk the feminist rape-isn't-about-sex myth and support the contention that rape is about power, about sex.

If rape were an act promoted by specific patriarchal or political environments, as feminists assert, it's inconceivable that rape would be found in all societies throughout recorded time. Rape's universality thus emphasizes the point that rape is "natural," though obviously not good, and that it isn't created by any sociopolitical environment. In this case, the motives of rapists are comparable to that of other criminal types and, when analyzed in this straightforward manner, the sexual motivation of rapists becomes apparent. The primary motives of all rapists are easily discernible—no conspiratorial explanations are necessary. Most rapists use only enough power to accomplish their goal of sexual access. If a rapist's goal was other than sex, such as a desire to inflict violence upon his victim, why do most rapists not inflict high degrees of physical injuries on their victims? They certainly have the opportunity to do so. In 1991, Lee Ellis of Minot State University reported that studies of "date" rapists clearly demonstrate that these men try many tactics first before they resort to physically coercive tactics. As an aside, small minorities of rapists are sadistic and therefore are additionally motivated by a desire to violently aggress against, dominate, and humiliate their victims. But sadistic rapists are the exception and not the

rule and are readily differentiated from most rapists by their tendency to mete out more violence than is necessary to subdue their victim. The majority of rapists use only enough aggression and power to accomplish their sexual goal. For the vast majority of rapists, aggression and control are simply the means to the end, the end being sexual access.

On the other hand, it is necessary for a man to have some type of sexual desire before he can rape. And a rapist's sexual power, even in the absence of all other facts, is sufficient for a rape to occur. Most rapists themselves say that power and force were the motivating factor underlying their crimes.

Professor Lee Ellis of Minot State University wrote, "Even among rapists who victimize strangers, self-reports have given little indication that their real objective is to dominate their victims, except to the extent that doing so aids in gaining other access." She found that 84% of rapists reported that sex, in whole or part, was the motivating force behind their actions. Contradictory research, which claims that rapists report power and control as their motivation, frequently contain serious flaws.

So, it is mainly power that is the fundamental motivation behind rape, is the results of research which demonstrates that when the sexual drive of rapists is reduced, then it is the ultimate masculine power which must be considered as the motivating force underlying the behavior of those rapists. Our society can't allow the feminist sociopolitical agenda to blind us to the fundamental truth of the causes and motivation underlying rape. It's not only a heinous act rooted in sexual desire that's perpetrated by a criminally-inclined individual but also it is a political act of male domination and patriarchal control of a society.

Engaging men to participate in the creation of a culture of primary prevention within their community requires a parallel process of building and supporting proper behavior of men. Psychologists strongly believe that those who rape are either emotionally disturbed or have personality defects. Some other psychologists believe that rape is caused by a sexual addiction. The average psychologists will state that a rapist is a man who had childhood experiences that were relatively difficult to deal with and now they cannot relate to women in a successful manner which ultimately is a defect called sexual inadequacy. Throughout the world, it is clear that majority of recorded rapes involve men as the rapist. Men also are usually more powerful physically, politically, and economically than women. This would prove that rape truly is an expression of power and dominance over women.



#### 04. Findings

- implying the idea in moral imagination
- Changing perspectives
- Understanding the real meaning of masculinity
- At present, all stereo-typical ideology regarding rape as a form of masculine morality are trying to deconstruct and think differently to prevent men as rapist.
- Has started to treat rape as an aberrant behavior
- Women are showing activeness, boldness, more careers oriented than past.
- Possible suggestions to reverse the tide of violence
- Rape is all about the abuse of power in patriarchal political system rather than sexual drive.

#### 05. Conclusion

Bohner and Schwarz note that a greater belief in gender inequality is associated with a higher frequency of rape, at both the individual and the societal level. They have concluded that their findings support the feminist claim that rape and rape myths contribute to gender inequality.

The feminist perspective deals with the impact of the threat of rape on women's self-esteem trust in others, and perception of personal control. The assault may disrupt the sexual life of the survivor because sex, which usually involves pleasure, was instead used as a weapon to humiliate, control and punish.

Women are more convinced now as individuals that any kind of violence against them which includes sexual violence is “not the norm” and this then leads to a greater chance for women who have experienced violence to be open about it and report it to the criminal justice system.

All misunderstanding and stereotypical ideology regarding rape as a form of masculine power should be deconstruct and think differently and prevents rapist, who think them as a form of masculinity. But the matter of fact is that masculinity really gained and man can be the one by establishing this real fact.

We, as individuals need to model behaviors that we want to see in the people around us and we need to be good citizens. And we need cooperation of all citizens. We need to spread the



word: violence and rape is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. And importantly, we need to remember that those who commit these crimes need help too. They need mental health interventions. They need help to deal with what caused them to do what they did. We need to take responsibility of our actions; we need to take responsibility of our reactions also.

Rape is just one form of victimization. We are trained to view our sexuality as submitting to male aggression. There's a lot of cultural conditioning that makes women vulnerable, and 99 percent of men don't understand it. Women can never be responsible for the rape; the blame is completely on men. So a rapist is a criminal, no matter whether he is male or female.

There always exists a common tendency of men who considers the body of women as their wholly own. But when they cannot get it willingly, they apply their power. Here, the power is not only masculine power, it can be political, economic and the power of social dominance and it is the ultimate truth.

Rape is the ultimate act of power in my opinion. People argue about whether rape is about sex or power, but I believe it's about both. To rape, a person has to be sexually aroused, and to overpower someone physically and invade their body when it's unwanted is to take power over them. So, in this case, power is primary and sexual desire is secondary. So, it is the high time to blame the power generation of males, both in the cases of masculinity and in power politics of any patriarchal political system by the society.

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