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<u>Impact of Sexual Objectification on the Well-Being of People</u>

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Abstract

The current study aims to study the Impact of Objectification on the Well-being of People. For obtaining a better in-depth understanding various sources of objectification have been studied along with how people objectify themselves and others. The results obtained show that there is a negative impact on the physical, mental, emotional, and subjective wellbeing of people. The paper also draws attention to public health and safety concerns. A PESTEL analysis has been done to understand the effects of objectification on the political, economical, social, technological, educational, and legal aspects. Based on the gained understanding the author has various recommendations that can help society move towards a healthier and flourishing society.

Key Words: *Objectification, self-objectification, sexual objectification, well bein*g.

1.0. Introduction

The whole drive of western culture, the part of it which is serious, is towards an extreme objectification. It's carried to the point where the human subject is treated almost as if it's dirt in the works of a watch.

- Henry Flynt[1]

Objectification theory was originally proposed by Barbara Fredrickson[2] and Tomi-Ann Roberts[3]. It is essentially a synthesis and systematic formalisation of many different perspectives on sexual objectification. This theory attempts to explain the extreme and pervasive tendency to equate women with their bodies and why this can have negative consequences for women's body image and beyond (R M Calogero, 2012).

For a layman, the word "object" is automatically related to materialistic things or commodities meant only to be used and discarded as soon as it serves its purpose. With the advancement, development, and ever-increasing pace of life, people have developed the tendency to treat even people as commodities. It has been observed that both genders face objectification, but with varying degrees, power positions, and perspectives. Objectification has been so deeply rooted and ingrained in our minds that it took a long time for people to even realise it.

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[1] An American philosopher, musician, writer, activist, and artist

[2] An American Professor who has been advancing the science of positive emotions for more than 25 years.

[3] A social and personality psychologist

Objectification presents itself in two forms: self-objectification and sexual objectification. Self-objectification happens when people view themselves as objects for use instead of living beings. It is a result of external objectification and is usually included in the discussion of sex and gender (Arroyo et.al. 2014.); it highlights the underlying psychological process by which women internalize the way others objectify their bodies, resulting in self-criticism and various other negative emotions (Calogero, R.M." Sex Roles"). Sexual objectification happens when a person is solely treated as an object of sexual desire and sexual gratification. The sexually objectified person is not viewed as an integrated whole but merely as body parts. Both genders can be sexually objectified but it is more commonly found in women. This bias towards a gender contributes greatly to gender inequality. The feminist theory as proposed by Martha Nussbaum (1995, 257) has identified 7 ways in which a person can be treated as an object. They are instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, and denial of subjectivity. Rea Langton (2009, 228-229) has added three more to Nassbum's list; they are reduction of a person to just a body, reduction to mere appearance over time and silencing as if they lack the capacity to speak.

Objectification theory draws our attention to how sexual objectification manifests in people's day-to-day life. These include gazing or leering at women's bodies, passing sexual comments, whistling, honking, taking photographs secretly, and many others. When people treat their bodies as objects there are bound to be negative consequences on their mental health and overall well-being. Well-being refers to the experience of good health, happiness (positive and purposeful feeling) and prosperity. Being able to manage stressful situations, making meaningful connections with others, and being satisfied with the work-life. Various studies have shown that self-objectification and sexual objectification are linked to various eating disorders, depression, low self-confidence, and low self-esteem. It can also lead to unhealthy sexual identity and attitude towards the opposite gender thus posing a big obstacle towards the achievement of one's well being.

This paper elucidates the sources and impact that sexual objectification has on the psychological well-being of people. It also tries to understand the implications objectification has pertaining to one's culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. In a time when crumbling self-esteem and poor mental health is at an all-time high, the author felt compelled to identify the root of these problems. Based on the findings, the author even recommends measures.

