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THE SEXISM ROOTED IN THE WORLD OF FICTION*

ABSTRACT:

The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines gender as the behavioural, cultural or psychological traits typically associated with one's sex. Gender related issues are no new to this era of modernisation. They have been since the advent of time, been deeply rooted to the societies across the globe. From the deeply embedded system of patriarchal society to domestic violence are just the different violence's under which the ladies have been victimized. The modernisation proved to be no better in this regard, the deeply embedded mind set and sadistic pleasure which the people derive from letting down the women has witnessed even greater heights in the cyberspace. The sad reality being that even the leading business tycoons and the very nationalistic government of India tries to convey revolutionary ideas by the way of advertisements and posters which are sexist in nature. The violence in the cyberspace is not one fought with arms and weapons but one where the thought process and backward thinking of the society at large has to be sought to be changed and adapted to. This the fight against those minds which are yet to accept the reality and are not able to withstand the changes the society is witnessing, the upliftment of the status of the women and their recognition in the society. Violence in the cyberspace takes form of cartoons, memes, posters, video games, advertisements, cartoon series and everyday a new form keeps getting added to the list. The paper analysis 3 cartoons and the results of a survey conducted on the very same cartoons with regards to its sexist nature. The objective of the survey was to gauge the mentality and know about observations and the varied perspectives of the respondents. By the way of this paper the authors evaluate if the modern society still tends to incline towards sexism or are we far ahead to

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these things. How this modern society has derived ways to use even art forms such as cartoons for a social stigma.

Keywords: *Gender, Sexism, Cartoon, Violence, Cyberspace*

INTRODUCTION:

Cartoons let them be in the print media or social media, has always been a powerful tool to convey messages to the people. Quite a lot of people have even been fond of reading comic strips or for that matter comic books themselves. Lately, we have been having Amul (Company based in Gujarat), which every day comes up with a new cartoon based on an on-going issue and the same gets published in the print media (Times of India). Let alone the adults, even the children are exposed to this segment of art and have been enjoying and appreciating it. However, the idea of sexism and cartoon don't seem to compliment each other. A platform like this should ideally be used to convey socially correct messages and not propagate ideas like sexism and violence amongst the people.

In the survey conducted by the authors of the present paper, of the total 220 respondents 66.7% (149 respondents) answered the question of reading through or responding to the various cartoons or memes on social media, in affirmative. While 23.6% (52 respondents) were mid-way, they responded with a *maybe* to the same question and the other 8.6% (19 respondents) answered in negative.

A majority of 54.1% (119 respondents) find such cartoons or memes funny while 5% (11 respondents) answered the same in negative. A group of 40.9% (90 respondents) however preferred to take a safe stand by answering *maybe*.

A mix response was received when the question came to sharing such cartoon and memes, 40.9% (90 respondents) responded with a *maybe*, 29.1% (64 respondents) were a cut through yes and the other 30% (66 respondents) said a clear-cut no.

Out of 219 responses received for the question pertaining to the motive behind the reading of such piece of arts, a majority of 58.4% (128 respondents) said they read them to know the mind-set of the people along with having the fun to read one such piece of work. While 27.4% (60 respondents)

read it just for fun and the other 14.2% (31 respondents) read it just to know the mind-set of the people.

Out of the 218 responses received with regards to the taking a stand against a cartoon or meme which conveys a socially or morally wrong message, 67.9% (148 respondents) answered in affirmative while 12.8% (28 respondents) answered in negative. The rest, 19.3% (42 respondents) were not sure of their stand and thus responded with a *maybe*.



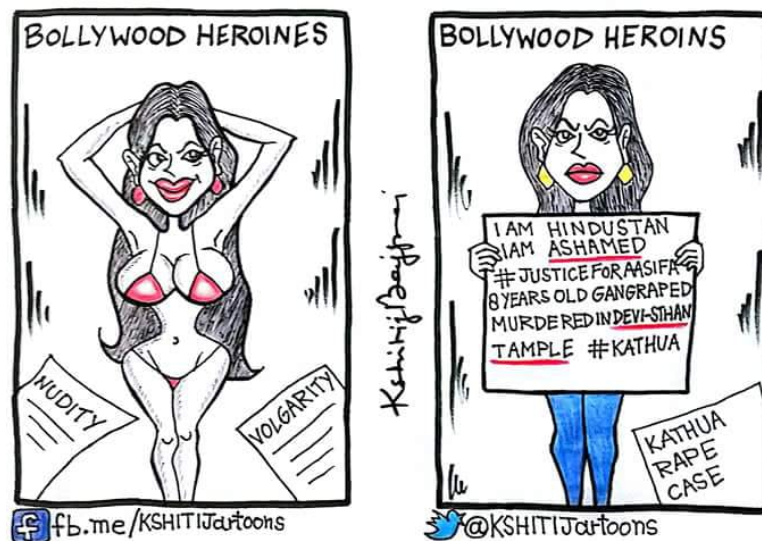
CARTOON 1:

Out of the 220 responses received, 93.6% (206 respondents) don't find this cartoon funny, while 3.6% (8 respondents) find it funny, the remainder of 2.7% (6 respondents) are not sure if they really find the cartoon funny (*maybe*).

Out of the 219 responses received pertaining to if they find the cartoon sexist, a majority of 68% (149 respondents) answered the same in affirmative while 26.5% (58 respondents) answered the same in negative and the minority of 5.5% (12 respondents) responded with a *maybe*.

