

# EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHIC LITERATURE ON GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN WESTERN SOCIETY: A REVIEW OF ADVERSE IMPACT ON SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION OF WOMAN IN WEST

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## Abstract

*The paper intends to explore the role of pornographic literature on to create gender discrimination in the western society with critical reference to identify the status of woman in west. The topic remained of great focus in academia in west. The last decade accounts expand of academic western literature to document concepts of analyzing increased consumption of the pornography with its imagery. In recent, the growing concern is observed amongst western commentators and policymakers to present notion of “sexualization” with specific consequences for woman. The present article is a contribution to sketch an academic background to present role of “pornographic literature” to create discrimination in western society through a feminist lens. The paper is qualitative in nature. It is designed to analyze the western literature through content analysis. The material is downloaded from the internet sources. After thorough analysis of pornographic literature, the findings of the study reveals some of the important issues related to identification of woman in west. The two important issues are: 1) the pornographic literature is in process to promote nudity other than to highlight various other aspects related to the origin of pornography and its impact on youth which seems to be obscured and 2) the discussion is deflected from possible ills of normalization of pornography with pornographic images of women only that creates a source of discrimination on side of woman. As a result the adverse effect on her identity in west. Therefore, it is significant to describe the nature of pornographic studies in relation to its origin and its impact on overall society.*

**Keywords:** *Discrimination, Gender, Identity, Pornographic literature, Woman, West.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Western cultural trend has acknowledged the role of pornographic literature widely (Boyle, 2010; Tyler, 2011; McNair, 2002, 2013). Its acceptance from different academic domains is visualized in literature of journalists, scholars and commentators on culture. The access to pornography is observed with fragmenting imageries and blurred traditional non-pornographic forms within popular state of culture. This takes many forms. These are referenced and documented in diverse domains like, clothing fashion, music industry, sports, practices of beauty, art, higher education and etc. (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002; Kohe, & Hurych, 2013; Paasonen et al., 2007; Paul, 2005). The following trends tried to involve varied forms of cultural relics from fashion to films and advertisements (Babej & Pollack, 2006). The result to explode Play-boy trend merchandise (Spain, 2007) towards setting copies for pornographic conventions in form of “Brazilian waxing” (Jeffreys, 2005) to studies of porn in North American institutes (Atlas, 1999).

### **Problem Statement**

Academically, pornographic literature is new into research academia in west. The pornographic literature is conceptualized in direct relation to the sexual activities in western society by the western scholars. However, there are differences, if the pornographic literature is perceived through a feminist lens. Earlier in the developmental stages of pornographic literature, it was acknowledged less in academic practices due to follow of conventionalized patterns in western society. However, it has turned into a new approach to highlight the gender discrimination with specific reference to the identification of woman in west through a feminist approach. This has shaped the new literature.

### **Research Aim**

The Study aimed to highlight the role of pornographic literature on the gender discrimination in western society. It reviews the adverse impact on identification of woman in west through pornographic literature.

### **Research Objectives**

- To find the role of pornographic literature on the gender discrimination in western society.
- To explore the effect of pornographic literature on social identity of woman in west.

## **Research Questions**

R.Q.1. What is the role of pornographic literature on the gender discrimination in western society?

R.Q.2. How far does social identify of woman is affected through pornographic literature in west?

## **Rationale Behind the Study**

The early developmental stages in the pornographic literature have come across various concepts to present nudity in the western society. The pornographic literature has been perceived differently by the western scholars. It has been the focus of various elements that is attached to its description. With the growing literary practices in western academia, still the pornographic literature is under severe criticism (Smith, 2010). However, according to Smith (2010), the pornographic literature is creating discrimination between females and males in western society. The concept behind this genre of literature is used commonly in academics, but, lack proper analytics of researchers. Therefore, in altogether the main concept of pornographic literature abandons the identification of woman in western society. The following study tends to present greater degree of conceptualizing the true identification of woman in west.

## **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

### **Mainstream Concept Behind Pornography**

After mid-2000s, the concept of pornography began to be used in mainstream western academics. This grew considerably with emergence of new trends in western literature. This tends to mark contribution of McNair that has been influential in following field. The notion of porn was acknowledged into mainstream of western literature in year 1996, with publication of book: *Mediated Sex: The Pornography in Postmodern Culture*. It increased actual consumption of pornographic literature in west as propagation towards discourse of sex. Limitation of this major contribution was confronted with misconceptions to describe pornographic industry in academics as mainstream processing unit (Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1997; Dines, Jensen, & Russo, 1998; Russell, 1998) to discuss pornographic domain.