2.0 Sources of Objectification

2.1 Visual Media

Advertisements are one of the promotional tools for the products/services of a company or an organisation with the intent of scaling up the sales and ultimately the profits. The main purpose of advertisements is to create a strong need and desire within people about a certain product or service. The public tends to get bombarded with advertisements every second of their life now. This can get so overwhelming that people lose themselves in the sea of advertisements. They then begin to act in ways or buy things that do not hold true to their logical mind. Lately, people have started becoming extremely brand conscious. It is not because of the product utility but due to its association with models that people have idealized. Purchasing branded stuff provides a sense of worth and social standing. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be the best-selling brand and leading in your category but the way it is done is cause for concern. It creates a false sense and standards of what an "ideal look" should be. These brands create imaginary problems and then offer solutions to fix those made-up problems. For example, companies advertising cellulite, ageing, greying, etc that are normal parts of human life portray these as a huge "problem." and then offer expensive creams, colours, and ointments to fix it. Whether the results are obtained or not, the companies do make huge profits out of it. The women and men are made to believe that they are incomplete without the products.

In order to create this false reality of what beautiful or ideal looks like, models are used to advertise these products for both male and female products. These models are used in ways that objectify them sexually. Burger King, in one of their print advertisements, contained the picture of a burger-shaped like an erect male penis and a woman looking at it with an open mouth, in a highly suggestive manner (Fox News, 2016). What's worse was that the female model herself wasn't informed what her pictures will be used for (Hicks, 2014). Even fashion magazine covers have pictures of models posing in the most sensual manner, in order to add sex appeal to the product and sell it on the basis of that.

2.2 Social media

TikTok was started with a good intention but it has been used not only by teenagers, young adults, and adults but also widely by children under 13 years. These sites have live videos and several posts having objectionable and sexually objectifying content along with hashtags like cutter, trigger warning, anorexic, self-harm, and so on. Challenges like the "silhouette challenge", where people were taking off their clothes and dancing under a red light filter can prove to be very dangerous, especially for the uninformed youth. A few hackers were able to remove the red light filter and then threatened to release the naked videos of people (Bakar, 2021). Understanding the dangers of social media would help young people who are only beginning to use the platform, and want to participate in trends.

Snapchat was developed by Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy as they felt that emoticons were not sufficient to transmit emotion through text (*Why Every Parent Needs to Know About Snapchat*, 2020). But it can be a very dangerous site for vulnerable young children. People send their pictures or nude body parts which can be used wrongly by others thus causing physical, emotional, and psychological harm. These pictures are supposed to last for twenty-four hours and then disappear forever, but people can always screenshot the picture or screen record them to misuse it. It has also been misused by people to send unsolicited pictures of their genitals to unsuspecting people which is also a form of cyber sexual abuse. An infamous controversy was that of an Oregon mom, Rheta Melvin in 2018 who used Snapchat to groom and rape a 14-year-old boy (National Center on Sexual Exploitation, 2020).

According to statistics, Instagram, since its launch in 2010 has risen to 1 billion users worldwide making it the 6th topmost used social networking site. With such wide numbers of users, there are dozens of Instagram pages dedicated to college lifestyles that have gained immense popularity. Pages like "tfmgirls" and "hotter_chicks" have thousands of followers. Even a simple search on any social media platform with some keywords lead to these explicit pictures of people, sometimes without their consent and knowledge. The underlying theme of female objectification, female submissiveness and young, white collegiate experiences are very prevalent on these platforms. (Davis. E.S- 2018). People usually post on these sites to gain popularity.

In a research conducted by Jenna D.R and his colleagues in 2019, they followed 172 "female influencers" social media pages for 4 months, of which some were unpaid for promotion, some promoted their products. Here, it is crucial to understand the business model of a social media influencer. They themselves are a brand, selling a service which is their influence over people. Their primary goal is to gain maximum followers so that when they do endorse other brands' products or services to their audience, more people use them in turn gaining them profits. Like any other business people, influencers also identify the trends on their platforms and repeat what generates them most profits which realistically, happens to be content that is usually sexual in nature, accentuates their sexualised body parts or is downright pornographic. There are also pictures/videos of nude or seminude posts without the face or showing their backs making them just mere bodies thus subjecting themselves to sexual objectification.

