IN SEARCH OF CAUSES OF RAPE IN INDIA

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The present paper attempts to search the causes of rape in India today. The analysis has been made from the holistic perspective; psychological, bio-social, Socio-cultural, and the socialization approaches have been combined in one to understand the causes. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the causes of rape lie in the psychological make-up, Socio-cultural scenario oppressive to women, and the socialization of men in such a milieu.

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Introduction

One of the most recent, and the only source of official information on crime at the national level, Crime in India, 1981, published by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, (1986), reports that of 13,85,757 cognizable crimes committed in the country in 1981, there were 5,409 cases of rape (BPRD, 1986:33). A close look at the trend of rape during the decade 1971-81 reveals that, barring 1979 when the incidence of rape registered a decline over 1978, there has been a rapid rise in cases of rape which touched a high of 5,409 cases in 1981 (Pandey, 1986: 169-186). Given the statistical sleight in reporting and registering rape, the problem is more serious than what is reported. This shows that India is not only a rape-prone society but is becoming more rape-prone as the days pass on.

To be sure, sexual assault is not a universal characteristic; crime of the rape varies cross-culturally (Sanday, 1981 :9). That is to say, all societies are not 'rape-prone' where the incidence of rape is high. On the contrary, there are 'rape-free' (tribal) societies, where the act of rape is either infrequent or does not occur (e.g., Sanday, 1981:5-27; Blanguernon, 1955:134; Turnbull, 1965; Stout, 1943:39; Maiskii, 1921 :98; Elwin, 1947:656; Rattray, 1927:211). It transpires, then, that even though human sexual behaviour is biological in nature, it is determined by Socio-cultural forces, and that where men are in harmony with their environment, rape is usually absent, as is the case with many tribal societies, and conversely, where they are in disharmony with their environment, there is a rape-prone Socio-cultural configuration as is the case with traditional and modern societies.

It may be noted that rape is not necessarily associated with poverty and backwardness of the people; many tribal societies are reported to be rape-free (for such societies, see Broude and Greene, 1976; Murdock and White, 1969. See also Sanday, 1981, 1981a). The rate of rape in one of the most affluent societies of the world today, the U.S.A., has been rising sharply since Uniform Crime Report Statistics were reported
first in 1933 (Bowker, 1979; Hindelang and Davis, 1977). It is projected that in America one rape occurs every minute (Merchant, 1979). And all this is happening despite the fact that, in recent years, the women’s liberation movement has contributed much towards the reduction of the incidence of rape and the amelioration of the circumstances faced by those who survive the rape-ordeal (Largen, 1976; Rose; 1977). It may be noted that this alarming rate of rape is no more than a third of the rapes (extra-marital) which are reported. Rates of reported rape appear to have increased in Anglo-Saxon countries as well in the last twenty years (see figures in Shorter, 1977:480). In Germany and the U.K., rapes have been committed in more than one per cent of the total number of cognizable crimes, the range being 1.20 to 2.09. In Japan, the percentage of rape of total cognizable crime is less than one per cent (Krishna, 1982:92). This, then, shows that the causes of rape lie in the larger social scenario; they are not confined to poverty.

Given the fact that many societies, including India, are rape-prone societies, that rape is not restricted to poverty and backwardness of the people, and that the causes of rape go deep into the Socio-cultural milieu in which men are enmeshed, the present paper intends to make a search for the causes of rape in contemporary India.

**Approaches to the Etiology of Rape**

In criminological theory, there are three *approaches* to the etiology of rape with three different foci of attention: (1) the social structural approach, (2) the individual psychological approach, and (3) the social learning approach.

The social structural approach emphasizes the structural determinants of rape. The adherents of this view argue that human sexual behaviour, though based in biological need, "is rather a Socio-cultural force than mere bodily relation to two individuals" (Malinowski, 1929: XXIII), and that rape is "an act that illuminates a larger social scenario" (Sanday, 1981:5-27). The social structural theorists have sought to explain the causes of rape in terms of social structures and processes within society, but they argue from two contrasting positions: functionalist and conflict.

The functionalists do not argue about the role of violence within modern society. They rather make value-consensus as the basis of social order. When explicit reference is made to unequal relationship, they see this unequal relationship as natural, because, according to them, men are unequal in their abilities and contributions. Under the dictum that "if it exists and persists, it must have a system-maintenance function", functionalists find rape and, for that matter, crime as a whole, to be functional for society. They argue that, on the evidence, universal conformity to normative expectations is unlikely. This is what led Durkheim (1938:64-75) to comment on the 'normality of crime'.

