

## **Representation of Women in Iraj's Music Videos Special Reference To Ashawari, Wassane Heene And Cleopatra**

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**Abstract:** Ever since the advent of the music video in the early 1980s, there has been a continuous array of commentary and analysis regarding its content and form. A trend and issue in the music industry is the Sexualization of the female body within song lyrics, photos, advertisement, music videos and live performances. Previous research has demonstrated that women are objectified and sexualized in music videos. This content analysis addressed the question of whether the bodies and sexuality of women were portrayed differently in Iraj's music videos. Music videos were coded for women's character roles, and visual performances of sexuality. Videos were also coded for specific ways women's bodies were objectified or sexualized through camera shots and angles. Three music videos which are produced by Iraj were analyzed in this study. Coding sheets and content analysis have been used scene by scene which women appeared in music videos. This study seeks to prove that women are sexually objectified in Iraj music videos. Objectification theory provides an important framework for understanding, researching, and intervening to improve women's lives in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's worth with her body's appearance and sexual functions.

The content analysis conducted shows that sexual imagery is a common feature of music videos. Result of the study indicate that Iraj portrayed women characters in stereotypical way through characters' roles and using of different camera shots, movement and angles.

**Keyword:** Music video, Sexual Objectification, women in media, Iraj Weerathne

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### **I. Introduction**

Music is a part of daily life for most people. Music plays an important role in the society. It has been a contribution to people's lives. Different genres of music have developed with the technology and they have influenced our society in distinctive ways. At the present, a song with visuals has become as a trend. The music video has defined as "a videotaped performance of a recorded popular song". Music videos can have a storyline related to the song or focusing on the artistic performance. Music videos have become a center of commercial, popular and artistic interest. The music videos can reach their audience through different ways, such as television, the Internet, video, DVD and compact disc.

The women's representation in the music industry has been become an important contribution to build perceptions on viewer's mind related to the gender. Music has some certain ways of portraying women. They represent women through their lyrics as well as a visual of the music videos. Earlier researches showing that women in music videos often placed in positions of sexual submission to their male counterparts (Baxter, DeRiemer, Landini, Leslie & Singletary, 1985).

Directors of music videos designate a particular role for male and a different role for female to tell a story. Being that both men and women already have some qualities that have been identified with when it comes to body image, a woman's body are said to be sexy with or without movement (Beynon, 2004). More music video clips now use erotic images of women to sell their videos. Research has been carried out by Brown, Campbell, & Fischer, (1986) shows that music and images in to musical video clips can make viewers to construct the world they live in. Most of the research has found out that music videos may have a significant impact to the viewers on drugs, sex and violence. (Van Dyke, E: Race, Body and Sexuality: 2011)

The modern music videos are tool of generating controversy and interest in an artist as creativity is endless for a music video (Street, 2011). With better effects and editing tools music videos now have an almost film like quality. Modern music videos in the world has been comprised with sexual language in its lyrics and message of violence, racism, and hatred towards women. The physical appearances of women in music videos are depicted thin and attractive. Women compare themselves with the images in the music video and this can result to negative mood and body dissatisfaction. (Tiggemann & Slater, 2003). Wallis (2011) did a content analysis of gender roles in music video, and the findings show that the stereotypical reinforcement notion that women are objectified as sex objects and men being portrayed to be aggressive are seen which means that different roles are assigned for both male and female in musical video clips

Sometimes in music videos, the woman's face is not shown. Instead, her body becomes a showpiece and is put on display. It depicts her as not having an identity or a sense of individualism thus, reinforcing her role as a sex symbol. It is very common for women to be represented as being an object of desire for males.

This can be taken in a negative sense as most females feel as though they are being objectified.

Not only visuals as well as lyrics also stereotypes women in music videos. By using (slang) words that portray women as inferior and the use of female pronouns when referring to objects or ideas are the ways that portray women in a stereotypical and negative manner. Today music has the power to construct the public's view of each gender. The perception and the effect of the music videos are related to the age, developmental and emotional stage of the viewers as well as the level of exposure to the music. People listen to music and then familiar to the lyrics of the song. Viewers see themselves as characters in the music videos. When they familiar with the song, they want to be and follow the characters which they viewed in the videos. Modern music videos in the world have been compressed with sexual language in its lyrics and message of violence, racism, and hatred towards women.

