

OBJECTIFICATION THROUGH FEMINIST LENSES

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary feminist theory the common theme is sexual objectification. It has been associated to the work of “Catharine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin”, the anti-pornography feminists and also with the work of “Martha Nussbaum”. However the views of these feminist on objectification find their foundation in the philosophy of “Immanuel Kant”. Therefore, in order to understand the contemporary discussion on sexuality and objectification it is necessary to have a close analysis of the philosophy of Kant on objectification and sexuality. This paper deals with the analysis of the Kant philosophy on objectification and sexuality, what does an object mean according to Kant, his solution against objectification. Further the paper deals with the views of the contemporary feminists on objectification and sexuality.

Keywords: *Women, Objectification, Pornography, Sexuality.*

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INTRODUCTION:

“Objectification is a notion central to feminist theory. It can be roughly defined or understood as the seeing and/or treating a person, usually women, as an object”¹. However the idea of objectification has been in existence for quite a long time in the philosophy, and much before time when feminism got hold of it. It gained one of the first articulation in Aristotle’s matter-of-fact remark that a “slave is a living tool”. The thought that, Aristotle’s complacency notwithstanding, there may actually be something not correct with perceiving a person as an object is one that gains eloquent articulation later, in the theories of Kant. For Kant, virtuous malpractice consists in an omission to treat “humanity always as an end and never as a means only”, an omission to treat the humanity with respect “by virtue of which we are not for sale at any price”. This historical idea of Kant has obtained new imprudent in recent approach by feminist philosophers, who have perceived its relevance to exploitation, and to the many available ways that female might have been handled as a means only, and many a times set up for sale. For feminists thinkers, the main focal point is the treatment of women, and they insist that female’s oppression partly consist of female’s being perceived “as objects”².

For the better understanding of the phenomenon of objectification, it must be studied under the following head³-

- Objectification through sexuality.
- Objectification through pornography.
- Objectification through feminine appearance.
- The possibility of positive objectification.

Majority of the authors who have considered objectification to be a phenomenon morally disturbing. And different thinkers have discussed it differently.

VIEW OF IMMANUEL KANT

Kant advocated, what is awfully challenging is the sexuality when it is practiced beyond a sphere of a monogamous marriage, suggesting that in such cases it gives objectification a scope. In his discourse of ethics he states that “sexual love makes of the loved person an Object of appetite; as soon as that appetite has been stilled, the person is cast aside as one casts away a lemon which

¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Objectification*, 24 PHILOS. PUBLIC AFF. 249 (1995).

² Sandra Lee Bartky, *Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power*, in FEMINIST THEORY READER (5th ed. 2020).

³ Martha C. Nussbaum, *supra* note 1.

has been sucked dry, as soon as a person becomes an object of appetite for another, all motives of moral relationship cease to function, because as an object of appetite for another, a person becomes a thing and can be treated and used as such by ever one".⁴

Kant is concerned about the exercise of sexuality outside the sphere of a monogamous marriage, exercising sexuality in such a way gives an impression that how people take humanity as a means for their purposes sexual in nature. Kant often in his Lectures on Ethics has discussed about 'humiliation', 'servitude', and 'degrading' of humankind when exertion of sexuality is involved. Kant further expresses that sexual activities can open on to the loss or 'sacrifice' of humanity. Objectification for him implicates, regarding someone "as an object, something for use"⁵.

Kant believed that both man and women can be objectified in theory, but at the same time the fact was known to him that in practicality females are the most frequent sufferers of objectification, which is evident in his discourse of concubinage and prostitution. Practice of sexuality within sexual context which are morally problematic lead towards the reduction of a women status to a men's objects of appetite.

