**Unjustified flak**

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Reportedly Prime Minister Imran Khan in an interview with Jonathan Swan of Axios on HBO while responding to a question regarding sexual violence in Pakistan said that provocative clothing provokes sexual violence and it was imperative to remove temptation from society to quell the rising number of rapes and sexual assault in Pakistan. The statement has come under harsh criticism by his political opponents and the so-called liberal progressive segments who contend that by saying women should dress in a certain way, he is giving a new narrative to the oppressors and criminals against women and shows the intent to absolve rapists of the responsibility for their actions.

Dilating on the subject in a two-hour-long, question-and-answer interaction with the public on live television in April, in reply to a question about the measures the government had taken to prevent sexual abuse he had also remarked, “In any society where vulgarity is prevalent, there are consequences and women should cover up to prevent any temptation.” He was accused of being a ‘rape apologist’ blaming the victim instead of the rapist. The trolling went on for some time.

[Chauvin sentenced to 22.5 years behind bars over 2020 killing of George Floyd](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/chauvin-sentenced-to-22-5-years-behind-bars-over-2020-killing-of-george-floyd)

I think the flak directed at the Prime Minister is not fully justified. What he said may not be the only cause for a heinous act like rape but it surely is one of the causes for it. His statement needs to be understood in the context of Islamic injunctions and Hadith. Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, a religion which is a complete of code life. Islam sees modesty as a sign of respect for oneself and others. The Quran and Sunnah have laid down certain principles regarding the dress code of both males and females.

It can be safely inferred that vulgarity and obscenity are abominable sins and vulgarity does provide temptation to men to rape. It does have a correlation to this heinous male indiscretion. There can be situations where a person fails to resist the temptation and commits rape because they are not strong-willed to resist it. So the Prime Minister was not off the mark when he said that there were many people who could not keep their willpower in check.

Yes, there are also many other factors responsible for rape and the victim is not invariably responsible for it. It also has something to do with the social conditions and the prevalent attitudes about women. In our rural settings where feudal lords hold sway, rape is quite a common phenomenon; usually the women belonging to the tenant class become an easy prey for the rural elite. A colleague of mine once narrated an incident in his village. According to him, the daughter of a tenant was raped by the son of the feudal lord and the poor fellow went to complain about the incident to him. After listening to him the landlord said, “If the son of a landlord would not commit rape who else would?”

[US not changed stance on recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/us-not-changed-stance-on-recognizing-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights)

Although rape is a universal phenomenon, it is more common in excessively male-dominated societies like ours where women unfortunately are regarded as sex symbols. Ironically, women are also regarded as a symbol of family honour. We also often hear rapes ordered by Jirgas as a recompense for any crime or wrongdoing committed by the sibling of the would-be victim of rape. The case of Mukhtaran Mai and many others testify to the existence of this practice of enforced rapes. The rape of a woman on the Lahore-Sialkot motorway occurred not because it was a pre-determined act by the dacoits. It was a case of taking advantage of a situation where a woman was helpless and at their mercy. Hostility and aggression towards women can also motivate men to express their prowess and hate.

Recently, many cases of rape of innocent children have also come to light. It surely has nothing to do with how they dress. To be honest, the PTI government has shown remarkable commitment with regards to dealing with the crime of rape by bringing in legislation prescribing severe punishments. The speedy trial of the Lahore-Sialkot motorway culprits of rape and the award of death sentence testifies to the urgency and priority given to this detestable crime. The government has also run a sustained awareness campaign among the masses with regards to how to protect children as well.