Onlyfans is a relatively new website, centred around the business of selling explicit pictures and videos of themselves participating in sexual acts. People who wish to view a person's account have to pay to unlock a certain picture or video. A lot of Instagram influencers and even celebrities have made their accounts on this site. People have made it a full-time career, making hundreds of thousands of dollars by objectifying their bodies on the internet. Due to the illegalisation of brothels as well as the shutting down of the legal as well as illegal prostitution during the COVID-19 times and even otherwise, people have resorted to Onlyfans to make money. It is a relatively easy source of income and people usually carry it out on the side. Although individuals who use these platforms for these purposes are fully aware of its consequences for their own selves, they aren't aware of the consequences it has on their own kind. When several women portray themselves in such a hypersexual nature, this reflects on their whole community and kindness. Unrealistic expectations are created and fostered.

2.3 Pop culture

Popular culture (or "pop culture") refers in general to the traditions and material culture of a particular society. In the modern West, pop culture refers to cultural products such as music, art, literature, fashion, dance, film, cyberculture, television, and radio that are consumed by the majority of a society's population. Popular culture refers to the type of media that have mass accessibility and appeal (Crossman, Ashley, 2021).

The rap songs and mainstream music across the globe normalise lyrics about men treating women as sexual objects. The most obvious problem with this genre is that women are hardly ever referred to as women; terms like 'bitch', 'whore', 'hoe', or 'slut' are put to use. "These hoes! They hate it! Your boy! Today!...Bend it over, bend it over, lift it up, make that jump..."- Drake, Nice For What? (Cairnduff, 2018) However, in recent times, women have started owning up to their sexuality and have started taking it up without demeaning their partners (eg. Cardi B and Megan - WAP 2020) (Ross, 2020).

2.4 Social and historical context

Going back to the days of early civilisation when the division of labour was purely based on the fact that women were able to reproduce and needed a safe shelter to recuperate from the trauma that their bodies had endured. Due to this, they began staying at home with the children and elders, while the men hunted and gathered to make sure that their families were well taken care of. Gradually, this arrangement was starting to be taken for granted and people began preaching that since men provided for their families that they were the head and that women should respect and obey them. Having no survival training, as it was usually passed on from fathers to their sons, the women had no choice, but to comply and did not know how to advocate for their rights because they started believing that they had to always stay under male protection. With this, the gap kept increasing and the importance placed on the patriarchal society grew.

Through misplaced followings and misinterpretations of religious teachings, these thoughts were promoted and deeply ingrained into our very being. It's not that only women are objectified, even men have been objectified but placed on a positive spectrum of strength and power whereas women are marginalised and viewed through a lens that places them on the extreme opposite end of that spectrum. On close observation historically and across cultures, it has been found that people have taken over roles typical of their biological gender, a phenomenon known as a person's gender role. Traditionally men are identified as competent, possessing traits like aggression, independence, logical-thinking, problem-solving, competition, and objective (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Bakan, 1966), whereas the women's gender roles fell under the umbrella of expressivity and relationality. The traits associated with her are emotional, caring, nurturance, intuitive, submissive, dependent with a focus on maintaining peace and harmony.

Gutek (1985) coined the term "sex-role spillover" (gender role spillover) which means that men and women tend to carry over gender-based roles into their work settings. The probability of sex-role spillover is more likely to take place when the sex role is more important than the work role and hence guiding the stereotypical behaviour towards the opposite sex.

When it comes to family members and peers, there's a common observation that there is a constant comparison between siblings or extended family members with looks being the discussed topic; the one that is more fitting into the perceived standard of beauty mostly has an upper hand in the family and amongst friend circles. Analysing some of the Indian traditions like "*kanyadaan*" which means giving away your daughter as a donation, the religious context may be different with different sets of values but it is like treating your daughter like an object that was valuable to the father previously and now he is giving her away to the groom. The jokes and humour used in Indian marriages "*saali aadhi gharwali*" meaning that the groom's sister-in-law equals half wife. This is again sexual objectification of the women and also an unsaid encouragement to have illicit relationships.

