

## Sexism and Attitude towards Rape Victim among College Students

Elsa Joseph<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Deepthi Vijayan<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The present paper examines the effect of sexism and attitude toward rape victims among college students. 110 students between the age group of 18-25 from different colleges in India were taken. Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) was used and the Attitudes toward rape victim scale were used for collecting data. To analyze the obtained data, Pearson's product-moment correlation and t-test were used in the study. The result of the present study indicates that there is no significant relationship between Sexism and Attitude toward rape victims. The findings show that there is no significant difference between male and female students, with regard to Attitudes toward rape victims and benevolent sexism while it shows that there is a significant difference between male and female students with regard to Hostile sexism. The study provides insight into sexism and Attitude toward rape victims among college students.

**Keywords:** Sexism, Attitude, Rape Victim, College Students

Sexism refers that it is judging people by their sex when sex doesn't matter. Also, it is discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping based on gender, and is most often expressed towards women and girls. According to APA, sexism is an individual's attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and organizational, institutional, and cultural practices that either reflect negative evaluations of individuals based on their gender or support the unequal status of women and men.

Sexism can be: hostile, benevolent, or ambivalent. These terms come from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory, a framework that researchers use to understand and measure the effects of this prejudice. Hostile sexism refers to beliefs and behaviors that are openly hostile toward a group of people based on their sex or gender. Misogyny, or the hatred of women, is an example of hostile sexism. Benevolent sexism includes views and behaviors that frame women as: innocent, pure, caring and nurturing, fragile and in need of protection, and beautiful. Ambivalent sexism is a combination of benevolent and hostile sexism. People who engage in ambivalent sexism may vary between seeing women as good, pure, and innocent and seeing them as manipulative or deceitful, depending on the situation.

<sup>1</sup>Student, Dept. of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College Autonomous, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College Autonomous, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

\*Corresponding Author

Received: May 02, 2023; Revision Received: August 22, 2023; Accepted: August 24, 2023

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Attitudes toward rape show that there is an overall negative attitude toward rape victims leading to discrimination, stigma, and, consequently, under-reporting of rape. Certain characteristics such as blaming, being judgmental, and skeptical contrasted with believing, authenticating, and non-judgmental reactions from police-influenced survivors. The former proved to have negative consequences on victims' emotional states while the latter had positive consequences. Negative consequences increase the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and heighten symptoms of depression, anxiety, and hopelessness. It can also lead to risky sexual behaviors thus increasing exposure to sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, and HIV.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kamdar, Kosambiya, et.al, (2017) Rape attitudes over time indicate that men have no control over their sexual desires and when women dress “seductively”, they are asking to be raped. Researchers have revealed that negative attitudes toward victim's results in justification of the act of sexual violence.

Sleath and Bull (2017) found that some police officers have a problematic attitude toward rape victims by judging victims' appearance and behavior such as emotional expression and alcohol in toxication. This is some finding as the police are expected to provide support and assistance to victims of sexual violence.

Gleeson, Campbell et.al, (2016) concluded in a study of 20 adolescent rape victims that majority of the victims had been involved in behaviors that can be said to be inappropriate such as consuming alcohol, hanging out with older people and getting involved in some sexual activity prior to the assault. Furthermore, the study also examined how certain characteristics such as blaming, being judgmental and skeptical contrasted with believing, authenticating, and non-judgmental reactions from police influenced survivors. The former proved to have negative consequences on victims' emotional states while the latter had positive consequences.

Strömwall, Landström et.al, (2014) across the board, it would seem that most studies show that men and women deviate in terms of assigning blame to victims. Specifically, men and women deviate in terms of victim blaming based on the information about the perpetrator.

Bohner.S, (2011), conducted a study on rape attitudes or beliefs that needs to be well-thought-out and addressed as a social problem and not just one that is isolated within specific populations. The authors contend that the acceptance of rape culture is a social issue. It is crucial to balance this view point to the problematic attitudes towards rape victims.

Weiss, (2010) historically, rape has been viewed as a crime involving men as perpetrators and women as victims. This perception may be directly related to a general belief that men are physically stronger than women as well as gender roles within cultural contexts that paint women as being vulnerable to rape.