Kant describes prostitution as "the offer for profit of one's person for another's sexual gratification"⁶. Kant further explains that an individual can't permit other individual to consume their body sexually in interchange of money without dropping their humanity and fetching an attribute of a mere object. He states that⁴ "a man is not at his own disposal. He is not entitled to sell his limb, not even his teeth. But to allow one's person for profit to be used for the satisfaction of sexual desire to make oneself an object of demand, is to dispose over oneself as over a thing". The commodification of prostitution results in the objectification of women which in turn reduces a women worth into a thing upon which other satisfies their appetite for a body in a sexual context.

The other example of association in which there is presence of objectification, according to Kant is concubinage. Kant assert that it is uncommercial sexual relation between a male and numerous female. Concubinage can be understood as purely a sexual arrangement in which the parties aims at the fulfillment of their sexual wants. The concept which makes this arrangement problematic is the prevalence of discrimination, which Kant put forward as that the woman submits herself wholly to the male and that male in most instances do not completely submit his sex to the women. Since body and self are for Kant the things which cannot be separated, they together constitute the person, thus a woman by submitting her body solely to a male, the female who submits her whole individuality to the male, authorize him to possess it. On the other hand that

⁴ IMMANUEL KANT, LECTURES ON ETHICS (1997).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

male by incongruity, who possess more than one sexual relation partner does not solely submit to the women, thus women allow her man to own or possess her, without getting herself the similar possession in his person, she loses the exclusivity of her person and is being made into a thing or an object.

Those association of man and women in which both can practice their sexuality reducing the distress of reducing their self to an object according to Kant's theory is monogamous Union. Monogamy is essential to guarantee that their relation is impartial and mutual in the acquiesces and possession of the two spouses' persons. The couples entirely acquiesces their person to the other so none of them is in threat to let go of his or her person and transform to an object. Kant put this idea in words in his Lectures on Ethics as follows "if I yield myself completely to another and obtain the person of the other in return, I win myself back; I have given myself up as the property of another, but in return I take that other as my property, and so win myself back again in winning the person whose property I have become. In this way, the two persons become a unity of will"⁷, thus bringing the equality and reciprocity between the spouses.

VIEW OF MARTHA NUSSBAUM

According to Martha Nussbaum objectification is a cluster concept, in which the proposition of denial of independency and autonomy are very crucial; but the collection also includes the idea of ownership, violability, inertness, fungibility and denial of subjectivity. She has recognized seven attributes that are intricate with the impression of treating an individual as an object:

- Instrumentality
- Denial of autonomy
- Inertness
- Fungibility
- Violability
- Ownership
- Denial of subjectivity⁸

Nussbaum states, objects themselves are not always contenders for objectifying treatment. A canvas is not treated as endangered, or exposed, nor it is just instrumental, though it may be given a treatment as an object in different ways. Some shares of the natural world are not just instruments, not violable, nor inherent, nor fungible. "Not all objects are to be treated as objects,

⁷ MENON NIVEDITA, SEEING LIKE A FEMINIST (2012).

⁸ *Id.*

it depends on the nature of the object and the context.”⁹

However Rae Langton¹⁰ has added 3 more elements to the Marth’s list:

- Reduction to body
- Reduction to appearance
- Silencing

Through such inclusions the notion of objectivity has become more broad and it help us to understand that for understanding the purpose of perceiving female as an object, we do not see only at the idea of an object but also at the idea of perception.

VIEW OF SIGMUND FREUD

Sigmund Freud is one of such thinkers whose thoughts regarding sexuality and women were corned on entirely different views then Kant and Martha. He have a provocative view point on women, trusting that the lives of women are controlled by sexual reproductive functions. He also wrote, in 1925’s “The Psychological Consequences of the Anatomic Distinction between the Sexes” that “women oppose change, receive passively, and add nothing of their own”. To him, women are plainly men without penises, so through his theory he hosted a idea of “penis envy”, where a women grasps that she does not own a penis, and proficiencies jealousy of the male, which is responsible for much of female conduct. Freud explained that the only solution to this jealousy is having a child of their own, he also suggested that the women wanted male child, in their efforts to gain a penis¹¹

Thus Freud theory provides for a prototype where there is no room for feminineness unless it is unswervingly related to masculinity. According to him women are inferior to men.