Women were always told that they need to look attractive or else their husbands might turn to other women for sexual gratification. These messages and ideas are so ingrained in the mind that both genders assume them to be true. With these idealised beliefs, the gap between the genders has been increasing, giving more power to the men and the women believing themselves to be weaker and unimportant in major decision making or giving any opinion on matters. Here again, a quote holds great value and reflects on our society and culture. The quote say, "*Aurat pairo ki juti hoti hai unko sar per nahi pairo may hi rakhna chahiye*". This means that a woman is like footwear, so they must be kept under the feet. Objectification of men and women can be seen everywhere only on which spectrum one lies is different.

With this belief and ideation of societal beauty standards, physical beauty has been serving as an asset or as "currency" that would benefit women more than their skills, talents, and other pursuits. Researchers have shown that females who fit into the societal standards of beauty definitely have an upper hand in personal and professional areas but they also targeted more to sexual objectification as compared to other women.

There is an interesting study conducted across 7 nations that indicated that objectification is higher in nations like Australia, Italy, the UK, and the US than in nations like India, Pakistan, and Japan. Culture plays an important role in the objectification of men and women (Draperi, 2015, p. 4).

3.0 Impact of Objectification

3.1 Effect on Mental and Physical Health

Objectification theory states that when people are constantly exposed to sexually objectifying experiences and images, the people in the society tend to internalise those images and experience them as their own. This internalisation leads to thoughts and behaviours that result in the comparison of self with societal standards and expectations. According to some researchers, the ideal body shape has evolved culturally with time (Markey, 2004; Grogan, 2007). Going back over in time during the middle ages until the turn of the 20th century, women with fuller bodies and women with a voluptuous, "reproductive" figure and full stomach and hips were considered attractive (Grogan) and were desired. In India, there is a famous saying, "*Khate pitey ghar ki lagne chahiye"* meaning that fuller women were considered and viewed as belonging to a financially sound family, and the thinner ones were considered to be from a less privileged one. With the turn of the 20th century came the trend of a thin physique paired with sexual attractiveness (Shower & Larson, 1999, Markey, 2004). This thin physique became thinner and thinner to a dangerous level. Promoting fad diets and glorifying serious illnesses, such as bulimia and anorexia. Many researches have found that self-objectification and sexual objections can lead to various mental health conditions:

- Shame, anxiety, and depression: In research conducted by Shelly Garbe and colleagues (2007) with boys and girls between the ages 11-13 as their sample, the results that they found showed that adolescent girls reported greater levels of self-objectification, body shame, rumination and depression as compared to boys. Yet another longitudinal study by Bethany A. Jones and others (2015) found similar results which stated that an increase in self-objectification in women over time for a long duration had a higher probability of resulting in depression. Whereas in the case of men the results were mixed.

- Kopp K.J (2009) studied mothers between the ages of 25 to 40 years with at least one biological child. The study aimed at examining the relationship between self-objectification, self-surveillance, body shame, appearance anxiety, interoceptive awareness, depressed mood, control beliefs, and weight. Results indicated a relationship between control beliefs and distance from one's goal weight significantly predicted body shame. Their levels of depression were significantly predicted by their scores on interoceptive awareness, self-surveillance, appearance anxiety, and self-objectification.

- Eating disorders: 214 college students participated in a research study conducted by Peat, C. M., & Muehlenkamp, J. J. (2011). Results indicated that both interoceptive awareness and social anxiety are significant mediators in the relationship between self-objectification, eating disorders and symptoms of depression.

- Cohen R. and colleagues (2018) studied the relationship between usage of social networking sites and body-related concerns and disordered eating habits in females. Results indicated that "selfie activities" on social networking sites were positively related to body concerns and disordered eating habits. It was also found that self-objectification moderates between selfie activity and depression.

3.2 Sexual Dysfunction

Tiggemann M (2011) reviewed existing empirical evidence demonstrating self-objectification and mental health conditions. He concluded that sexual objectification led to self-objectification. This in turn led to negative consequences like increased shame, anxiety about body appearance, decrease in awareness of body internal states, decrease in flow experiences. This in turn accumulated and put the women at increased risk of three particular mental disorders like eating disorders, depression, and sexual dysfunction. Porn sets unrealistic standards of sexual performances which led to dissatisfaction in the couple's lives. The dissatisfaction would again lead to body surveillance, self-doubt, and other series-related negative thoughts, emotions and actions. It can have far-reaching consequences such as domestic violence too if one partner doesn't live up to the unrealistic standards the other partner fosters. Everything is so intricately linked to one another that understanding them in part would be difficult.