### **False Image of Pornographic Literature in Western Society**

It is crucial to understand about the pornographic literature. It is straight in nature. One of greatest contribution was put forwarded by McNair, who conceived it positively. This will be discussed later that the pornographic literature has been perceived differently from basics forwarded by many the feminist writers; it is critical for pornographic industry and tends to comprehend similar trends. Pornographic literature has been explained in detail by (McNair, 2013). This tends to continue and state resonance with writings of other authors that adopted different concepts. According to Mulholland (2013), the pornographic literature offers explicit content in public. This similar concept is described as:

*“Pornographic literature offers escalating public presentation for pornographic icons that come across popular representation of it on media”* (Mulholland, 2013)

The definition has not satisfactorily presented pornography in relation to everyday forms of culture. Neither had it attributed for anything specific with trends that appear. Analysis has been little. Focus has been more on famous cultural norms and documentations, than critiquing. Some more noteworthy dissimilarity has been highlighted below.

### **Explicit Content in Pornographic Literature of Mainstream Western Academia**

Following section is a review on literature that highlights sexual actions in literature that emerged in 2000s, later it was increased and became part of mainstream pornographic literature in western context. There have been few texts expressed nudity in prior of the time, surprisingly, it adopted new understandings of the sexual activities within commonplace. The term have been under research since 1980s to 90s that refers to make something oriented towards sex, or something as not in common considered as sexual. There has been great literature that focused on analyzing the racial aspects of sex in research pattern of social sciences (Hodes, 1993; Hutchinson, 1999), the dynamics of power in prisons (Miller, 2000), punishments of corporal nature (Butt & Hearn, 1998), and even to describe sexualization in patient-doctor relations (Zelen, 1985). Jeffreys (2015) stated that the sexual contents is commonly utilized and acknowledged, sometimes not with relation towards the idea for objectification of sex. More focus on present use of sexual activities in literature presented the objectification of sex in work of (Haug 1987), however, this has been limited. Following section is a

contribution to develop relation of sexual activities in pornographic literature.

There has been a great split in use of pornographic literature with increasing interest of culture, or anything that has been sexual. On other hand, critical aspect to view sexual activities has been considered a process negative as well as the dehumanized in its nature, especially in relation to girls and women. Academicians as, Attwood (2010) tried to view this perspective in broader sense. In her contribution (2010), she intended to present it as:

*“Pornographic literature is way that expresses the sexual discrimination and has become even visible within contemporary context of western civilization”* (Attwood, 2010)

Following comprehensions stand have greater academic definitions of creating discrimination within the literary text of pornography. The earlier works have been referenced that considered objectification of sex on athletes (Sailors, Teetzel, & Weaving, 2012; Wanneberg, 2011; Davis, 2001) that provided important differentiation about sexual orientation and perceived positive and healthy. Sexual and explicit content in terms of objectification is considered degrading. It deals in particular to represent athletes within media. According to Davis (2001) there have been three criteria to understand about sexual activities. They are

- Deliberate effort to focus on sexually important parts of body to fulfill purpose for titillation of sex
- Attune towards posture of body that tends to emphasis or intend to titillate sexual feelings
- If there has been case for photographs, then it tends to precede for categories to accompany, punned frequently to caption that confirms moment for relief of sexualized comics

Further, Davis (2001) suggested that the explicit sexual content have been problematic to present athletes. It tends to neither dignify them towards prowess for sports nor tends to promote as complete humans to deserve respect. This shows that explicit sexual content has been echoed through various inquiries for government, high reports related to identification of woman in west through sexual discrimination is related to the woman and girls given by American Psychological Association (APA) within mainstream media. For above instances, term has been visualized through cultural patterns, analyzed through particular terms having negative effect

onto youth, especially to girls and women. The prominent report of explicit sexual content adversely impacted public and was reported through (APA) - Force Task that described condition of women and girls (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). Report presented the overall literature as problematic that understood as synonymous to objectification of sex. Report have explicitly presented the entire concept of pornographic content through literature and it showed deviation from the healthy sexual move and defined it using separate four other criteria to state sexual activities to occur as if one's value brings his or her behavior or appeal towards sex. It excludes other traits. Person having standard to equate physical form of attractiveness (known to define narrowly as *sexy*); Person has been objectified sexually; it is rather used or seen to be under capacity of others. It lack independent mode of actions with power to make decisions; the pornographic literature have not been properly utilized (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). In context of Australian based inquiry, UK has a review of the pornographic literature that was shared with young people and brought many adverse effects through discrimination of gender psychologically and physiologically. The review has been placed with wider scope to sketch picture of degraded position and violence of women in society.