Recently, Davis (1937:744-755) argued that prostitution is consistent with, rather than a threat to, the conventional structure of society. Merton was mild about urban "machine politics" when he wrote in terms of the modicum of 'Justice' for the poor through the vote assuring assistance of urban politicians (Merton, 1957:71-82). Building on the work of George Simmel, Coser documented some of the positive functions of conflict (Coser, 1956; 1967). Merton's (1957:131-194) analysis of anomie, usually classified as a kind of functional analysis, suggests that crime is a symptom of the dissociation in society between culturally prescribed aspirations...
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(Clinard, 1956:112) and available means. Merton’s theory has been further broadened into a societal theory attempting to incorporate into it certain elements of differential association (Cohen, 1955; Cloward, 1959:164-176). For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between the theoretical position of Merton, Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin, see Clinard, 1964:1-56). The theory of anomie as applied to the crime of rape and delinquency, is, of course, provocative and sociologically sophisticated. Nevertheless, it does not explain why many, who do not achieve normal sexual outlets in our society, fail to go beyond institutionalized means to obtain it. Nor does it offer a satisfactory explanation for the behaviour of professional offenders. Precisely put, functionalists hold that women are unequal to men in society because they are unequal in their abilities and contributions and that rape is consistent with the conventional structure of society.

The conflict theorists take the opposite stance. They argue that violence is the primary mechanism that holds societies together. Instead of stressing interdependence and consensus, conflict theorists view social relations as unequal and exploitative. Their pivotal assumption is that inequality is unnatural; and that it can be sustained only by force and violence. As a result of a few pioneers (Chambliss, 1964, 1969; Horton, 1966; Quinney, 1964, 1970; and Turk, 1966, 1969), the conflict perspective has moved the study of crime closer to the study of law (Hopkins, 1975). The central concern of the conflict perspective is that of power: “Instead of seeing the law as an impartially administered codification of shared norms, conflict theorists hold that criminal statutes are created and enforced according to the wishes of those with power. Thus, general theories of inequality can be applied to the combined study of crime and the legal order” (Jacobs, 1978:515). (For an excellent review of several of these studies, see Nettler, 1978,1979). According to the conflict theorists, in the act of rape are the assertions of male dominance over women and attempts to keep control over them.

An offshoot of the social structural approach is the socio-biological view of human behaviour which traces war, violence, and, now, rape, to the violent landscape of our primitive ancestors. It is argued that early on, the male tendency became genetically programmed in fight for the survival of the fittest. Male nature is conceived as an ever present struggle to overcome baser impulses bequeathed by apish ancestors (For such central themes, see Ardrey, 1966; Lorenz, 1966; Tiger, 1969). Basing her analysis on this common theme, Susan Brownmiller (1975 : 209) attributes violence to the male and victimization to the female—on human (viz. male) nature—a point to which we shall return a little later.

The Individual psychological approach is an actor-oriented approach which stresses the abilities of the individual to create his own social world. (For formulation of such a logic, see Garbet, 1970: 215-227; Velsen, 1967). The psychology of both the victim as well as the offender is said to cause the crime of rape albeit, on different grounds. It is argued that it is man, the real living man that does all the rape crimes. There are different schools of thought within the individual psychological approach; the most important being the psychoanalytic school led by Freud—the father of psychiatry.

Freud’s psychoanalytic theory has three interrelated themes: a theory of personality structure, a theory of personality development, and a system of personality dynamics (Freud, 1933). Freud believed that personality has a three-part structure: the id, the
ego, and the superego. The id can be thought of as a sort of storehouse of biologically based motives and 'instinctual' reactions to satisfy these motives. The major motives, or 'instinctual' reactions in psychoanalytic theory are the sexual and destructive urges. The energy of these motives, termed libido, would satisfy mental motives as they arose, without regard to the realities of life or to morals of any kind. The id, however, is usually bridled by the ego consisting of elaborate ways of perceiving, knowing and executing. Freud characterized ego as working "in the service of the reality principle". The superego corresponds closely with what we commonly call conscience. It consists of restraints on the activity of the ego and the id. Freud conceived of personality as developing from infancy to adulthood through several overlapping stages.

The psychoanalytic theory of personality is both a deterministic and a dynamic theory. The theory states that thoughts and behaviour are caused by motives. The motives are the id instincts and urges which seek expression. However, many of these impulses would arouse a great deal of anxiety if they were expressed directly because they are in conflict with ego and superego forces. Therefore, the id urges are repressed to, what Freud called the unconscious. These unconscious motives are expressed in disguised form, if at all, and are a dynamic force. Freud maintained that (rape) civilization was a reaction to man's primitive repressive force of social institutions beginning with the family. All intellectual followers of Freud embraced this theory.

From a social learning theory point of view, the criminal (including rape) as well as non-criminal behaviour are learnt, and the frequency and patterning of that behaviour and the motivations underlying it, are largely determined by the social learning history of that person. In other words, a person is a rapist to the degree to which he has learned to be so. There are many, rather different, theories of social learning (Rushton, 1982:425-446). Of the various learning theories that have been used to explain criminal behaviour, the most popular one is the theory of 'differential association' advanced by Sutherland (Sutherland, 1947, Sutherland and Cressey 1955:77-79). He thought of his theory as a genetic rather than as a mechanistic explanation. A genetic explanation is one which seeks to find out the cause of behaviour in the life history of the individual. His theory holds that "criminal behaviour is learned in inter-action with persons in a matter of communication". A person becomes delinquent or criminal because of "an excess of definitions favourable to violations of law over definitions unfavourable to violations of law" (Cressey, 1960:1). The criminal behaviour is learned and is a product of differential association of individuals with criminal and non-criminal behaviour. Differential association varies in regard to frequency, priority, continuity, and intensity.

