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**Attitudes toward Women Expressed in
the Speech of Male College Students**

B. A. Mahalakshmi Prasad, M.A.

Primary Focus of This Paper

This paper attempts to study the attitude of college going boys towards women, as seen in their use of language, in the city of Mysore, Karnataka in South India.

The modern college-going student uses the language he has acquired. In the case of a college student studying in Mysore, Karnataka, India, the predominant languages are Kannada, English and Hindi. The student uses these languages to convey his status, group that he identifies himself with, his education and thinking through the creative use of terms and by giving extended meaning to lexical terms that are in no way connected to the original meaning of these words. The paper's primary focus is on the attitudes that the college going boys portray towards women that is enumerated in the language used by the students.

Crimes against Women in Karnataka

Among the states of India, Karnataka State heads the list of crimes against women as per the records of State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) reported in the *Times of India* newspaper dated February 16, 2010. Gang rape, molestation, abduction and murder for

dowry are few of the crimes committed against women. The report also recorded the significant rise in rape cases — up to 486, of which six are of gang rape. As many as 2,186 women were molested last year. The husband or his relatives have committed the highest numbers of crimes against women. About 3,185 such cases were reported.

Language Use Revealing the Status of Women

The language used by the people living in a particular society can gauge the outlook of the society towards women. The society passively encourages the use of such language by people, which is portrayed in movies, television serials and other popular cultural effects.

This Study

The study was carried out in colleges in the city of Mysore, Karnataka, India. Fifteen minute recording of conversation of fifty students studying Bachelors of Commerce and Bachelors of Business Management was made. The students were also given a questionnaire to answer to gather information about their socio-economic background.

Results from the Data Collected

Some examples from the registers of these students is given in with their explanations.

item : a prime example for the objectification of women in modern society.

Eg: *maga, nam classnalli ondu bombaata item idaaLe, urvashi anta.*

Translation: Yo Man! In my class there is a wonderful item called Urvashi.

piger : a crude corruption of the word 'figure'. Usually used to describe good looking girls, it is sometimes used to describe allegedly snobbish or haughty women also.

Eg: *aa veeNa doDDa piger taraa aaDtidaaLe.*

Translation: That Veena behaves like big piger.

dove: Dove is a term given to a girl whom the guy fancies. Note the analogy to a white (representing innocence) bird (representing that she is out of reach).

Eg: *naveen dove sumati gE maduvE fix aaytantE!*

Translation: Naveen's dove Sumati is getting married

aunty: This is a derogatory term used for older women. Sometimes used for younger women who act in a mature way or dress conservatively.

Eg: *pakkad manE aunty kenchangE kaNnu hoDdlantE!*

Translation: The neighboring aunty winked at Kencha

Dagaar: This term was popularized by the vile and crude Jaggesh movie called **tarIE nan magaa**. A Dagaar is a female with loose morals. If a girl wears even slightly revealing clothes, she is labeled a Dagaar.

Eg: *aa Dagaar geetha mini skirt haakonDu hogtidaaLe, swalpa nu maana maryaadE idya?*

Translation: That dagaar Geeta wears a mini skirt when she goes out.

gowramma: In contrast to Dagaar, a gowramma is one who wears too conservative clothes and acts in an old-fashioned manner. Often used to describe rural women.

Eg: *aa gowramma noDu, disco-gu seerE haakonDu bartaaLe.*

Translation: Look at that Gowramma, she wears a saree to a disco

bomb, paTaki: literally means 'explosive'. used for 'mind blowing' women.

Eg: *aa film-nalli yaana gupta full bomb, magaa!*

Translation: in the film Yaana Gupta is a bomb man!

maal: yet another example of women being considered as sex objects. means 'goods for sale'.

Eg: *forumnalli sakkataagirol maal noDdE, full sexy aagidlu!*

Translation: In the mall I saw a very sexy maal

petromax: used rarely. means mistress. made popular by the 'golmaal' movies of Anantnag.

Eg: *iro ondu henDtina saakakke kaasilla avanigE, petromax bErE keDu!*

Translation: he cannot take care of his wife and yet he wants a petromax

hakki,bulbul,myna: various words which refer to birds.