Harrower.G, (2008) maintains that men blame the victims more than women especially when victims know their attackers. These create a tendency to put more responsibility for rape on the victim. Their study further showed that participants who related more closely to victim characteristics were more inclined to blame the perpetrator, showing a correlation between “harm avoidance” and “blame avoidance”

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### *Significance of the study*

As we know the rate of rape crimes increasing day by day. According to recent reports, it has been found that rape happens every 15 minutes. Sexism plays an important role in this. Society seems to view men as superior to women. According to the National Crimes Records Bureau, 2015 annual report 34,651 rape cases were reported across India. As with any issue of this magnitude, there are bound to be different attitudes toward rape. This study is important to know the attitude towards rape victims and Sexism among college students. Studying the attitude toward rape among college students may provide results indicating the need to develop public awareness about rape and attitude toward rape victims. Consequently, such interventions may also bring the needed support rape victims so desperately need from the societies they live in.

### *Operational definitions*

#### **Sexism**

Sexism refers that it is judging people by their sex when sex doesn't matter. Also, it is discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping based on gender, and is most often expressed towards women and girls.

#### **Attitude toward rape victim**

The overall negative attitude towards rape victims leads to discrimination, stigma, and consequently, under-reporting of rape. Certain characteristics such as blaming, being judgmental, and skeptical contrasted with believing, authenticating, and non-judgmental reactions from police-influenced survivors.

## **METHOD**

### *Objectives of the study*

- To assess the relationship between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victim
- To assess the relationship between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victim
- To assess the difference between male and female students with regards to their attitude towards rape victim
- To assess the difference between male and female students with regards to their hostile sexism
- To assess the difference between benevolent male and female students with regards to their benevolent sexism

### *Hypothesis*

- H1: There will be a significant relationship between benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victim
- H2: There will be a significant relationship between hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victim
- H3: There will be significant differences between attitude male and female college students with regards to their attitude towards rape victim
- H4: There will be a significant difference between male and female students with regard to their benevolent sexism
- H5: There will be a significant difference between benevolent male and female students with regard to their hostile sexism

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### ***Research Design***

While conducting a study, the important thing to be noted is to select an appropriate method. This research study followed a quantitative design. Quantitative research design refers to the collection and evaluation of numerical data to test a hypothesis or to identify patterns and correlations within the numbers. In collecting quantitative data, the most common techniques used are Surveys and Questionnaires. A Questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a series of questions which is used for gathering information from the respondents.

### ***Measures Used for the Study***

As the objective 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 victim scale

### **Ambivalent Sexism Scale**

The ambivalent sexism inventory (ASI) is introduced by Peter Glick and Susan.T. Fiske in 1995. The scale consists of 22 items. The ASI may be used as an overall measure of sexism, with hostile and benevolent components equally weighted, by simply averaging the score for all items after reversing the items.

The scale is scored from 0-5. For some items, the scorings are reversed. The two ASI subscales (hostile and benevolent sexism) may also be calculated separately.

### **Attitudes toward rape victim's scale**

This scale is a 25 items scale. Attitude towards rape victim scale was developed by C. Ward in 1988. The scale is scored from 0-4 and a respondent can score from 0-100. For some items, the scoring is reversed. The higher the score, the more negative the attitudes that respondent holds toward the rape victims.

### ***Sampling Design***

#### **Sampling Selection**

Convenient sampling method is used in this research. A total of 110 samples are selected. All the samples are from college students in India (N= 55 males, N= 55 females) The age of the sample ranges between 18-25 years. The samples are the college students pursuing the under-graduation and post-graduation degrees.

### **Collection of data**

The study which was conducted was based on sexism and attitude toward rape victims among them. For collecting the data, the male and female students who are pursuing undergraduate degree and post-graduate degree programmers were selected and the questionnaires on sexism and attitude towards rape victims were given to them. The purpose of the study was briefly explained to the respondents. The respondents were given an idea about the questionnaire and how to respond to the questionnaire which is the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement for ambivalent sexism inventory and a 4-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for attitude towards rape victims. The main problem faced during the data collection was the cooperation and willingness of students to fill out the form.