These, then, are the four predominant approaches to the etiology of rape. The analysts have a tendency to focus on one cause or another, perhaps because of our training as psychologists or sociologists, for example. We are of the view that severally, these approaches fail to explain the causes of rape, and that all the approaches conjointly would perhaps better help in reaching at the causes of rape. In fact, personality, society, and culture are an inseparable trinity (Sorokin, 1947). The behaviour, that is to say, is a function of both the person and the environment (Lewin 1966:166). So a man must be seen as a whole, for, "He is product in process, so to speak, of his constitutional make-up, his physical and social environment, his past experiences, his present perceptions, reactions, and even his future aspirations. It is
this physical-psychological-social-past-present-future configuration that he brings to every life situation he encounters” (Perlman, quoted in Pandey, 1961:25). Thus, here a pluralistic view is preferred to the singularistic one.

Causes of Rape in India Today

Coming to the causes of rape in India today, we confront two types. One set of causes is applicable to all societies but another set of causes is peculiar to India alone. Keeping this in view, the causes of rape in India can better be discussed under three broad heads: psychological, Socio-cultural, and social learning or life history of individuals. We are of the view that personality and character differences are basically influenced by the Socio-cultural contexts in which an individual is born and bred. In other words, the character and temperament traits associated with male or female are influenced by, and are the result of, the Socio-cultural peculiarities to which its men and women belong. Barring the natural anatomical and bio-physiological differences among the sexes, there could hardly be any psychological traits or characteristics which are not influenced by the traditions, beliefs and values current in the culture. The Socio-cultural milieu affects the behaviour of men and women from the beginning of the making of personality, and moulds and shapes their behaviour and attitude so as to conform to the prevailing socio-cultural standard (For recent Cross-cultural studies, see Mead, 1939, 1969. For divergent views, see Deutsch, 1944, vol. I: 224-225).

However, while stressing the social and environmental influence on individuals, we do not disregard the impact of natural, biological and anatomical endowments in the sexes; the latter, indeed, do make a difference in moulding and developing their mental characteristics. The psychological make-up, whether due to the difference in sexes or due to the effect of the Socio-cultural milieu, does determine the personal values of the person. In the Indian expression, the significance of quna (the natural psycho-biological properties) is no less important than that of desa (region, place) and kala (time, period). All these and other factors combine in influencing the behaviour of the individual. With this prologue, let us look at the causes of rape in India.

Psychological Causes

There are various psychological interpretations of rape which lay emphasis on different psychological factors. One psychological interpretation locates the causes of rape in the conflict between instinct and social pressure. It is argued that every man is endowed by nature with the sex urges, or, what Freud called, the libido. Although, the sex-urge is always active in all of us, there is a period of life when it is most intense and active. At that point, sex urges need satiation and channelization. But the society fails to provide an outlet simultaneously to all at that moment. The socially inhibited sex urges find outlet at times in rape. For instance, youth attains the height of sexual powers (Kinsey et al., 1941:219), the apex of physical maturity (Davis, 1944:8-16), and the peak of intellectual capacity (Vernon, 1960:132-154), but is not allowed by the society to give expression to them due to the subordinate position in the society everywhere (Davis, 1944:8-16). Being denied the available outlets for the fulfilment of sex urges, the youth develops a behavioural pattern conducive to sexual assault. Surrounded as he is by moral stringency, fear of adult rebuff, sense of shame, and the like, he adapts to the fears that surround him by celebrating his prowess, asserting his aggressive masculinity and resorting to rape (Pandey, 1969:224-237).
While tracing the etiology of rape, some scholars stress either individual or social factors, but, either way, they hold that it is the male sexual repression which is at the root of rape. This view suggests that male sexuality is inherently explosive unless it achieves a heterosexual outlet (Stoller, 1979).

A second, psychological approach, popularly known as 'psychoanalytical approach', draws its inspiration from Freud. However, there are several psychoanalytical explanations of rape. To begin with, some psychoanalysts trace the roots of rape in the mal-development of personality. It is argued that in the process of the development of personality, the superego of some individuals does not develop well and remains weak, due to which their id tendencies predominate and the ego grows weak. Such individuals fail to judge, and lack the capacity to control, the id impulses. The ego of such individuals surrenders to the id impulses. Rape is the result of such mal-development of personality: many of the mal-developed individuals become sexually perverse. Men with weak ego and superego are guided by the pleasure principle and, sometimes, indulge in sexual assault to satisfy the id impulses.

Several psychoanalysts locate the roots of crime, including rape, in unconscious motivation. However, here, one comes across differing explanations. For some, the rape results from unconscious id urges of sex (Alexander and Healy, 1935; Eisler, 1949). Other psychoanalysts attribute rape to an unconscious need for punishment. It is argued that the unconscious need for punishment "due to unconscious guilt feelings is the motive that leads the criminal to his style-of-life" (Bergman, 1949:281). Still others widen it by saying that crime, including rape, is motivated by many factors, the majority of which are buried in the unconscious of the criminals "(Alexander and Stab, 1956:25).