Freud further bestowed to us the notion of rape as a phenomenon of victim participation. If, as Freud insisted, women are indeed masochistic, “rape either in fantasy or in fact can satisfy those self-destructive needs”¹⁰. However Deutsch a disciple of Freud gave the key contribution to the vision that women themselves are responsible for their rape. By observing masochistic traits as share of the idyllic and adequate female temperament, Deutsch fashioned a standard for womankind out of the primary psychoanalytic situation. In narrating rape whims of young girls, Deutsch explains that “The masochistic tendency now betrays itself only in the painful longing and wish to suffer for the lover”.¹¹

Thus the notion of women and sexuality put forth by Freud is entirely different from what has

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ LANGTON RAE, *SEXUAL SOLIPSISM, AUTONOMY –DENIAL IN OBJECTIFICATION* (2009).

¹¹ Rochelle Semmel Albin, *Psychological Studies of Rape*, 3 UNIV. CHIC. PRESS 423.

been stated by Kant and Martha. For Freud women are not satisfied by their own sexuality they tend on finding ways to have penis, through having male child. Further he even justified the concept of rape by bringing his ideology of victims suffering from pathological fiction or fantasy. He brought the idea of people fantasizing rape and gaining pleasure out of it, and also provided for the concept of “masochism”, i.e. the tendency to derive sexual gratification from one’s own pain or humiliation.

OBJECTIFICATION THROUGH PORNOGRAPHY

Catharine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin who are anti-pornography feminists strongly support the view held by Kant that objectification is tightly linked to inequality. In the view of Mackinnon, Dworkin as well as Kant there are two parties involved in the process of objectification, one being the powerful objectifier and other being the vulnerable sufferer.¹²

In respect of inequality Kant presents, that polygamous relationships are the prerequisite for inequality to take place. Whereas Mackinnon and Dworkin believe that inequality has a lot more to do than polygamous relationships, it is very extensive and inescapable phenomenon. It surrounds all facets of our community. Dworkin and Mackinnon put emphasis on that we reside in an era of gender disparity.

Mackinnon makes a clear distinction between a person’s sex and a person’s gender. ‘Gender, is how a woman or man are socially constructed on the other hand sex is how female and male is biologically determined. Thus the term sex is used to denote the biological variances between men and women, while gender indicates the wide range of folk connotations involved to that basic difference’¹². Within the patriarchal social order the roles of women and men are clearly demarcated, “women are objectified, whereas men are their objectifiers”.¹³ This theory of the Mackinnon i.e. the difference between the sex and the gender even finds a place in the statement given by Simone de Beauvoir’s, “that one is not born, but becomes a woman, it means that all of us have to learn to be men and women. If so, there is no reason why feminine qualities should attach only to bodies marked female and masculine qualities to bodies marked male”¹⁴. She thus advocated a sweeping disjointedness between culturally constructed genders and sexed bodies. Mackinnon and Dworkin believed that “the situation of gender inequality which troubles our societies and is so tightly linked to the objectification of the women is created and sustained by men’s consumption of pornography”¹⁵. Mackinnon defines pornography as “the graphic sexually

¹² MENON NIVEDITA, *supra* note 7.

¹³ Anees Backer, *Rejecting “Moral Harm” as a Ground Under Obscenity Law*, 8 NSLR (2013).

¹⁴ LANGTON RAE, *supra* note 10.

¹⁵ ALAN SOBLE, *PORNOGRAPHY, SEX, AND FEMINISM* (2002).

overt demotion of women through word or pictures which also includes females being degraded as sexual objects, belongings, or merchandises; delighted in the humiliation and pain of rape; being snarled, bowdlerized, marred, injured, or bodily hurt; in means of sexual obedience or flattery or exhibition; condensed to body parts, penetration by objects or animals, or accessible in set-ups of humiliation, grievance, agony; publicized as mucky or substandard; bruised, bleeding, or injured in a setting that makes these circumstances sexual”.¹⁶

Mackinnon observed that in today's society, pornography defines female's part as sexual objects obtainable for male's utility. Pornography depicts female's look, women's existence is reduced to her body,¹⁷ it provides for how a woman can be used sexually. Mackinnon is a firm believer that porn is in charge for both female's and male's notion of female being an object accessible for male's utilization.