A joint study by Sutherland Institute and Family Research Council in Washington D.C indicated that "pornography significantly distorts attitudes and perceptions about the nature of sexual intercourse". An attempt to replicate the sexual acts on the screen to gain a hypothetical imaginary pleasure can lead to trauma, injury and diseases to self and others. This sends a message across to young boys and girls that it's okay for men to own their sexualities and take control and dominate the sexual activity.

3.3 The Unrealistic Expectation from Self and others

An adolescent would strongly desire to buy a product, for example, a shampoo after seeing an advertisement on television that showed the model's rough and dry hair turning silky smooth after using a particular brand of shampoo. The model on the screen would have people especially boys admiring her. Watching that the adolescent would also expect that her hair would turn that way after using the product. When the product doesn't have the desired effect after using it, it increases the chances of a feeling disappointing, unloved, unattractive, and thus unworthy of attention.

Most individuals have grown up in a similar way; being teased, bullied, ridiculed leading to reduced self-worth. People's capabilities and their strengths become secondary. Several times this leads to an unawareness amongst individuals of their true potential. This true self of theirs exists in the darkness looking for a chance to reveal itself. With these strong beliefs in societal standards along with constant bombardment by the media, people desire to be closest to societal expectations while expecting the same from others. This can lead to prolonged dissatisfaction which in turn affects the person's attitude towards life and others. Various studies have shown that the internalisation of self-objectification and then eventually sexual objectification is highest and most intense during the growing up years of boys and girls which is a critical developmental period. During this period the adolescents develop a relationship with their bodies. Objectification would highly shape the relationship that they would have with themselves, with others, and with the environment at large.

3.4 Subjective Well Being and Happiness

Breines G. J and others (2008) assessed 49 female college students to find the association between self-objectification and psychological well-being. They found that perceived unattractiveness was strongly linked to self-esteem.

The most contingent participants experienced drops in their well-being when they self objectified themselves as unattractive. When we objectify someone we reduce that person's worth to just an object. An object is valuable as long as it can serve a purpose, isn't it very natural when one undervalues themselves, there is a loss of self-worth, self-esteem and another whole lot of negative thoughts and emotions associated with it thereby automatically reducing our well-being and happiness.

In the process of objectification, there is a constant comparison of self with others and thus people fail to see their progress, their strength, and all good things in their life pushing them into a vicious cycle of comparison and dissatisfaction. Life in a true sense is difficult to be experienced in this state.

3.5 Public Health and Safety Concerns

Sexual desire and sexual objectification are two different things. Desire is having feelings that are humanised. But sexual objectification is the opposite, it dehumanises. An objectified woman is nothing but a collection of body parts meant for consumption, use, and easily interchangeable with another objectified woman. Her existence is merely for sexual gratification (Gilmore, 2018). This mindset allows people to feel comfortable making unsolicited advances on others. There is a constant threat of being subject to violence, rapes, acid attacks when such advances are rejected.

The male gaze puts the women and girls under constant fear, anxiety, and public places unsafe for them to move around freely. There have been many incidents reported and much more unreported where women have faced physical abuses that have scarred them for life. Their physical boundaries are violated since they are sexually objectified by the opposite gender.

An article by Andrea Waling and her colleagues (2020) mentioned that objectification of self leads to impairment in cognitive functioning. The impairment of cognitive functioning is bound to impact all the other areas of one's life. It has a ripple effect on one impairment leading to another. People actively get involved in social media, evaluate their self-worth based on the number of followers they have, likes, and comments received leading a very masked life, one for the world to see which is very happening and perfect while leading a completely different life. Cyberbullying, sexual harassment, grooming the vulnerable for their sexual advances on the media is a very common thing.