In Sri Lankan music industry also accompany with the world. With new technology, it developed day by day. They released at least 100 music videos per year. Sri Lanka has various video production companies such as Wide Angle, Hari Creation, Hiru, Bluesky, Red fox, Iraj production, etc. These companies produce various music videos and released them to the audience. Most of these music videos represent women in distinctive ways and they affect change in the culture, the attitudes, behaviors, women stereotype in the Sri Lankan society.

Lately, most of the Sri Lankan music videos are increasingly sexualizing and objectifying women. Now a day it becomes a trend. Because of the commercialism most of the directors use their music videos as a marketing device. In beginning lyrics and the visuals of the music videos had a connection. The visuals are made based on the lyrics of the song. But music videos which are produced in today there is no relationship between them. Producers mostly consider only visual of the songs. Females within music videos are represented differently on what roles they are supposed to play, like stereotypical roles in regular society. Within the lyrics, it also portrays the tradition male stereotypes of using females as objects.

This study examines three music videos namely "Wassane heene", "Ashawari" and "Cleopatra" which are produced by Iraj Weerathne. Iraj weerathne is a popular music artist in Sri Lanka. He works as a rapper and songwriter. He produced more than 25 music videos from 2002 to present. He was the first Sri Lankan music artist to have entered into the Kollywood Music Industry. These three music videos which are produced by Iraj are against to the Sri Lankan culture and all three music videos represent women in stereotypical. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine whether the women in Iraj music videos are portrayed stereotypically as sexualized characters through analyzing his three music videos, namely, "Wassane heene", "Ashawari" and "Cleopatra".

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

Theory of objectification was used as the base for this study.

Fredrickson and Roberts proposed the objectification theory in 1997. Objectification means treating a person as a commodity or an object without regard to their personality or dignity. Objectification theory provides an important framework for understanding, researching, and intervening to improve women's lives in a sociocultural context that sexually objectifies the female body and equates a woman's worth with her body's appearance and sexual functions.

Sexual objectification is the act treating a person as a mere instrument of sexual pleasure. Sexual objectification occurs whenever a woman's body, body parts or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments, or regarded as if they were capable of representing her (Bartky, 1990). Sexually objectifying also occurs in visual media that depict interpersonal and social encounters. This sexually objectifying treatment of women in the visual media is not limited to pornography. Mainstream films, music videos, advertisements, television programs, women's magazines each streams targeted women's bodies more often than men's.

Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) contended that media contribute to the culture of sexual objectification. The main ways that media enact sexual objectification are via (1) the visual presentation of bodies and (2) the thematic content that emphasizes the importance of bodies and appearance. Objectification theory has been used to explain why the music video version of femininity might be damaging. Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) explain that objectification occurs when "women are treated as bodies- and in particular, as bodies that exist for the use and pleasure of others."

Music videos contain highly concentrated amounts of sexual imagery, which is damaging to young women. When men in music videos shown to have more positive and powerful characteristics it promotes optimistic ideas and expectations of what real men are like. The same principle applies to women. The negative

way that they have been represent in music videos extends beyond the fictional characters until it soils the representation of real women. (Hawk, 2014)

Objectification of women in the media field can range from subtle forms such as highly sexualized dialogue, the lack of main female characters, and provocatively dressed female characters. Objectification theory proposes that sexual objectification of women's bodies by the media teaches women to internalize an outsiders' perspective on the self-such that they come to see themselves as objects to be evaluated by others, a tendency called self-objectification. Women who self-objectify have been shown to be at greater risk not only for negative feelings toward their bodies (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001), but also for mental health problems such as depression and disordered eating (e.g., Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Slater & Tiggemann, 2002).

Sexual objectification conveyed through body exposure. The definition of sexual objectification specifically mentioned the representation of a woman as a "collection of body parts" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), suggesting that sexual objectification occurs whenever body parts are on display.

Women were portrayed through their bodies and sexuality represents their entire being. Objectification theory posits that because of been objectified, women begin to treat themselves as objects to be look at and evaluated, leading to various mental health risks (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In this line, this study uses the insights of the objectification theory to examine the music videos of Iraj.