Dworkin explains the phenomenon of sexual objectification as “ objectification occurs when a human being, through social means, is made less than human, turned into a commodity or a thing, bought and sold”¹⁸. When objectification occurs a person is dehumanized. Female usually lives to meet out the male's pleasure in pornography

Further Mackinnon and Dworkin had thrown light on the consent of the women to be treated as mere means for male's sexual object. They argue that even without female acquiesces to being treated only as object for male's sexual pleasure it doesn't justify pornography. For example these feminists assert that in the pornographic industries female usually accept to be treated as an object or the means for men's sexual desire because there is a deficiency in terms of choices available to them within our male driven society. They contended women's consensus is not a true consensus as it is given due to the lack of options available to them. Mackinnon provides, “The sex is not chosen for the sex. Money is the medium of force and provides the cover of consent”.¹⁹ They hold that women alone can't be made responsible for their reduction to a thing which merely have an instrumental value.

Mackinnon holds pornography accountable for instructing its users that female exists to be cast off by men. According to Mackinnon a woman is compared with a cup and such that she is valued for its look and usage. Same view has been taken by Dworkin when he talks about man being the only focal point of the human world, enclosed by substances for their use, inclusive of a woman. Even Simone de Beauvoir holds the same logic, she states that “The humankind is male and the man describes women not in himself, but as inferior to himself: women is not viewed as a self-

¹⁶ Sandra Lee Bartky, *supra* note 2.

¹⁷ Vaishnavi Bansal, *Legality of Pornographic Content Dissemination in India : A Critical Analysis*, 3 SML REV (2020).

¹⁸ Martha C. Nussbaum, *supra* note 1.

¹⁹ MENON NIVEDITA, *supra* note 7.

sufficient being. She is defined and distinguished with locus to man and he not with orientation to her; she is supplementary, the dispensable as opposed to the indispensable, he is the subject, she is the other”²⁰.

Mackinnon state that pornography brands women’s sexuality into “something any man who wants to can buy and hold in his hands”. She is portrayed as an object to be taken into usage by him, precisely an object of his physical use. She believed that pornography teaches its consumers that not only it is allowed to “treat women in these ways, but also that women themselves enjoy being used, violated and abused by men”²¹.

However the notion that pornography is the cause because of which men uses female as an objects to be utilize and mishandled have been supported by various feminists thinkers. Alison Assiter states that pornography strengthens desire on the part of male to treat female as an object for a mere means to attain their sexual pleasure. This idea is also supported by Rae Langton, she writes “As a matter of human psychology, when men sexually use objects, pornographic artifacts, as women, they tend to use real women as objects. One weaker variant of this causal claim might be restricted to a subset of pornography. As a matter of human psychology, when men sexually use objects as women, and those objects are pornographic artifacts, whose content is violent or misogynistic, then they will tend to use real women as objects”.²²

Further the opinion that pornography has the power to impact men to such an extent that they look women as only an object to fulfill their sexual desire has been criticized a lot. Elizabeth Frazer and Deborah Cameron interrogated the very idea that male are conditioned to act in a certain way just because they are a pornography consumer. The thing to contemplate here is the idea that male are being considered lacking the ability of critically scrutinizing pornographic material, and are assumed to merely imitate what they see in pornography²³.