Another group of psychoanalysts maintains that the criminality of the adult is the direct continuation of the delinquency of the child. In this manner, they place childhood behaviour in the very centre of the problem of adult criminality (Alexander and Healy, 1935). The psychopathy of the criminal is, according to them, a continuation and prolongation of infantile behaviour into the age of psychological adulthood (Linder, 1944:2). According to Abrahamsen, who conducted his study on the wives of eight convicted rapists,

The conclusions reached were that the wives of the sex offenders on the surface behaved toward men in a submissive and masochistic way, but latently denied their femininity and showed an aggressive masculine orientation; they unconsciously invited sexual aggression only to respond to it with coolness and rejection. They stimulated their husbands into attempts to prove themselves, attempts which necessarily ended in frustration and increased their husbands’ own doubts about their masculinity. In doing so, the wives unknowingly continued the type of the relationship the offender had had with his mother. There can be no doubt that the sexual frustration which the wives caused is one of the factors motivating rape, which might be tentatively described as a displaced attempt to force a seductive, but rejecting, mother into submission (Abrahamsen, 1960:165).

Another group of psychoanalysts, however, rejects Abrahamsen's conclusions on the plea that he places the burden of guilt not on the raptist but on his mother
and wife. Brownmiller (1975:179) argues that dominance cannot exist without passivity, sadism cannot exist without masochism. What makes men sadistic and women masochistic, or men dominant and women passive, must be studied as part of an overall syndrome. Most recently, Stoller (1979) held that sexual excitement is generated by the desire, overt or covert, to harm another. And, in this sense, rape would exist in all societies. Despite the reactions of Brownmiller, Abrahamsen's conclusions find support from LeVine (1959:967-969).

According to the third psychological explanation, many men suffer from several socio-pathic sexual deviations such as exhibitionism, sadism, masochism, homosexuality, zoophilia, to cite a few. Sexual deviations relevant to rape are voyeurism (compulsion to look at scantily clothed or naked bodies, usually of the opposite sex), fetishism (when sexual excitement is produced by the sight, touch, or smell of an article of clothing, or some part of the body not usually associated with sexual activity), and redophilia (involves sexual interest in heterosexual activity with a child), among others. The psychodynamics of these and other sexual deviations are quite complicated. Though there is enough room for disagreement as to whether or not some of them are really associated with rape, it can be reasonably said that some of these and other deviations may be symptomatic of the crime of rape, particularly when these disorders cause the individual to make a nuisance of himself.

A sort of corollary to this is the fourth psychological view that holds that many men and women suffer from excessive sexual desire. When women suffer from morbid and uncontrollable sexual desire, psychologists term it nymphomania and when men suffer from morbid and overpowering sexual desire corresponding to nymphomania in women, it is termed as Satyriasis. The excessive sexual desire, if not timely and properly treated, may result in crimes of rape. While such women extend invitation for rape, such men just jump over women in order to quench the thirst of their morbid and overpowering sexual desire.

Since rape is a violent activity (Amir, 1971), a fifth psychological approach maintains that rape is, at times, committed in a fit of aggression. In such cases, it may not be that much a sex desire as much as the satisfaction of the pent-up feelings of aggression, hostility and revenge. Aggressive personalities are prone to temper tantrums and violent aggressive attacks, including sexual attacks. Such people act out of hostility by striking out at the world and women. It is, perhaps, because of this that the rapists indulge in assaulting the victim physically in many respects, including their humiliation and debasement.

A sixth psychological argument is that rape symbolizes a powertrip, a masculine assertion. Mackellar (1975) aptly verbalises this tendency as follows: "The man who rapes does so because he lacks a better means for making the point, I am a man." Similarly, Bart (1975) observes: "Psychiatrists say a gun is a substitute phallus... I find the reverse to be true. When it comes to rape, a phallus is a substitute gun. Rape is a power trip, not a passion trip. The rapist is more likely to rape in cold blood, with contempt and righteousness, than with passion".

Thus far, psychologists considered men responsible for rape. There is another, a seventh viewpoint which holds women responsible for rape. For this group of analysts, rape is the result of sexual excitement caused by the victim in the mind of the
Rape victims are frequently held to "have brought it upon themselves". The victim, rather than the offender, is socially stigmatized. And, psychologists have helped foster the belief that it is women, not men, who are really to blame (on this point, see Albin, 1977:423-435). Obviously, then, the offender, and for that matter, society, is absolved of the responsibility of committing the crime of rape. Naturally, therefore, rape victims are often accused of "asking for", "deserving", or "enjoying" their victimization. It is argued that women wear seductive make-up and walk provocatively. And, lurking in all this is an open invitation to men to rape. It is also argued that only women of bad character and reputation are raped; it cannot be unless they want it. It is not surprising, then, that women are characterized by such psychologists as incapable of acting with consistency, as having the weakness of being emotional and sentimental (for such views in India, see Prabhu, 1963:257-283; Kapadia, 1968: 250-272, and, for elsewhere, see Roback, 1952: 609-611), and as lacking the sense of justice (Freud, 1933, 134).