When people objectify themselves and others, this mindset and attitude are carried over in all the areas of our life, at the workplace, at homes, at institutions, and in public places. Sexual objectification and self-objectification can lead to domestic violence, marital rapes, violence at public places, verbal violence, violence in thoughts and behaviours that show up passively in the form of ill-treatment. There have been times when people face abuse but they are not even aware of it and it just gets passed off as normal, for example, someone staring in a way that makes them uncomfortable.

4.0 PESTEL analysis to study the effects of objectification at different fronts of life

a. *Political aspect*

Objectification has the potential to garner more support to the traditional gender norms which dictate that politics is not a place where women belong. Researches have shown that women have been subject to sexual objectification significantly higher than men. A recent post by the congresswoman from Pennsylvania, Madeleine Dean on the comments that she received against her tweet where she questioned Attorney General Bill Barr about the use of force against the peaceful protesters at Lafayette Square were gender-based and highly sexual objectifying (*The Objectification of Women in Politics and Why It Matters*, 2020). Also, the number of men in politics is much higher than the number of women. India currently has only 9% MLA's and MP's across the nation (Singh, 2019). Sexual objectification and the patriarchal mindset of society could be some of the greatest contributors to it. Recently, an Indian politician passed a comment on how wearing ripped jeans especially by women would be a bad influence on young children (Bhalla, 2021). Various other sexist comments have been against film star turned politicians, comments like "prostitute", "*Nachne wali bai*" (woman who dances), the lady who wears "*khaki*" underwear etc. Another politician went ahead and commented about a female MLA that her *bindi* was directly proportional to the number of her husbands she had (Desk, 2019). These statements are a testimony of how women are objectified. In the past, politicians have even gone on to say that allowing women to access mobile phones and eating *chowmein* (street food) makes them more susceptible to getting sexually assaulted.

Such thinking isn't only sexist and nonsensical but also restricts women from making their own choices and steals them of opportunities and experiences. There was also a politician who believed that the sale of alcohol could be increased if it was given a woman's name (Bhalla, 2021).

b. *Economical aspect*

Robin Bleiweis (2020) in his article wrote about wage gaps in America between the genders and women of colour. According to the Census Bureau Data 2018, all women on an average earned 82 cents as compared to 1 dollar by men of all races. Also, there was a wage gap between white women, women of colour and Asians. These gaps are probably because women are never treated as equals even though they may be well deserving.

Many educated and skilled women are not allowed to work by their significant others due to the fear of abuse which leads to financial loss to the family and waste of talent and skills. These talented women could add to the country's economy and growth. Women who take a break for various reasons find it difficult to find jobs and even if they get paid less as compared to their counterparts.

In the past, a glass ceiling effect (artificial barrier) has been observed wherein a well-deserving female candidate has been prevented from getting into top managerial positions due to their gender. Most of this inequality is a by-product of the mindset that has developed towards women over the years.

c. *Social aspects*

A well-settled man with family and children of his gazes at other women not for admiring her beauty but sexually objectifying them. Such a person would pose strict rules and regulations on his female offspring, many times denying opportunities that would help her progress and succeed. Men are questioned less about their whereabouts as compared to women. When younger boys are exposed to material where women are objectified, it can create confusion in their minds about good women (family and friends) and bad women (on-screen and unknown). There is a high possibility for them to treat other unknown women in an objectifying manner.

d. Technological aspects

Riya BIdshahri (2018) mentioned in her article "Empower women" about the gender gap in the technological sector. About 28% of women took computer science degrees and 25% held computing jobs with only 11% in top managerial positions in silicon valley. A proper support system, mentorships, and network is denied to them that would accelerate their careers.

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions, as speakers at conferences and networking sites. Digital platforms aim to solve this problem. New technology and software are developed that allow people to use various filters to make superficial changes and get that perfect picture for their post again leading to more and more dissatisfaction with themselves in the real world.

e. Environmental aspects

Creating a need within the potential customers leads to unnecessary buying of things and then discarding them. Buying and discarding are alright but not a single thought is given on where these things land up and thus creating a threat to the environment. This is one aspect of it, another would be that most people 'follow the monkey and do the same' policy and so girls and boys pressurise themselves to buy products that may not serve much purpose. This leads to financial drain and sometimes disharmony at-home settings.

