

#SOCIAL ISSUES

Understanding the dynamics of rape

When we say "I know rape is wrong. Rapists do not. They need to be punished," we are in actuality failing to recognise the fact that we as a society breed rapists, and we as a society are responsible to not only punish rapists, but to prevent rape in the first place.

A study by the UNDP showed that most rapists, when asked why they committed the crime in the first place, said that they thought it was their right. When asked the question why do you think rape is wrong, many of us reply with, "It takes away a girl's honour, or it is disrespectful, and the victim will never get married," etc.

All of these reasons are wrong because they are simply satisfying the whims of a society that believes a girl needs to be a "virgin," to be pure, to be untouched and unseen, to have respect, honour, rights and happiness.

All these reasons allow the society to shun the rape survivor and her



family because these reasons allow the misconception that a rape survivor is not respectable, for they have already been disrespected, a rape survivor is not honourable for their honour have already been taken away, and rape survivor cannot be married for they are no longer a virgin.

These portray rape to have a more lethal effect on the survivor's society, community and family than the survivors themselves, which is why rape is so widely used as a war and political tool. This brings me to my next point: Rape is not about sexual desire, and it does not root from power and violence only.

Rape is not a matter of sex, power, and violence. Rape is a symptom of a larger social problem that stems from imbalances in class, power, gender, religious and political identities, and the reason why rape is so prominent and thriving in our society is because our solutions and responses to the problem are derived from the same power structure that rape is a manifestation of.

We are trying to weaken rape by strengthening its roots.

When we say "It is illegal and that is why it is wrong," and "Rapists must be punished more severely," we create a disparity of power. When we bring religion in, we create religious disparity, when we say girls should "cover up more," "not go out after dark," and "boys will be boys," we create gender disparities and so on. Therefore,



it matters why we think rape is wrong, because that shapes how we analyse the causes of rape and then try to tackle the crime.

When we use power, gender, politics, and morals to justify why rape is wrong, we snatch away any autonomy of the victim. We not only snatch away the victim's rights to justice, but the victim's right to determine for themselves that they have been wronged.

This is why marital rape is a norm in the Indian Subcontinent; because once a girl is married, religion and law are used as an excuse to justify rape and normalise it.

Rape is wrong because RAPE USES THE VICTIM'S BODY AGAINST THEMSELVES TO VIOLATE THEIR BODILY INTEGRITY AND AUTONOMY.

It is a conventional belief that rapists have mutated into who they are because of abusive childhood experiences. When a child's first sexual experience, or love of any form is expressed as power and violence, that child grows up to tie the two together. Therefore, to the child, sex become rape and rape become sex.

When a child grows up in a home with domestic violence, their first exposure to love, their parents, is often of one of the parents using violence and power over the other to relieve stress or any other form of tension. The child starts to normalise it.

Rape is also used as a weapon against an individual or community for revenge, punishment, or aggression. This is why rape is so prominent in wars and any other form of disparities. There are numerous cases where people were sexually assaulted to humiliate or dominate or inflict pain and injury, either directly on the victim and their family, or to disgrace one gender as a whole. An example would be the constant sexual assault faced by the transgender community.

There are also numerous

misconceptions about what causes rape. Many believe not wearing a veil, getting married late, swearing western clothing, etc. causes rape, because men do not have control over their sexual desires. The only reason this notion exists is because male sexual desire has been normalised compared to female sexual desire where in they are the same, as scientifically proven.

It goes without saying that if a woman can control herself her entire life, a man can also control his sexual urge. Laws and necessary precautions all exist in our country, but they fail to tackle rape because of the social ignorance and stigma that surrounds our people.

Rape cases are rarely reported, and when they are reported, people do not know how to react because the topic of sex remain to be a taboo in our society. People do not know who to blame because they do not know the causes for rape, people do not know what to do because they do not know why rape is wrong. Many families do not report rape cases because they think they will lose their honour, respect and their daughter will never be able to get married. And we are to blame for that mindset.

Therefore, rapists must not only be penalised, but our society as a whole need to be educated about consent and sex. We need to hold awareness campaigns to not only teach girls how to stay safe but to teach society why rape is wrong. We must make a societal effort to shun rapists and other sexual predators.

We must show that the women of this country have a voice without fear, for they have an entire nation backing them up. Tackling rape in not only the responsibility of the law and justice system, but a societal effort, a systematic change and an educational revolution.

By Disha Tananze Ekram
Photo: Star

FROM PAGE 8

A menu for puja festivities

Switch off the flame and let this mixture cool down completely. Spread a bit of ghee in your palms and make the laddoos. Store them in an airtight container or serve.

PRANHARA SHONDESH

Ingredients

3 litres full cream milk

1 tbsp lemon juice

¼ cup malai/doodher shor (fresh cream)

250g mawa

300g sugar

Method

Boil milk in a deep bottom vessel until reduced to half. Mix lemon juice with 1 cup of water and add it to the milk. Cover the vessel with a lid and switch off the flame. The milk will curdle by then and water will separate.

Strain the water and put the curdle milk over cheesecloth and tie all the ends of the cloth. Place the chhana with cheesecloth over a flat surface and put some weight over it to remove as much moisture as possible.

Now take cream over a pan and cook it over low heat to reduce this. Knead the chhana using your fingers. Take half portion of the chhana with sugar and cook it over low heat. Get the mixture completely cooled. Now knead the cooked chhana along with uncooked chhana and reduced cream to make a smooth dough. Make small balls out of the dough. Coat them with grated mawa and serve.

Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

Food: Selina Parvin

Food Styling: RBR