The theories stressing only psychological factors, have all received criticism, be they the conflict between instinct and social pressure, mal-development of personality, unconscious id urges, unconscious need for punishment, direct continuation of the delinquency of childhood, the nature of human nature to keep women in a constant state of intimidation, sociopathic sexual deviations, excessive sexual desire or fit of aggression, or sexual excitement caused by women's make-up. Klein, for instance, observes:

In Freud's writings, we find... on the one hand, the wonder at the 'enigmatic' woman, the approach to feminine psychology as a 'riddle' to be solved and a theory which views the development of femininity as a particularly difficult and complicated process, on the other hand, there is the contempt... for her inferior intellectual capacities, her greater variety, her weaker sexual instincts, her disposition to neuroses and hysteria, and for her constitutional passivity... judgements on the strength or weakness of the sex impulse in women (passed by Freud and other psycho-analysts) are not based on organic facts but are in accordance with a cultural pattern and milieu... They are also valid, most probably with corresponding modifications, in every society with strong patriarchal traditions (Klein, 1946: 84-89).

Klein, thus, lays stress on the differences in mental development owing to the differences in cultural pattern in which individuals are brought up in the different regions of the world. She observes: "The realization that in different societies women fulfil different social functions and, accordingly, display different attitudes and mental characteristics has shattered the idea of the all powerful influence of anatomy and biological facts on character-traits" (Klein, 1946).

**Socio-cultural Causes**

The social structural perspective stresses the structural determinants of rape. Since this approach has two variants—functionalists and conflict—both provide separate reasons for rape. For functionalists rape is a functional necessity, and, for conflict theorists, rape is the assertion of power. Let us take them one by one.

A group of scholars, to be more exact, functionalists, treats rape to be consistent with the conventional structure of society. Rape results when and where men fail to
maintain conformity with the normative expectations of sex behaviour in the society of which they are members. Rape is a symptom of dissociation between sexual aspirations and available sexual outlets for their fulfilment.

Analysing the causes of rape, Levine (1959) assumes that males, who are denied sexual access to women, will obtain access by force unless they are separated from females. Here men are depicted as creatures who cannot control their sexual impulses, and women as the unfortunate victims. Levine then hypothesizes that four structural factors will be associated cross-culturally with the incidence of rape: (1) severe formal restrictions on the non-marital sexual relations of females; (2) moderately strong sexual inhibition on the part of females; (3) economic or other barriers to marriage that prolong the bachelorhood of some males into their late twenties; and (4) the absence of physical segregation of the sexes.

In contradistinction to the functionalists, the conflict theorists locate the causes of rape in power. According to them, women's status is inferior to men in all the known societies of the world. Men assert their superiority over women in many ways. Rape is one of the many methods adopted by men to keep women under subjugation. In a few investigations the conflict perspective has been used in the study of criminal sexual behaviour. Roby (1969) looked at the evolution and enforcement of statutes that regulated prostitution in New York. Women, according to Quinney (1975: 129), become rape victim because they were already oppressed in the society.

Within the conflict theory, some scholars explain rape through the 'subculture of violence' theory. Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967), and Amir (1971), among others, are pioneers of this approach. According to Wolfgang and Ferracuti, the subculture of violence is formed of those from the lower classes and the disenfranchised. The prime value for such people is the use of physical powers and aggression, including sexual assault, as a demonstration of masculinity and toughness. In the study of rape, Amir placed the rapist "squarely within the subculture of violence" (Brownmiller, 1975: 181). Brownmiller (1975) succinctly summarizes Amir's study with the following observations:

Like assault, rape is an act of physical damage to another person, and like robbery, it is also an act of acquiring property: the intent is to 'have' the female body in the acquisitory meaning of the term. A woman is perceived by the rapist both as hated person and desired property. Hostility against her and possession of her may be simultaneous motivations, and the hatred for her is expressed in the same act, that is, the attempt to "take" her against her will. In one violent crime, rape is an act against person and property.

The works of Wolfgang and Ferracuti and Amir, then, show that rape is linked with an overall pattern of violence and that part of this pattern includes the concept of women as property. Note that the concept of women as property is not new. Women in some societies are treated like objects in an elaborate exchange system between men (Levi-Strauss, 1966). For an excellent recent discussion of the sexual double standard which is the reflection of the view that "men have property in women", (see Thomas, 1959: 195-216).

Most typical of the conflict approach to the etiology of rape is Susan Brownmiller's contention that rape is a power confrontation. She views rape as an act of hostility
towards women by men — rape is the means by which men keep women in a state of perpetually fear. Sexual violence is one of the ways in which men remind themselves that they are superior and through which they exercise power over them. Thus, the element of power is a crucial component of sexual assault. In her comprehensive and important analysis of rape, Brownmiller says that "when men discovered that they could rape, they proceeded to do it", and that "from prehistoric times to the present, rape has played a critical function" (1975: 14-15). The critical function to which Brownmiller refers have been "to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation, forever conscious of the knowledge that the biological tool must be held in awe, for, it may turn into a weapon with sudden swiftness borne of harmful intent" (1975: 209).