### **Impact of Pornographic Literature on Identification of Woman in West**

The pornographic literature have great influence on western society altogether. This has been demonstrated through sexual content that adversely impacted on the identity of woman in west. The pornographic literature has shown many misconceptions to use terms related to pornography in the western context. These are evident to present problems that mark equity between sex and pornography. According to McNair (2013), contemporary formed societies on capitalism are keenly obsessed to sex and use it in their cultural patterns and art. Similarly, pornography has stepped into world of fashion and advertisements. McNair (2013) in book tried to explore employment of particular imagery of pornography to infiltrate design, culture and the advertisement. McNair on pornographic literature tried to pave path to comprehend commercialized industry of sex that is having stakes within its process. Pornographic industry has likely endeavored itself within mainstream pornography. The products are normalized to be used for everyday purposes. According to Attwood (2010), the commoditized as well as commercial sex types are described under pornographic literature with introduction of sex in mainstream. Example of mainstream explicit sexual content is described by ways as sex to become clearer within present culture of west. These take many forms. The sexual explicit content and

pornography, according to commentators are easily accessible with click of mouse on computer. Even, the celebrities of porn industry are part of mainstream world, books are sold on large basis, even the advisors of sex are working to promote magazines of lifestyle and later to become star. The notion of porn as industry domain has become the object to fascinate art, promote televised shows, films and even social media press. This style is commonly practiced within advertisements and video music to such an extent that the look of pornographic figure is not confined to books but on streets as well. Attwood (2010) continues with an argument that employment of imagery concept in pornographic productions has framed “hyper-sexual acts” in society, especially targeting young girls. Pornographic literature did not appear in overall text. However, representation of particular pornographic content was highlighted that is not been a reflection to analyze its real concept. It is described inherently a problematic to construct pornographic content especially for girls and women. There is no clear concept in regard to pornographic literature and inclusion of sexual activities within the academic research based articles. According to Evans, Riley and Shankar (2010), the use of term *porno-chic* is equated immediately to arouse sexual behavior. The terms, ‘porno-chic’ and cultural raunch have been synonymous within contribution of Levy (2005). Levy tried to deal more critically with this aspect. Majority of western authors tried to present pornographic literature as neutral in its very essence. This do not exactly state happenings, as basically linked towards industry of pornography representing women inequality. These possibly speak to processes that do not rename or obscure pornographic mainstream and rebranded as “*just-SEX*”.

According to Jeffreys (2015) while arguing on real essence of pornographic literature stated that:

*“Pornographic literature has been problematic as this is employed to describe not much for the sex, that potentially refers for presenting mutual activities to pleasure both genders on equality basis, however, it is but to package women with their bodily parts that has been described as playful objects for meeting fantasies of men. Therefore, it is more misleading to describe Pornographic literature that creates problem for woman on its identification of status in West”*

## **Research Gap**

The previous contribution on pornographic literature failed to provide its relation with discrimination of gender in western context. Therefore, the true identity of woman in western context is not properly demonstrated. The following study is a way forward to propose a framework that could explore the role of pornographic literature on the gender discrimination in western society. Along with this, it will try to highlight the adverse impact of discrimination on social identification of woman in western context. Previously the impact of pornography on social identification of woman in west has been ignored.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

Following paper follows the qualitative design.

#### *Data Collection Tool*

Excerpts from books and documentaries on pornographic literature were taken that highlighted the role of gender differences to mark identification of women in western context.

#### *Research Site*

The western context is taken to highlight the concept of discrimination create between genders as an impact of pornographic literature. The state of Australia is taken as research site of study.

#### *Data Analysis Process*

The excerpts were read and analyzed through technique of content analysis. The data is taken from western literature on woman status to deeply analyze contextualize perceptions through the writings of renowned feminist scholars.