Women face a hostile work environment and are subject to sexual objectification at workplaces more often than men. This can be a constant source of stress for them.

f. Legal aspects

Various countries have made their laws to protect the rights of especially women so that they can also get an equal opportunity to grow and self-actualise themselves. India has also formulated 10 major laws that can help Indian women to stand up for their rights and voice out any injustice met towards them.

5.0 Recommendations

Based on the data gathered and the knowledge gained some measures are recommended that could help in dealing with persistent global issues.

5.1 Policies

The government should form stricter rules and regulations for the censorship of the material screened to the audience.

A historical move by the Israeli government that passed a law that banned underweight models from taking part in catwalks and adverts (Ostroff, 2012). Such moves will force the fashion and media industry to change its norms.

Sexuality education has positive effects, including increasing young people's knowledge and improving their attitudes related to sexual and reproductive health and behaviours. Sexuality education should start at a very junior level as it does not increase sexual activity, sexual risk-taking behaviour, or STI/HIV infection rates as people generally believe (*Why Comprehensive Sexuality Education Is Important*, 2018).

Parents, teachers, institutions, and other helping organisations should be involved in these programs for better impact and healthy attitudinal development towards our bodies.

5.2 Awareness about the effects of objectification

Sexual objectification stems from society's patriarchal notion and to shift it there is a strong need to shift these faulty notions (McCoy, 2017). There are various policies set up by nations to safeguard the interest of the women population. But the problem will get resolved when the general public is made aware of such existing policies. India has formulated the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001). This policy has mentioned in its point number 7.1 about violence against women and in point number 9.1 it looks into the matter of objectification by media ("National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001)," 2014, p. 736). NGOs, self-help organisations, and other helping communities can formulate an awareness program that focuses on the recognition of abuse/objectification of the form that they are faced with and ways in which they can reach out.

Children from an early age should be taught the importance of self-love and respect for their bodies which can act as a protective factor and save them from being an easy target to all the objectifying material floating around. Early education will also help the boys and girls to treat each other with respect and appreciate people for who they are and not view them as mere bodies.

Teaching children about body boundaries, personal space, and the importance of consent will empower them to say "NO" because many a time people are not even aware that they have a choice to say no and just be victims. This is important because according to statistics every 1 in 3 girls and every 1 in 6 boys could be sexually abused. Children with special needs or with disabilities are 1.8 times more likely to be abused than children with no disabilities (Team, 2020) The people occupying positions of authority need to be sensitised about the objectification problem so that they can incorporate the policies and provide a conducive environment for growth and safety. The problem that we see is just the tip of the iceberg, hence it is very important to deal with it for a healthy society and human values have to exist.

5.3 Role of body positivity and #Metoo movement

Body positivity is a movement that represents appreciation, respect, and acceptance for bodies as they are, and for the functions and activities they do (*The Importance of Body Positivity*, 2020). People should be encouraged to live an active, healthy, fulfilling, and meaningful life. The **"Me Too"** movement was started by Tarana Burke in 2006 to raise awareness of women who had been abused (Rahman-Jones, 2020). This movement was an eye-opener to all because the abuses and objectification that women underwent were now openly spoken about aloud. Such movements should be supported and encouraged because they will empower the ones who could not gather the courage to speak up for their rights.

6.0 Conclusion

From the above literature, it can be concluded that objectification is a very deep-rooted concern that needs to be worked upon in such a way that every human being is benefited. It has been found that objectification impacts people's physical, psychological and emotional health that can lead to serious concerns like eating disorders, low self-esteem, sexual dysfunction etc.

When left unchecked and unattended, objectification impacts the overall subjective well being and happiness of an individual. To bring about a change in the deep-rooted problem of objectification, there is a need to fight the rigid patriarchal, misogynistic, objectifying mindset and belief. Thus, very consciously train the mind to look out for the good qualities that each and every individual possesses. This would gradually weaken the strong faulty association of looking at people formed over the years. There is a very strong and urgent need for a collective effort that needs to be put in to protect the well being of not only women but the men too. It is important that people adopt respect towards every living being as a new culture and its training be started from day one.

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