The theme that rape is less a sexual act and more an act of power in the relations between men and women has now gained currency in the literature. For instance, Bart (1975), based on her analysis of rape victims, concludes that rape is a power, and not a passion trip. Goode (1971) goes a step farther to say that all social systems depend on force or its threat, including man and woman sexual relations. Murphy and Murphy (1974: 197) say that "men... use the penis to dominate their women". Rape is used to punish women.

It may be mentioned in passing that there seems to be some semblance between the earlier popular socio-biological view which explained war and violence to the landscape of our primitive ancestors and the contemporary conflict view which made violence and power as central to explain rape. Like in the past, now rape is considered as a male tendency to become genetically programmed in the fight for the survival of the fittest. Male nature is conceived as an ever present struggle to overcome baser impulses bequeathed by 'apish' ancestors. (For such general theme, see Andrey, 1966; Lorenz, 1966; Tiger, 1969). In other words, this view is premised on the assumption that male nature is programmed for rape.

**The Indian Social Scenario Congenial to Rape**

Now the question is: which aspect of Socio-cultural milieu in Indian society is more congenial for rape? There are two aspects of the Socio-cultural milieu which are, perhaps, at the root of rape in India today. One is the woman's status in society, and the other is the contemporary sex revolution.

**Women's Status in Indian Society**

Right from the post-Vedic era down to the modern times, the religious practices, rituals, scriptures, precepts, and social traditions have been part of the historical forces which have created for women their existing secondary status in Indian society. Barring the Vedic age, the woman appears to have enjoyed a low status in society throughout. In the *Manusmritih*, one can find a large number of restrictions imposed on woman which tended to deprive her of the status she used to enjoy during Vedic times. First of all, she was thrown into ignorance by making the study of the *Vedas* beyond her reach. And, once the access to the sources of knowledge was denied, she came to be treated on a par with the Shudra. She, thereafter, remained only a passive partner in the religious rites. The son came to occupy a higher, place in the family and society, than the daughter, in religion, intellect, economic, the affectionatal area. Naturally, therefore, the birth of a male child became the prime
aspiration of the marriage. And, to fulfil it, early marriage of the woman became the rule of the day.

The ideal of wifehood, in essence, was the negation of her personality, individuality, and independence. She was required to worship her husband as a god, even if he be devoid of character, or seeking pleasure elsewhere, or devoid of good qualities. What Sumner said, in a different context, applies well in the Indian context. The demand for the woman's virginity—an "appeal to masculine vanity" and "a singular extension of the monopoly principle" assumed signal significance: "Chastity for the unmarried meant—no one; for the married — none but the husband" (Sumner, 1906: 358-359). A faithful wife must never do anything that would displease her husband, either alive or dead. The wife was turned into a 'mistress' in her own home. Manu decreed that woman could own no property; he denied her the right to individuality and independence: "By a girl, by a young woman, or by an aged one, nothing must be done independently even in her own home. In childhood a woman must be subject to her father; in youth to her husband; where the lord is dead, to her sons. Woman must never be independent" (Manusmritih, V: 147-148. See also Shankeracharya, n.d.: 3, 6, 8).

The story does not end here. Manu does not hesitate to sling mud on the character of woman and in protecting man. He stresses the prejudicial view in respect of her sexual appetite. He advised that she must be guarded against evil inclinations by all castes, even by weak husbands. And, thus, he rationalizes his ideal of lifelong fidelity to the husband. The nature of woman, in his version, is to seduce man in this world. She is a temptress (Pramada) created for infatuating man and, hence, there is nothing more heinous than woman. Interestingly, Manu was fully backed in this by the writers of the epics and Puranas. Women were pictured as fickle, frail and faithless. Such was the shocking defamation of woman.

Anyone who has witnessed the pathetic condition of woman in India at the dawn of the British rule, says Shatri (1959:170), cannot but be shocked at it: "the enforced child marriages; the exposure of female children; putting to death female children by throwing them at the junction of the Ganges and the sea; the violence used to make woman follow the Sati rite and, thus, end their miserable existence; the shameful treatment accorded to a widow; the famous Kulinside which made marriage a profession rather than a sacrament, made women not only an object of pity but many a woman sighed in the secret recess of her heart and wished that she had never been born a woman in this unfortunate country". Her status became even lower when the British neglected the cause of women in favour of men.

The status of woman became so low during the British period that Panikkar says: "The daughter was legislated out of existence, the wife became part of the husband's family, and the widow was presumed to have died" (1956: 36). Women virtually became the custodians of the most conservative element in Hindu homes (Majumdar, 1961:251). Strange, yet it is true, that despite all the efforts made towards raising the status of women, the traditional ideas still dominate the minds of leaders and intellectuals of the nation (Kapadia, 1966: 250-272; Prabhu, 1963: 257-283).