Even if we assume that pornography sends the message to the masses that women are objects like, it can’t be said that it is the primary reason for women objectification. The notion that women are merely an object or tool is armored through television, parental pressure, music videos, fashion and popular novels. What we need to do is change the societal mindset, eliminate the gender inequality. Even Nussbaum, supports the view that “sexual objectification is often caused by social inequality”.²³

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Siddharth S. Aatreya, *Obscenity and the Depiction of Women in Pornography: Revisiting the Kamlesh Vaswani Petition*, 13 NSLR (2019).

²² Evangelia Papadaki, *Understanding Objectification: Is There Special Wrongness Involved in Treating Human Beings Instrumentally?*, 11 J. PHILOS. 5 (2012).

²³ Martha C. Nussbaum, *supra* note 1.

FEMININE APPEARANCE AND OBJECTIFICATION

Female in every institution are more recognized and allied with their physique than are male and to a greater extent than male, they are worth are judged on the basis of their appearance. In order to get societal validation, female are within continuous compulsion to justify their body look and appear every now and then. The push for women's to become "such objects starts early in their lives. With sleazy dolls and clothes offered to small girls, and movies aimed at children essentially conveying the message that beauty is the ticket to wealth and happiness. A particularly heavy dose of such messages is served at a particularly formative time of a woman's life: her adolescence, when a girl's beauty is emerging in its adult form. A plethora of magazines, movies and even sexual education courses, invites adolescent girls to see themselves as body only".²⁴

In a book authored by Sandra Bartky "Femininity and Domination", where she applied Marx alienation theory to elucidate the objectification which is derived from female's engrossment with the way they look. A characteristic of Marx theory of alienation is the putrefaction of the human being. For Marx, the most peculiar human activity is labour, and the result of the labor is exteriorization of the existence of workers. "However workers are removed from the products of their labour under capitalism and as a result of the same their person is fragmented."²⁵

Bartky strongly supports the notion that female in a patriarchal society also go through a type of fragmentation because of being too closely associated or knitted with their body, every being is acknowledged with the body, which is considered a less inherently human than the personality or mind. All the consideration is drawn to a woman's body in a way that her personality or mind are not adequately accredited. A woman's person, then, is fragmented. Bartky further states that it is because of this fragmentation a woman is objectified, as her body is detached from her person and is alleged as the representative of the woman²⁶. Further Bartky hold the same view point as of Kant that in the process of objectification there is involvement of two parties the objectifier and the objectified, however Bartky arguments that sometimes both the two can be the same person. Women folk in male-driven societies feel persistently scrutinized by men, much like the captives of the panopticon, and they sense the need to look sensually attractive to men.²⁶

The Encarta Dictionary lists the definitions of norms as the standard pattern of behaviors, usual situations, and expected range of functioning. In the realm of trying to fit in, what does one do, they look at their peers for direction, they look at the media as a way to know what's going on in the real world and others' responses to that, and then the person in turn take a look at themselves.

²⁴ Sandra Lee Bartky, *supra* note 2.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

This is where self-objectification originates.²⁷

The portrayal of women by media tends to objectification of women, women start self-objectifying themselves because they measure themselves on the scales presented to them by the media. Photo-shopping, airbrushing, and many other kinds of digital editing to physical appearance of celebrities like models and actress is another ground for self-objectification. It is true that for some of the people their looks is their livelihood and thus looking good is their job, but the truth of the matter still remains the same that the majority of the magazines photo-shops the images to set an improbable standards of physical beauty, this in turn makes the women to self-objectify them as well as other women.

