

# [Rape culture and feminism](https://assignbuster.com/rape-culture-and-feminism/)

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In a recent poll thatwas conducted by the Thomas Reuters Foundation, India was ranked as the leastsafe country for women in the world because of issues like having the worstrecord for rapes, violence against women and sexual harassment. Although thisfact might be hard for most Indians to accept, the prevalent truth is stillthat Indians live in such a culture where the culture normalizes issues likerape, sexual harassment, and violence against women.

One such issue that hasbeen the highlight of many news headlines recently, is Rape Culture. Rape Culture is anenvironment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence againstwomen is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. (MarshallUniversity, 2018). Rape culture is perpetuated using misogynistic language, theobjectification of women’s bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women’s rights and safety. (MarshallUniversity, 2018). On a day to daybasis, one can see women being degraded in India through various means such aseve-teasing, groping, stalking among many other such behaviours. All these area result of certain beliefs and certain actions that normalizes rape and rapeculture. Violence against women is a part of systematic rape culture and itusually does not take place in isolation. Attitudes and actions that we term as“ harmless” are what is a part of this structure and are reinforced as an excusefor more sexually violent acts.

Feminism is a broadsociology conflict theory that shifts focus and views from the male viewpointand male experience to that of women. A typical feminist theory typicallyhighlights social problems, issues, and trends that are otherwise misunderstoodor overlooked by the dominant male perspective of this theory. In other words, a feminist theory observes gender in its relation to power. There is a beliefthat the feminist theory tends to exclusively focus on girls/women and portraythat women are superior to men. However, this is an incorrect belief. Thefeminist theory has always been about viewing the social world in a way thatilluminates the forces that create and support inequality, oppression, andinjustice, and in doing so, promotes the pursuit of equality and justice. (Crossman, Ashley. “ Feminist Theory in Sociology. ” ThoughtCo, Oct. 5, 2018). To understand theconcept of Rape Culture better, a few examples of how prevalent this is in aday to day life are explained. First, is the exampleof Rape Jokes. Such jokes are neither funny nor are they harmless. In today’stime, it has become so easy for people to use rape as a joke, for example, whena student finishes writing an examination that was tough and when he/she says,“ The exam raped me”. They don’t keep in mind the effect such a word called“ rape” could have on the minds of every single person around them hearing it. It might seem like an “ innocent” joke, but it represents oppressive ideologiesthat sustain rape culture. From a feminist viewpoint, such jokes can be verysensitive to women especially if they have been victims of trauma.

One way tocurb this is to avoid the usage of language that may objectify or degrade womenand to be respectful of other people’s physical space even if it is just incasual situations. Another example isthat of Victim Blaming. Victim blaming tends to marginalize the victim andmakes it difficult for the victim to speak out or report an abuse or a sexualassault. A woman should be given the freedom to wear the kind of clothes thatshe is comfortable in; a woman should be allowed to identify and choose her ownsexuality, be it a transgender, lesbian or a bisexual. In an instance where awoman gets raped and, in the event, that she was wearing short clothes, leadsto victim blaming and leads to the notion that such a thing called rape isnormal and is prevalent in the society and it is the woman’s responsibility toprotect herself. From a feminist point of view, one should try to separatethemselves from the victim. If a woman says she has been raped, one should beable to listen to her and be supportive of her instead of blaming the victimfor being raped. Yet another example isthat of Toxic Masculinity. Toxic masculinity basically highlights the beliefsand expectations of how a “ real man” should or must behave. No matter how a manbehaves, it is ‘ supposed” to be okay since it is toxic masculinity. Toxicmasculinity is what leads to the notion that a man must prove his manliness andthe fact that commits certain sins with women is simply because he has certain“ needs” and has to “ score” with other women. Such an attitude makes womeninferior and a subordinate to men. In response to feminism or femaleempowerment, men tend to choose abuse women either physically or sexually.

Although toxic masculinity cannot be eliminated overnight, a step that can betaken to slowly curb this is to always communicate with a sexual partner and notjust “ assume” consent. Another thing to keep in mind is that one should be ableto define his/her own manhood or womanhood and not let stereotypes shapehis/her actions. All of these are someof the examples of everyday sexism that contributes to the normalization ofrape. The battle against rape culture is far from over. It is time that womenstart speaking out for their rights because only then will it lead to adifference not only in their lives but also in the lives of a million otherwomen whose voices are yet to be heard. One such feminist movement called the“#MeToo” movement that was recently started in India to launch a battle cry forwomen and their deserving rights and freedoms; the only way now is forward.