Of the 220 responses, 90.9% (200 respondents) were unwilling to share this cartoon while 4.1% (9 respondents) were willing to do so. The remainder of 5% (11 respondents) were mid-way.

This cartoon was trending on the social media because it was claimed by many to be sexist in nature. What was that aspect that made the people this way? This cartoon would remind us of the advertisement where the mother says to her male child, to stop crying as it is girls who cry and not the boys. Girls rather the females are and have always been considered as a weak gender and that is probably the reason why crying is often associated with this gender. A man is thought of to of a strong personality who doesn't cry and is emotionally strong. This is where we go wrong, crying is not a sign of weakness but is a way of letting one's emotions and feeling out. Just because of the fact that a man since time advent has been working in the fields and acting as a labour doesn't mean they are physically strong. In today's era, the girls are at par with any male, we have some of the best wrestlers who are ladies or even for that matter boxing. Thus, it is time for the society to probably refresh their minds in this regard.



CARTOON 2:

Out of the 220 responses, 91.4% (201 respondents) fail to identify any element of humour in the cartoon rather they don't find it funny. A 6.8% (15 respondents) do find it funny while 1.8% (4 respondents) are not sure if they really find it funny or not.

Of the 216 responses, a 44% (95 respondents) find the sexist while 42.6% (92 respondents) don't find it sexist. While 13.4% (29 respondents) responded with a *maybe*.

Receiving a response of 218 respondents on the question pertaining to their willing to share the cartoon, a majority of 80.3% (175 respondents) were unwilling to share this piece of work, 11% (24 respondents) were fickle minded in this regard and the remainder of 8.7% (19 respondents) showed their willing to share the same.

This cartoon is an indication of the typical mentality of the Indians, where we often tend to associate and blame the reason for a lady being raped on her dressing style, where she exposes herself, she in a way tempts or attracts the people to come and rape her, this being an open invitation to all. The cartoon tries to rectify the same, in the Bollywood industry where the actresses tend to expose themselves are till date not a victim of such heinous crimes, then why is it that the commoners only. A small seven-year-old dressed in a salwar suit, was brutally raped at the very place where the God resides. She was not inviting anyone to come and rape her, then why was this innocent made a victim of such a heinous crime. It is time for the gentry to stop justifying its wrong and blaming it upon the victims themselves. As the society progresses in its thoughts, it tends to become more adaptive and open to things such the freedom to the ladies to wear whatever outfit they think is comfortable to wear. For instance, in USA, almost everyone wears shorts let that be the ladies or the gents, then why is it that such clothing is deemed to be a misfit in the Indian society only? For once even if we assume that the reason behind rapes being the short and tempting clothing of the lady, then why do the men loiter around in shorts and not raped? Isn't this temping to the ladies? When a person can enjoy watching a Bollywood actress dressed in such clothes, then why do you have to treat a lady well dressed in your very society in such a fashion. In the open public if we see two persons being intimate that becomes vulgar and obscene and devoid of any values for us and when then very scene is depicted in a movie, we claim that as romance. Isn't this double standards and a very baseless justification for a wrong committed.

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A car designer has won an award for designing a seatbelt which helps to cut down on vehicle noise pollution

#IWantOne



CARTOON 3:

218 respondents, answered the questions with regards to this cartoon and the turn out remained to be as follows:

With a very minute majority, 45.4% (99 respondents) don't find this cartoon funny while 45% (98 respondents) find this cartoon funny. The rest, 9.6% (21 respondents) answered the same with a *maybe*.

45.4% (99 respondents) find the cartoon sexist in nature, 42.7% (93 respondents) don't find the cartoon sexist while the remainder of 11.9% (26 respondents) chose to stick to a *maybe*.

A majority of 65.1% (142 respondents) showed their unwillingness to share this specific cartoon while 19.7% (43 respondents) were willing to share this cartoon. The remainder of the same, 15.1% (33 respondents) were dual minded in this regard (*maybe*).

This was the cartoon which was awarded the most sexist cartoon of the year award and the artist behind the same has been trolled by many. Till date we have been listening to advertisements published by the local police, that don't drink and drive, wear seat belts while driving and don't talk on the mobile while driving. As all of these were the reasons contributing to the increasing number of accidents, however this cartoon unveils an altogether new horizon, where the talkative ladies become the reason behind accidents. People ask what's so sexist in this, isn't this the reality.

Ladies might be talkative in nature and so are men, but how does that in any way make the driver gullible to falling pray to an accident. The facts stated in the cartoon seem to very interesting, till date scientists and studies reveal that vehicles, industries, loud music and any other technological advancement contributes to the increasing noise pollution levels. If the very talking of persons with one another contributes to noise pollution, then all of whole of World should probably for a day or two observe silence day, where they don't speak but communicate via sign language only. The baseless claims of the artists at times have led them into trouble.

CONCLUSION:

The results of the survey, as reflected in this paper rely upon the responses of the respondents, which may however differ from what they are or what they actually feel in reality. Of the 220 respondents, a larger share was shared by the females (56.4%) followed by males (43.1%) and transgender (0.5%). Of which the majority belonged to the age group of 20-30 years (50.2%). A detailed study of the responses revealed that it is mostly the males who denied to accept the cartoons are sexist, however the final results of the survey declare the all the 3 cartoons were found sexist by a majority. This was also the verdict of the people on the various social media platforms, as the cartoons selected were heavily criticised of being sexist. This is an indication that even one of the most progressive and educated societies are also prone to the sexist ideology.