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## **A study on the effects of victim blaming on rape victims**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

Rape is a violation of human rights being abused physically and having that scar mentally. However, the attitudes of society with rape myths leads to post trauma to the victims of rape. This paper explores on how rape myths and victim blaming leads to increase in their mental distress. It also discusses the psychological effects of victim-blaming such as depression, self blaming, Post traumatic stress disorder. The literature reviews highlight victim-blaming; how it affects both male and female survivors, men facing certain stigma that discourages them from reporting assaults that they face. Furthermore society and it's cultural factors says that victims are responsible for their assault by justifying those who committed this crime.

**Keywords :** Victim-blaming, Rape Myths, Societal factors, Anxiety, self blaming, Mental stress.

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### **Introduction :**

Rape is a type of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse, or other forms of sexual penetration, carried out against a person without their consent. Forcefully using a person for their emotional fulfillment which is considered as a crime against both the gender but mostly against the vulnerable group which is women. The physical strength man holds is what dominates them as well as the belief of women as a sex toy. The rape victims are the survivors only physically after several months but not mentally. Most of the cases women are getting the blame based on what they were wearing, the time when they were outside. Most of the time people don't see the mental problems that might cause to a person who is a survivor of the rape.

International Crime on Statistics and Justice by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) find that worldwide, most victims of rape are women and most perpetrators are male.

Rapes against women are rarely reported to the police because of that the number of female rape victims is less. By labeling or accusing the victim, others can see the victim as different from themselves. People reassure themselves by thinking, "Because I am not like her, because I do not do that, this would never happen to me." We need to help people to understand that this is not a helpful reaction.

This paper talks about the problems faced by rape victims even though they are trying to survive but because of the blames from the society how they are managing to deal with their mental pressures.

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### **Literature review :**

Eliana Suarez1 and  
Tahany M. Gadalla(2010)  
Stop Blaming  
the Victim: A MetaAnalysis  
on Rape Myths.

Women as well as men rape victims are suffering from the blame which is been received from the Social. By the studies collected it has been found that men are more victim-blamed than women which causes them not to talk about the problems they face. RMA( Rape Myth Acceptance)was also strongly associated with hostile attitudes and behaviors toward women. RMA was also found to be correlated with other "isms," such as racism, heterosexism, classism, and ageism. These findings suggest that rape prevention programs and policies must be broadened to include several strategies that also address other oppressive beliefs connecting with RMA.

Kerstin Adolffsson (2018)

Blaming victims of rape: Studies on rape myths and beliefs about rape

Rape which is a crime being low reported due to pressure they might face while in the justice process. The explanation for low reporting rates is victims' justified fear of being badly treated, mistrusted, and blamed. Victim-blaming attitudes have been extensively studied and reported both among the general public and among professionals in the justice and healthcare systems.

The aim of this thesis was partly to experimentally investigate whether situation-specific variables or participants' personal beliefs are more important in the blaming mentality. Possible effects of age, gender, force, and number of perpetrators were also investigated. The impact of victim blaming and locus of control on mental health outcomes among female sexual assault survivors.

Laura C Wilson, Abigail Farley, Sierra F Horton  
Violence Against Women 28 (15-16), 3785-3800, 2022

Research has shown that victim-blaming attitudes in the society not only exacerbate the stigma around sexual assault but also harm survivor's mental health, leading to increased feelings of guilt, self-blame and shame which leads to problem in coping with this. These attitudes can negatively influence how survivors process their trauma, often leading to increased levels of depression, post traumatic stress and Anxiety.

Effects of victim gender and sexuality on attributions of blame to rape victims  
Anna Wakelin, Karen M Long  
Sex Roles 49, 477-487, 2003

Research has shown that individuals have the tendency to blame rape victims for the assault they have gone through by saying it is because of the dress they were wearing and because they lacks in exact way how a women should behave and act. Also the literature talks about why this rape is happening because the society thinks that women are not behaving in a feminine way.

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### Findings :

The major findings includes; Myths regarding rape, Victim blaming and societal and cultural factors.

Rape Myths : It is the misleading beliefs about rape. Considering rape victims in way that they lost everything and won't be accepted by anyone to be their future partner.

Victim blaming: Victim blaming refers to the tendency to attribute responsibility for the rape to the victim rather than the culprit. Accusing in a way that they asked for it rather than blaming the mentality of the rapist. Victim blaming serves to justify or excuse the perpetrator's behavior.

Societal and cultural factors: Societal attitudes that perpetuate male dominance and control over women as they are considered as recessive. The portrayal of rape and rape victims in media making it as a fault of the victim which can perpetuate rape myths. The analysis investigates the role and correlations societal and cultural factors, victim blaming and rape myths relationship. Rape myths leads to societal and cultural factors as well as blaming on the victims which eventually leads to the misunderstanding of victims about themselves and never being able to come out from the incident they faced.

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### Conclusion :

In conclusion, the issue of victim-blaming which is being strengthened by the society and it's stigma leads to physical and mental problems for the survivors. The myths based on rape such as the behavior of women the dress they worn deepen the emotional trauma experienced by survivors. These attitudes will damage and contribute to feelings of guilt, and anxiety, blaming themselves as they are being pointed by the society which leading to the consequences of hardships in recovering.

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