As mentioned earlier, this attitude towards women is not peculiar to India alone. In the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, social contract theorists argued that the relationship
between the sexes must be grounded in the mutual consent of individuals. Locke talked of 'tacit consent' (Locke, 1967:119), "which implied that individuals (men and women) are going peacefully about their daily lives, even though there are no expressions of it all". Hobbes (1968) argued that all authority relationships are based on consent, even between parent and infant. For Hobbes, fear and liberty are compatible. Rousseau (1968) divides woman into the good and the dissolute, or whores. Women can remain good only if they stay within the shelter of domestic life. They are incapable of attaining the status of free and equal individuals. Rousseau maintains that men are natural sex aggressors; women are destined to resist. They must always say "no" even when they desire to say 'yes'. Apparent refusal of consent can never, in a woman, be taken at face value. "The lips always say 'No', and rightly so, but the tone is not always the same and that cannot lie". A wife, wrote a legal commentator of the classic contract theory, was a legal nonperson, "by marriage, the husband and wife are one person; in law,...the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended..." (Blackstone, 1844: 442).

**Contemporary Sex Revolution**

While the foregoing gives the picture of the Socio-cultural climate for women in India in the past, let us look at the modern Socio-cultural matrix. Quite different from the better-known political and economic revolutions, a peculiar revolution the sex revolution is taking place in the life of millions of men and women. (Much of the analysis in sequel is drawn from Sorokin, 1970). This sex revolution is changing the lives of men and women perhaps more radically than any other revolution of the past.

During the last few decades, every phase of culture and every institution in society have been invaded by sex. Look at literature: its topics, personages, scenes and aims, are largely centered on sex, especially its pathological forms. In the last few years, much literature has centered on the personalities and adventures of subnormal and abnormal people—Prostitutes and mistresses, street-urchins and criminal, the broken home of disloyal parents and unloved children, brothel, a den of criminals, a street-corner gang of teen-age delinquents, and the list goes on. In the last fifty years, the main themes in the literature have been various forms of abnormal, perverse, vulgar, exotic and even monstrous sex adventures of urbanized cavemen and rapists, the loves of adulterers and fornicators, of masochists and sadists, and the like. In the sham literature of today, which contains the stories of raped, mutilated, and murdered females and outmatching stories of males, it is the pornography that appeals to man. Giving detailed descriptions of the various techniques of sexual approach and the vivid scenes of copulating, kissing and embracing, pornographic literature brutally dramatises rape and other sexual perversions and dehumanizes millions of readers.

Not only in literature, but the general trend in our painting and sculpture, and other visual arts, has been towards a more naked, more sensuous representation of the human body. A pretty female face, an alluring feminine figure with voluptuous curves have become the favourite subject of pictures and sculptures.

What is true of literature, painting and sculpture is even more true of music. The trend of sexualisation is manifest in the music of our time. It is visible in the naked, seductive and abductive, lusty and perverse popular jazz and song hits, and in the bulk of music on the radio and television. References to kissing, embracing and going to bed are
essential to these lyrics. Their bleating is underscored by their gyrations, contortions,
and bodily rhythms all too clear in sexual innuendo and undisguised meaning.
Records of such music are sold by the millions and their nauseous repetition occupies
the greater part of radio and television programmes.

The story does not end here. Other forms of popular means of entertainment—stage,
movies, television and radio—are full of sex obsession and sex permeations in
contemporary culture. Topics of movies are devoted to sex and the cinema displays
passion and lust in their most primitive forms. Various organisations and communities
have protested about their pornographic nature. Still worse is the situation of
television. Endless murder and sex plays have been brought to our homes by this new
instrument of communication. (For studies demonstrating a causal connection
between television, violence and the amount of violence shown in the social
behaviour of viewers, see Murray and Kippax, 1979, vol. 12. For its positive effect, see
Rushton, 1979, vol. 12). With rare exceptions, radio programmes also consist of
misleading and sex-appealing commercials. In the serious drama of the twentieth
century, increasing attention is being paid to sex and its manifestations.

Take the popular press. Intense influence of sex on our popular press is evident, both
in yellow journalism and in the more respectable publications. The front page of
newspapers usually contains some spicy story about a sensational crime, scandal,
divorce, the sex adventures of notorious playboys and playgirls. The covers of
popular magazines regularly depict pictures of seductive females. Sex stories are the
normal contents of these magazines. Add to all this, the legion of frankly pornographic
magazines and comics. Besides, or, so to speak, above all that, sex appeal has
become a 'must' in commercial advertising. A voluptuous figure in a bathing suit, or no
suit at all, is used to catch attention.

These, and other instances, then, show that we are completely surrounded by the
rising tide of sex which is flooding every compartment of our culture, every section of
our social life. Under these circumstances, and even the bestial deeds and criminal
acts of rape, of sadism and masochism, for the satisfaction of lust, are only to be
expected.

Throughout human history, it is the family that has been the pivotal institution, the
building block of society. What is happening to the family today? It is gradually giving
up its original character in the wake of modern changes (see Bronfenbrenner, 1975:
439-469) and sex revolution (see Sorokin, 1970).