#### *Theoretical Framework*

The male-peer support theory is used in this study that was shaped in year 1987. Theory was response to the scholars of criminology that examined about relations between male-peer groupings that showed violence against the female gender (Dekeseredy & Schwartz, 2013). It was during 1980s later to 1990s, that criminologists as well the sociologists tried to seek and expand



empirical knowledge related to victimization of women by the men. According to Wrangham (2019), the violence in domestic context existed ever since the born of first human. However, related to this phenomenon it included the abuse of females by their partners and the concept of date-violence, however, it did not get much attention in academia in 1950s and 60s. According to DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2013), this concept have gone beyond to give patriarchal shape to society, the domination of male gender in society, and it intends to focus on the patriarchal shape of family, lastly, the intimate and domestic stages. The following theory have been designed to present the attachments of some male-peers that is viewed to date their female partners as sought to target for their sexual, psychological and physical assaults (DeKeseredy, 1988). Keeping the above view, the following study intends to use male-peer support theory to find the role of pornographic literature that creates discrimination between both of the genders and to identify the adverse effect of pornographic literature on social identity of women in west.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS OF STUDY**

### **Misconceptions in Pornographic Literature leads to Societal Problems: Context of Australia**

There are some of the misconceptions in pornographic literature of west that creates mark of discrimination between both of the genders. The explicit sexual content in pornographic literature is evident in discourse of public regarding pornography in context of Australia is different with respect to international literature on pornography. It tends to raise issues of pornography when, it has been allowed with sense of sex. According to Sørensen (2005), it has been the common issue within context of Australia that examples of fragmentation in pornographic industry to view culture have been mislabeled. Due to this blur concept, hot debate is centered to inappropriate disclosure of children status towards imagery of sex in society. This led to harm openly to the attendant that has been applied to youth and the status of women in Australia.

### **The Coverage of Social Media**

Mainstream social media have usually focused on explicit sexual content through pornographic literature in context of Australia. The mark of newspaper from mid of 2008 to 2010 namely *Fairfax* and *The Age*, *The Australian*, they all combined in total for 89 research based articles that mentioned about the pornographic literature. The articles have used

pornographic literature interchangeably with explicit sexual actions. Example of excerpt has been taken from writing of columnist, Tom (2010), who tried to contribute in *The Australian newspaper* to get thing simultaneously as:

*Pornification, Sexual desire, slutification ....* (2010)

At start, it was argued that overall concern was to arouse the sexual behavior in children. Mary-Anne Toy (2010) in contribution tend to state about the work of Powell, who under pressure of GEN-Y tried to state about girls and women as they feel free to have sex and described this all event as study of pornography in the society. This has been in preponderance to imagery of explicit sexual content in music, media and many other famous cultural patterns (Gilbert & Powell, 2010). There has been a great confusion taking pornographic literature in Australia into account with apparent commentaries in media on different issues and evident from expert quotes. The Australian newspaper gave example in “Pornographic Culture” as

*“The billboards tell to last longer on bed, Disney characters that present sexually explicit imagery patterns and also dreadful bratz dolls”* (Elks, 2009)

One of the important pieces taken from former Justice for Court of Family (Australia), (Nicholson, 2009) mentioned that:

*“The porn stars that become luminaries with girls young specifically have been encouraged so that there might be something in flaw for them, if there has been no engagement in sex. On the other hand, boys try to possess an impression that the young girls or women exist only to satisfy them.”* (Nicholson, 2009)

Similarly, Suzy Freeman-Greene, writer in *The Age, Newspaper of Australia*, takes an account that there has been degrading figure for imagery to sex and found lyrics popular within music videos and the songs. In article contributed in (2010) stated that

*“The Age went to feature stories that are on investigation of special provision, especially in sex in our city, focused merely on issues that are explicit through sexual images and bombarding the society.”*

One of the paragraph highlighted for the modern cultural patterns. It has been dynamic; however, changes seem to occur through rivaling rate with start of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Once it was considered taboo to discuss on sexual content, now this has been ubiquitous to talk on television, radio and internet. There they seems to ask that why women, who are adult need to put exposure frequently for image construction of being a woman. It has been endlessly available sexually. The idea exists only for pleasure of men to have sex. Later, discussion also lacks within Australian context for harms of pornographic literature. It shows actual status of women in society. According to Stark (2015) and Margetts (2015) there has been coverage of social media to link increase use of porn by young male child towards issues against women violence and culture of rape.