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### Statistical Analysis

Statistical data analysis is a procedure of performing various statistical operations. Data in the statistical analysis consists of variables. For analyzing data, the statistical techniques used in this study were Pearson's product-moment correlation and t-test.

### Independent t-test

In the present study, an independent sample t-test was used. T-test is a statistical test that is used to determine the difference between mean and average scores. This technique is used in order to analyze the mean differences between variables.

### Pearson's product-moment correlation

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used in this study. This method helps in measuring the correlation between the two variables x and y.

## RESULT

To test the first two Hypotheses, the Pearson correlation method is used.

**Table 1 Correlation between Benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims**

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2
Attitude towards rape victims	110	53.72	10.623	-	
Benevolent Sexism	110	29.07	7.566	.059	-

\* $p < .05$  (two tailed)

The table 1 shows the Descriptive Statistics of the correlation between Attitudes toward rape victims and benevolent sexism among college students. The mean and Standard deviation of the variable Attitude towards rape victims is 53.72 and 10.623 respectively. The Mean and Standard deviation of the variable benevolent sexism are 29.07 and 7.566 respectively. The mean of Attitude towards rape victims is higher than the mean of benevolent sexism. The correlation coefficient obtained is .059 and the significant value is .542, greater than 0.05. Hence the hypothesis is rejected. A significant relationship doesn't exist between Attitude toward rape victims and benevolent sexism.

**Table 2 Correlation between Hostile sexism and attitude towards rape victims**

variables	N	M	SD	1	2
Attitude towards rape victims	110	53.72	10.623	-	
Hostile Sexism	110	27.15	7.519	-.014	-

\* $p < .05$  (two tailed)

The table 1 shows the Descriptive Statistics of the correlation between Attitudes toward rape victims and Hostile sexism among college students. The mean and Standard deviation of the variable Attitude towards rape victims is 53.72 and 10.623 respectively. The Mean and Standard deviation of the variable Hostile sexism are 27.15 and 7.519 respectively. The mean of Attitude towards rape victims is higher than the mean of benevolent sexism. The correlation coefficient obtained is -.014 and the significant value is .885, greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. A significant relationship doesn't exist between Attitude towards rape victims and Hostile Sexism.

To test the third, fourth and fifth hypothesis, the t-test is used.

**Table 3 Descriptive statistics of t-test of Attitude towards rape victims on gender difference.**

Variables	Male		Female		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Attitude towards Rape Victims	54.49	11.213	54.15	10.098	-.170

**\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \* $p < 0.05$**

Table 3 shows the Descriptive statistics of the t-test. The mean and standard deviation of Attitude toward rape victims of males is 54.49 and 11.213. The mean and standard deviation of attitude toward rape victims of females is 54.15 and 10.098 respectively. The obtained t value was found to be -.170 and the significant value is .866. The results indicate that the significant value is higher than 0.05, the significance level. So findings in the Table 3 show no significant difference between male and female students regarding their attitude toward rape victims. Hence the hypothesis is rejected. The independent sample t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between the males and females in their Attitude toward rape victims.

**Table 4 Descriptive statistics of t-test of Benevolent sexism on gender difference**

Variables	Male		Female		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Benevolent sexism	29.82	7.577	28.33	7.550	-1.034

**\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \* $p < 0.05$**

Table 4 shows the Descriptive statistics of the t-test. The mean and standard deviation of benevolent sexism of males are 29.82 and 7.577. The mean and standard deviation of benevolent sexism of females are 28.33 and 7.550 respectively. From the table, it is evident that, for males, the mean of Benevolent sexism is higher than that of females. The obtained t value was found to be -1.034 and the significant value is 0.304. The results indicate that the significance value is higher than, 0.05, the significance level. So findings in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference between male and female students with regards to benevolent sexism. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 5 Descriptive statistics of t-test of Hostile sexism on gender difference**

Variables	Male		Female		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Benevolent sexism	25.09	7.636	29.20	6.870	2.967

**\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \* $p < 0.05$**

Table 5 shows the Descriptive statistics of t-test. The mean and standard deviation of Hostile sexism of Male are 25.09 and 7.636. The mean and standard deviation of Hostile sexism of Female are 29.20 and 6.870 respectively. From the table, it is evident that, for female, the mean of Hostile sexism is higher than that of males. The obtained t value is 2.967 and the significant value is 0.004. The results indicate that the significant value is higher than, 0.05, the significance level. So findings in the Table show that there is a significant difference between male and female students with regard to Hostile sexism. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.