Bartky discusses the corrective exercises that yield a female body and refer to these disciplinary practices only a medium through which female absorb to see themselves as an object. Firstly, Bartky states that, there are those exercises in the society that emphasizes to produce a certain size and shape body: women must conform to the ideal body types of their time and society. Thus to “conform to these idealized image the women are more inclined towards dieting than are man , large number of women have plastic surgery, most commonly liposuction and breast enlargement, in order to make their bodies conform to what is considered to be the ideal body”²⁸. Bartky further contends that, the next group of the exercise which are disciplinary in nature are the ones which provides that a feminine body are those which direct to regulate the body’s indication, stance, and variation. Women, she holds, are directed to be controlled than men in the manner a man moves, and they attempt to take up very tiny space in comparison to man. female’s movements were also curtailed by their objectionable shoes and clothing. Bartky holds that “the final category of the disciplinary practices, are those that are directed towards the display of a woman’s body as an ‘ornamented surface’, women must take care of their skin and make it smooth, soft, hairless and wrinkle-free, they must apply make-up to disguise their skin’s imperfections. our culture demands the infantilisation of women’s bodies and faces”²⁹. Thus a woman was reduced to a figure that is designed to excite or please, female’s engrossment with their looks repress the frame capable of women, “developing a sense of our bodies as beautiful objects to be looked upon and decorated thus suppressing a sense of our bodies as strong, active subjects”.²⁹

However some feminists doesn’t agree with the theme of self-objectification as being bad, Janet takes “women’s preoccupation with their looks to be a matter of personal preference, and not a feminist matter”. He further states that there is nothing wrong or degrading with a women

²⁷ MENON NIVEDITA, *supra* note 7.

²⁸ Sandra Lee Bartky, *supra* note 2.

²⁹ *Id.*

exasperating to be sensually attractive. Natasha Walter too supports the view of Janet, she claims that “women’s preoccupation with their appearances is not necessarily objectifying. She also points to the fact that men in our societies engage into self-decoration and seek to be admired by women”. Further in today’s time even the men’s magazines, like women are filled with articles giving advice on how a man should appear, what to wear, how to be burly, what creams and other cosmetics to use etc. Thus with time self-objectification have become more complex in nature covering not only the women as its victim but also the man, which in turn is a sign that the problem has grown.

THE POSSIBILITY OF POSITIVE OBJECTIFICATION

Objectification in common parlance has always been criticized. However plethora of philosophers had taken issue with the impression that objectification is always challenging.

The theory presented by Kant³⁰, “human dignity is something that people have” is questioned by Alan Soble, he further asserts that “objectification is not inappropriate”. Everybody in the world is inherently an object, and being an object doesn’t always means a bad or wrong thing.³¹

He states that in the case of pornography, there is no wrong in considering the pornographic models and actors as objects for sexual pleasure and refute their humanity, because there is no destructive objectification which needs to be occupied into moral account. He justifies the pornographic objectification by making a remark that “the objectification in pornography is in fact a good one; pornography takes those people who according to him are ‘good at sex, and makes sure that they do something with their lives’”.³²

The concept of positive objectification i.e. it is not always bad to objectify is further strengthened by the view given by Leslie Green, he backed his argument in favor of positive objectification by quoting Kant who asserts that “prohibition is against treating a person merely as means, and not at the same time as an end”. Thus Green emphasizes that there is no restriction against considering a human as a means, he argues that “we must treat others as instruments, for we need their skills, their company, and their bodies, in fact there is little that we social creatures can do on our own, and so little that is fulfilling”, he further argues that when persons go old, unemployed, or disabled, further what they dread the most is that they are no longer of any utility to others, they lack not only in their receding agency, but also in their receding objectivity.³³

The other feminist who challenge the idea of bad objectification is Martha Nussbaum,

³⁰ IMMANUEL KANT, *supra* note 4.

³¹ ALAN SOBLE, *supra* note 15.

³² *Id.*

³³ Rochelle Semmel Albin, *supra* note 11.

objectification for her is seeing and/ or considering one thing as another; one is considering a thing as an object which in fact is not an object but a living human being, she further has explained seven ways by which a human being may be objectified i.e. “instrumentality, denial of autonomy, inertness, fungibility, violability, ownership, denial of subjectivity”³². According to her “objectification need not necessarily have a devastating consequences to a person’s humanity”, she believes that “some features of objectification may in fact in some circumstances be even wonderful features of sexual life, and so the term objectification can also be used in a more positive spirit”. She further defines that negative objectification occurs in a situation where respect, sanction and equality are absent, and the same is positive when there is harmonious with acquiesce, equality and respect. She gives an example of positive objectification, “If I am lying around with my lover on the bed, and use his stomach as a pillow there seems to be nothing at all baneful about this, provide I do so with his consent, and without causing him pain, provided as well, that I do so in the context of a relationship in which he is generally treated more than a pillow”.³⁴