Eg: *MCC college mundE hakkigaLannu noDta idde, ashTralli police bandu baida!*

Translation: in front of the MCC college there are beautiful birds before I could see them the police arrived.

| Sl.no | Word | New meaning | Original meaning of the word | Sentence. | Translation of the sentence |
|-------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Gedde (K) | Aged person/ old lady | Root as in potato (alu gedde) | E avalu gedde kanappa. | She is a gedde |
| 10 | Solle (K) | Thin person | Mosquito | Ava solle kanappa | That person is a mosquito |
| 13 | Piece(E) | A sexy girl | A sample | Wow, ane | Wow, what |

| | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | piece le | a piece man! |
| 14 | Bomb(E) | A sexy girl | An explosive | Avalu bomb kanappa | She is a very sexy girl |
| 15 | Bakra (H) | Foolish person/ dumb girl | Goat | Adu ondu bakra | That girl is a goat |
| 16. | Garam Masala (H) | A sexy girl | A condiment | Avan girlfriend garam masal | His girl friend is a very, very sexy girl |
| | Awaz (H) | Threaten/bully someone | Voice | Arigu neenu awaz hakodu | Who are you trying to bully? |
| | Battery bidodu (E,K) | To stare at a girl/ Lady | combination of apparatus for producing a single electrical effect | Yaakou ashtu battery bithiya | Why are you staring at that girl man! |
| | Colour (E) | Girl | the aspect of the appearance of objects and light sources that may be described in terms of hue, lightness, and saturation for objects and hue, brightness, and saturation for light source | Channagidde avan colouru | His colour is very pretty |
| | Pertomax(E) | A prostitute | Petromax is a company that manufactures gas burners. | Your girlfriend is a petromax | |
| 17 | Figure (E) | A sexy girl | Graphical representation | What a figure | |

The words that are written in the word column are words used by the students in their daily conversations to describe the events in their daily life. Words followed by (H) are words borrowed from Hindi [1], Words followed by (K) are Words borrowed in Kannada [2] and words followed by (E) are words borrowed from English. The second column Language in India www.languageinindia.com 150

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shows the new meaning or extension of the meaning of the word made by the students. The third column is the original meaning as gleaned by adults in the standard language that is still used today. The fourth column is the example of the word used in a sentence. Most of the sentences are in English and some in Kannada.

Observations

The students developed these expressions to be a part of a group. The more derogatory the term of address the more the student became a respected member of the group. Most words used by the students attempted to describe the physical appearance of the girl and vulgarity in expression is encouraged. The girls were invariably compared to objects like condiments and matchbook or animals of sacrifice like a chicken or a goat. The conversational tones used always were loud with threatening gestures.

The girls meanwhile either had the option to report abuse to the authorities; however, doing so always exposed the girl to further and future abuse and harassment by other members of the group. Most of the students tried to ignore the harassment due to reason of fear of harassment by other students and from the families who would blame the girl for inviting the harassment meted out to them by ways and means expressed in their behavior. Reporting to the college authorities resulted in the suspension of the perpetrator. However, after the perpetrator returns to the college the other male students of the college hail him as a hero, thus the encouraging more and more boys to misbehave with the girls in the college

Conclusion

Language is an indicator of the social behavior of an individual. Most often, a person's language conveys a person's attitudes and beliefs. The word used by the college students to describe the opposite gender is an indicator of the views that the young people have about women. The culture of respecting women and treating them as equals exist in a few places most of the time a girl has to put up with many insults and derogatory words used to describe them at home or outside. It is evident from the rampant use of these words in media and aped by the young students paves a path of creating a belief in the that women must be treated as dumb sacrificial creatures who are devoid of any talent. As Benjamin Disraeli says "On the education of the people of this country the fate of the country depends." If the country has to change then the attitude of its youth has to change and this can be achieved when people stop, being passive to the violence depicted in the media.

List of Abbreviation

E- English

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H- Hindi

K- Kannada

U- Urban; indicating students who come from urban areas

R- Rural; indicating students who come from the rural areas

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