### **Commentaries of Academic Western Scholars on Status of Women in West with Impact of Pornographic Literature**

Mulholland (2013) tried to explain that how pornographic literature have been used in western context. It apparently tends to appear an oversight issue with respect to its actual usage, even it might lack. However, this could be argued strongly of being significant to understand. This could account to operate following logic: The content in pornographic literature has been a cultural issue, now this has been taboo, the panic continues thoroughly. Mulholland (2013) while defining it impact on societal issues tended to state that:

*“It is for general public that wanted to control, as of what could be perceived within media, public that is unhappy for tarty, sexual act, or, for general public, who tended to disapprove move for a more liberal society; or, for public that is unhappy for the standards of culture bound to physical state of beauty., or, for following people, that has clear power backed ways to argue and is reasonably fixed to advance liberal practices in democratic nature of society., as perceived to call image of abandoned child.. Therefore, arguments, as suggested, put forwarded have been less in interest to protect children than to use figure of helpless woman or child to forward specific agenda in politics”* Mulholland (2013)

## **Analysis of Pornographic Literature through Feminist Approach in Western Context**

There has been great confusion with terms of sexual activities and pornographic literature within press and mainstream media. There have been an unjustified problem creating panic for inappropriate revelation onto children about notion of sexuality; however, the focus is invisibly blunt. This greatly impacted on feminist critic writers in refers to mainstream pornography of adult women. There has been obscure possibility for continuum to influence imagery of pornography all across life cycles with refer to girls that will become adult women. There have been hot debates on pornographic literature, misconceptions and issues in refer to demonstration of explicit sexual content, this all reduced for opportunity to criticize potential influence of culture on inequality of women. The specific characterization for pornographic literature within mainstream, has great implications on critic analyzes through feminist lens on pornography. In first, it failed to acknowledge pornography as form of commercialized sex that have produced some conditions in terms of inequality, the misconceptions in pornographic literature as well lack of sex in both context and nuance. In second, there has been synonymous employment of sex with pornography within western academic texts as well famous discussions on pornographic literature to show nudity. It tends to operate pornography to become the truth as well sex that depicts of what actually sex refers to with ideal form of it (Tyler, 2011). And thirdly, misconception of pornography with sex has effectively slandered those that are critical to define pornography with inherent “antisex” factor. If there has been, sex and notion of pornography as are equivalently employed, then, to challenge pornography, there must also be challenge to define sex as well. Notion of antisex have history to be employed against critical feminist writers within industry of pornography. Leidholdt (1990) went far to describe label of antisex as “*age-old slur anti-woman*”. The word slur is effective enough to prove dismissing for criticizing pornography and specifically critic feminist writers of pornographic literature. The word slur is made part to sketch an idea against the sex. It has been visualized as absurd as taken for undermining and analyzing. According to Richardson (2000), the mere point of focus that critiques of feminist writers have is related to pornography in actualizing antisex concept. She tried to notify that there has been misrepresentation about inability to interrogate by supporters of industry of sex to define what sex constitutes to. Therefore, it has been a critique to label pornography in terms of critique to all types of sex that exhibit inability and imagine non-exploitative and non-commercial cadres. Therefore, this has been one of the

useful path for analysis of feminist writers and activism for countering myth of anti-sex.

## CONCLUSION

The literature of Pornography is now widely viewed and practiced academically in the western literature. However, it has created the margin of difference between both of the genders. Furthermore, the differences between the both of genders are less acknowledged and it has shown an adverse effect on identification of woman in western society. There literature on pornography is dealt and perceived differently by the western scholars. Therefore, the following project tried to highlight the role of western pornographic literature on western society that is represented differently by both of the genders. It has created adverse effects on the identity of woman. Through the analysis of literature by applying a feminist lens, it has shown that the pornographic literature is directly depicting the sexual activities committed within western society. To highlight this fact, the context of Australia was taken to analyze. The significant concern of pornographic literature is to promote the behavior of sexual arousal within youth and on the other hand, it has adversely affected the status of woman in west. However, many of the renowned western writers have suggested the literature of pornography cannot be discussed without exploring the explicit content and they can be interchangeably used academically and within governmental reports. The narratives emerged in field of western academia with specific reference to actual role played by pornographic industry is still unclear. Following are some of the new developments in western society that tries to depict the genderless utilization of pornographic identity through pornographic pictures that demands pornography equivalent to demands for sexual activity only. It is sidelined through analysis of feminism approach that comprehended pornography to a specific commercialized sex and linked to many ways towards inequality of woman status to man.

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