Another example of positive objectification given by her is taken from the work of “D.H. Lawrence, The Rain bow”

“His blood beat in waves of desire. He wanted to come to her, to meet her. She was there, if he could reach her. The reality of her who was just beyond him absorbed him. Blind and destroyed, he pressed forward, nearer, nearer, to receive the consummation of himself, be received within the darkness which should swallow him and yield him up to himself. If he could come really within the blazing kernel of darkness, if really he could be destroyed, burnt away till he lit with her in one consummation, that were supreme supreme”³⁵.

The above passage is a clear illustration of positive objectification, the lovers put their individualities aside and are recognized with their bodily organs. The lovers perceive each other in terms of those bodily organs. Thus the two lover refute each other’s sovereignty and partisanship, when involved in sexual act. Then the lovers, are equal and take each other as an object in away that is in line with regarding one another as human beings. Thus it would not be wrong to say that objectification necessarily needs not to be bad or wrong.³⁶

CONCLUSION

Objectification is a concept difficult to define, the view hold true even for Nussbaun who acknowledges objectification to be slippery and multiple, it is difficult to define it as different

³⁴ Sandra Lee Bartky, *supra* note 2.

³⁵ Evangelia Papadaki, *supra* note 22.

³⁶ MENON NIVEDITA, *supra* note 7.

feminist hold different views for the same, what may be objectification for one may not be for the other. Different feminists have different yardsticks in regard of objectification, while some urge it to be a negative concept others argue it to be positive. Objectification is like the more you understand the more your horizon shifts.

Also the notion that objectification is always bad has now through the work of the contemporary feminists taken the back seat, now the view on objectification is more liberal, the entire notion for understanding objectification has gone through a radical change, now objectification has obtained certain positive attributes to it as well. Self-objectification is also on the same path. Thus the cluster of objectification is now not only positive or negative, different feminists understand it differently for some it is positive to some it is negative. Further the views on gender and sexuality are more refined, it is well settled now that gender and sexuality are not inborn qualities of a person, gender is what a person obtains through the societal surroundings whereas sex is biological, the same view is given by Simone de Beauvoir's, "that one is not born, but becomes a woman. Which means that all of us have to learn to be men and women"³⁷, thus objectification exists because of the gender inequality in the society.

If we talk about the Indian legal framework which protects the women's bodily dignity viz- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 among many apart from the various provisions present in the Indian Penal Code, 1860 like Outraging the Modesty of Women- Section 354, Assault on Women with intent to disrobe a Women- Section 354B, Voyeurism- Section 354C, Stalking- Section 354D, Importation of Girls upto 21 years of age- Section 366B, Making any word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman- Section 509.

Apart from the above present legal framework there in many Supreme Court judgments where the apex court had in various its decisions like *Rupan Deol Bajaj v K.P.S. Gill*³⁸, *State of Punjab v Major Singh*³⁹ among others had recognized the women's right to dignity and bodily integrity.

For the two sexes, the society has two different value systems, the yardstick of right and wrong are different for two sexes, what may be right for one sex may be wrong for the other one, thus prevalence of this inequality is one of the major cause for objectification, the view holds true for both 'Dworkin and Mackinnon', who emphasizes that we are living in era of gender disparity. After referring to various feminists on their view on objectification the author has found out that objectification is a subjective phenomenon.⁴⁰

³⁷ Rochelle Semmel Albin, *supra* note 11.

³⁸ 1996 AIR 309

³⁹ 1997 AIR 63

⁴⁰ IMMANUEL KANT, *supra* note 4.