### DISCUSSION

The present study seeks to investigate Sexism and Attitudes toward rape victims among college students. The sample consists of 110 students (55 Male and 55 Female college students) within the age range of 18 to 25. A convenient sampling method was used to collect the data. The tools used in the study are Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (including two subscales, Benevolent sexism, and Hostile sexism) and the Attitudes toward rape victims scale. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS.

The findings of the present study show that there is no significant relationship between sexism and Attitudes toward rape victims. The results also indicate that there is no correlation between hostile sexism and Benevolent sexism with regard to attitudes toward rape victims, among college students. The results also show that there is no significant difference between males and female students with regard to attitudes toward rape victims. It also shows that there is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to benevolent sexism. In the analysis of hostile sexism on gender difference, there is a significant difference between males and female students with regards to Hostile sexism. Hostile sexism refers to beliefs and behaviors that are openly hostile toward a group of people based on their sex or gender.

The study shows that there are no significant differences between male and female students regarding sexism and Attitude toward rape victims. No significant differences in benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims among males and females. The findings also show that there is a significant difference between male and female college students with regard to Hostile sexism. From the correlation analysis, benevolent sexism, hostile sexism, and attitude towards rape victims have no correlation. On analyzing the table, it is found that there is a slight variation in the mean of males from that of females.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study aims to analyze sexism and Attitude toward rape victims among college students. The sample consists of 55 male and 55 female college students, totaling 110 students. A convenient sampling method was adopted for data collection. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and Attitudes toward Rape Victims Scale were used for data collection. The data gathered were statistically analyzed using SPSS software.

From the discussion and the finding, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in benevolent sexism and attitude towards rape victims in college students but there is a significant difference between male and female college students, with regard to Hostile sexism. Despite a significant interaction effect of gender and social category on many dependent measures, no main effect help identify ways to ward those biases, of what attitudes people hold towards victims of rape can thereby helping to minimize the stigmatization and secondary analyzation. The findings of this research will aid both rape victims and those meeting rape victims in understanding the processes that play a crucial role in the social perception of rape and the victimization of rape victims. The knowledge of gender and social category was found in the rape victims.

#### *Implications*

This study is important as it gives insight into the students and also helps to find out the level of sexism and attitude towards rape victims of college students. Also, the findings from the study may assist society to change its attitude toward the rape victim. It is essential to mention that, students will enormously benefit from this study by understanding the

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determinants of their level of sexism and attitude towards rape victims and it would be helpful to further researchers in various ways.

### *Limitations of the study*

- The sample was selected using convenient sampling
- The sample size was small, a larger sample size would have increased the generalizability of the results.
- Age groups other than 18-25 are excluded.
- Due to time constraints, the process of the study was conducted in a hurry.

### *Suggestions for future research*

- Further studies can include the assessment of attitudes towards rape victims among the college students.
- Studies can be conducted with a bigger sample size to facilitate a better understanding of the sexism and attitude towards rape victims of the general population as a whole
- The sample population can be further divided on the basis of sector or field of occupation
- The sample population can be divided on the basis of the number of children present in the household as well as the on the basis of the number of individuals present in the residence.

### *Ethics followed*

- The participant's consent was taken prior to the study.
- Participants; details and responses were kept private.
- The participant's data were not utilized for any other reason than the agreed upon the research project.

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### ***Acknowledgement***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Joseph, E. & Vijayan, D. (2023). Sexism and Attitude towards Rape Victim among College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 2615-2623. DIP:18.01.248.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.248