The increasing number of voluntary childless couples and growing number of cases of
desertion of children by their parents, are symptomatic of a progressive decline of the
'Parental instinct', or more exactly, of parental attachment, love, and care for
offspring. Side by side, there are symptoms of proliferating promiscuity. An increase
of divorce, desertion and small families means an increase also of sexual promiscuity
among more and more men and women. Such situations lead to illicit sex adventures
culminating in rape. Sorokin (1970:12) says: "Increasing divorce and desertion and
the growth of prenuptial and extra-marital sex relations are signs of sex addiction
somewhat similar to drug addiction."
Sorokin concludes:

The excessive pursuit of sex pleasures means a growth of the sex drive, which, in turn, changes the whole system of forces governing human behaviour. This means that changes in the sex behaviour of our men and women presuppose a parallel change of their biological and psychological properties of their scientific, philosophical, religious, moral, aesthetic, and social values; and, also, a change of the comparative motivational effectiveness of each of these factor-values. The central biological transformation consists of a set of anatomical and physiological modifications that result in an overexcitation of sex appetite and sex activities. This overstimulation may be due either to biological (glandular and other) alterations in the organism, or to the change in the psychological factors that inhibit and control sex impulses and activities. If, for instance, the motivational control and inhibition of these psychological factors weaken, or if instead of inhibiting, they begin to approve, glorify and justify the greater and more promiscuous sex freedom, the biological sex drive becomes progressively disinhibited and acquires a much greater "motivational power" in propelling the individual towards less and less restrained sex relations. In almost all sex revolutions on a mass scale, the increase of motivational power of sex drive is due mainly to the weakening of the controls of the psychological factors or values, and the replacement of the inhibiting psychological factor values by those that approve sex passion, sex prowess, and more varied sex relations (Sorokin, 1970: 13-14).

Causes of Rape in the Life History of Individuals

Rape, like other criminal behaviour, is the result of learning in interaction with other persons, especially intimate groups, in a process of communication. The learning of rape, like criminal behaviour, occurs within intimate personal groups—the family, the neighbourhood, the school, and the peer group. Learning the crime of rape includes learning techniques of committing rape as well as the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes. Learning of criminal behaviour, including rape, varies in frequency, duration, priority and intensity, (Sutherland, 1947). Learning takes place in a Socio-cultural milieu. Since India's Socio-cultural configuration, as briefly sketched earlier, is uncongenial for the woman, men learn to exert power over women in many ways, including rape. We have already seen how Abrahamsen (1960) explains rape through socialization. According to Amir (1971), men learn to have the possession of the female body, as a property, and negative attitudes towards them in and through society. The role of socialization in creating a rape-prone attitude cannot be gainsaid. For instance, it is argued that the dissemination and the attendant publicization of the violence rates for different networks, sponsors, and programmes, might play a part in exerting influence. Also, the family has become an ineffective socialiser for children.

It is, thus, the Socio-cultural milieu which gives rise to rape. The status of women in our society is inferior inasmuch as they are treated as things for lust. Sex anarchy in the wake of the sex revolution has created sex addiction in the mind of men and women, which is manifested in pre-nuptial and extramarital relations. Rape occurs where sexual chastity is ridiculed, nuptial loyalties stigmatized as an antiquated hypocrisy, and sexual profligacy and powers are proudly glamourised. The family has grown weak. Individuals brought up in such a Socio-cultural environment are most likely to be rape-prone.
Summary and Conclusions

In what preceded, an attempt has been made to search the causes of rape in India today. Since there is no empirical data, our conclusions are derived analytically and perceptively. It was shown in the beginning that there are rape-free societies and it is not necessary that the poor and underdeveloped countries should have a higher incidence of rape. Although sex behaviour is a product of the biological need, its mode is determined by the prevailing Socio-cultural scenario.

There are three dominant approaches that try to understand the causes of rape: social structural, individual-psychological and social learning. It has been maintained here that none of the three approaches can be of much use if seen in isolation. Therefore, a holistic approach for the analysis of the causes of rape has been preferred.

The cause of rape in contemporary India has been analysed from three different angles: psychological, social and, learning. There are certain causes of rape, viz., psychological and learning, which are applicable to all societies, but there are socio-cultural causes which are specific to the Indian society. Among the significant socio-cultural causes are the poor status of women and the resulting sex revolution. Born and brought up in such a milieu, the men are likely to be rape-prone.

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Even after that, we have rapes and brutal rapes in India, you may read them every single day. We don’t agitate as we did during Nirvaya case. They never told me about the adverse effects of Masturbation. These three things at very young age leads to pervert psychology in Indian society. Then there are some other reasons too behind the brutal rape cases and mass molestation. Prostitution in India. Prostitution in India is not fully legal and this is the major reason behind the rapes. Sex is very natural thing. Just like food, water and air you need sex for healthy lifestyle. Sex is also a basic need. In India there is a lot of prostitutes without licence. They are doing such a great job for the society. Rape is the fourth most common crime against women in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2013 annual report, 24,923 rape cases were reported across India in 2012. Out of these, 24,470 were committed by someone known to the victim (98% of the cases). India has been characterised as one of the "countries with the lowest per capita rates of rape". Many rapes go unreported in various countries including India. In India, consensual sex given on the false promise of marriage.