### **III. Methodology**

Content Analysis is used as a qualitative research method for this study. Music videos were coded for women's character roles and visual performances of sexuality. The coding sheets were developed based on a review of related literature (VanDyke, E. 2011, Frisby, C.2011 & Song,B. 2016).

First researcher finds out the time allocation for implicit of sexuality in music videos one by one. Then ascertain about the how women are representing in these music videos. Based on the coding sheet and operational definitions, the content of music videos was analyzed. Videos were also coded for specific ways women's bodies were objectified or sexualized through camera shots and angles.

The study has used books, journals and websites related to the women representation in music videos as the secondary data.

The sample for this analysis included current and popular music videos produced by Iraj production company. To find out how women are represented in Iraj's music videos, content analysis was performed for three music videos of Iraj Weerarathne. These samples are selected on purposive sampling method.

This study examines three music videos namely "Wassane heene", Ashawari" and "Cleopatra" which are produced by Iraj Weerarathne. These three music videos were released in 2017 and they have high rates in YouTube than other music videos produced by Iraj Production Company.

### **IV. Results & Conclusion**

Through the analyses of three music videos researcher sought to look at the act of women characters', which emerge from their representation. These three music videos have different time allocation for implicit sexuality. Representation of sexuality considered as the use of sexual movement, poses and suggestive facial expressions. Researcher allocates the time scene by scenes in these three music videos.

Findings reveal that every music video at least has used sexual movements, poses or facial expressions in visuals. The total time allocation of the sexuality in these videos were 20%. It revealed that Iraj used minimal time allocation for implicit sexuality in these music videos. Within these time period he portrait women in deferent sexual poses and movements.

The total characters (male and female) of these three music videos were examined as shown in below. These three music videos have three lead women characters.

Table 1. Total Women Characyers

| Cleopatra | Wassane heene | Ashawar i |        |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| 15        | 18            | 14        | Male   |
| 6         | 11            | 13        | Female |
| 21        | 29            | 27        | Total  |

The majority of characters in videos were male characters. Every woman characters appeared in three music videos were categorized based on the coding sheets. There were various character roles such as seductress, lover, occupation, backup singer, back-up dancer and background characters for portraying women

in Iraj's music videos. By using different character roles, he has tried to get the audience attraction mainly for women characters rather than male characters.

The women are presented as a decorative role in these music videos. The dress code of these women characters mainly depend on their character roles. They wear mostly slightly provocative and provocative dressers in these visuals such as shorts, short skirts, tight pants, short frocks, etc.

Within these three music videos, women character heavily used light colors and heavy make-up. For the lead woman character, they mainly used dark color dresses especially black and red color dresses. Make-up of the characters did by using mascara, eyeshadow, foundation, black eyeliner all around the eye and red color lipsticks. Women characters in these videos wore stylish hairstyle in visuals. Lead women characters in three music videos, had colored hair.

This study has focused on camera shots, movements and angles in particular three music videos. For representing women characters, Iraj has mostly used medium shots and close up shots. It emphasis he tried to enhance the women characters in visuals. When showing isolation body parts of the women characters such as eyes. Lips, bare stomachs, thighs and breasts Iraj has used close ups.

The results of current study revealed that the time allocation of implicit sexuality is less through the clothes and the camera shots, movements and angles were representing women as object in Iraj's music videos.

## V. Recommendations

It may be beneficial to study videos from more genres, or even across different media types to find out whether the patterns shown the women representation. A further research should also look into the roles given to men and women in other different genres of music video e.g. country music video, hip-hop music video, rap music video. Instead of selecting women representation in music videos, those who wish to do a research on this area, can analyze women in films, tele drama, theme song and programs. In addition, future researcher can analyze the lyrics of the songs.

Researchers should have tried to identify the gender representation in current Sinhala music videos. Future research should focus on effects these results may have on individuals who view music videos. While doing this research, the researcher used music videos, which are produced by Iraj, but those who are interested in this field can do a comparative study by comparing the way representation of women in music videos of various music directors in Sri Lanka.

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