

The American Scene

Victimization of Women Musafir

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings." — Cassius in Julius Caesar

There has been a rash of claims against male dignitaries in all walks of life for being sexual predators who took advantage of women's vulnerability. Women are suddenly remembering sexual advances by these guys that occurred 40 years ago. There are hash tags appearing for women to register their sexual harassment claims of past and present. One such hashtag #MeToo alone has been used by more than 1m times in the US, Europe, and the Middle East to register such claims by women.

The culture of sleaze in which young women have invariably been the victims stretches back to the origins of mankind and it is hard to believe that the present movement against it causing the downfall of a few luminaries like Harvey Weinstein will transform the milieu. Which is not to say it will make no difference at all. Those prone to such indiscretions will henceforth try to be more discreet but as long as there are givers, there will be takers.

Young actresses aspiring to Hollywood or many of the striving women in other fields succumb to animal passions of the predators for stardom and career advances. Many of the established Hollywood actresses pose nude and indulge in sexual acts on screen in the hope of getting a role in the next movie. Weinstein and others always maintain that their indulgences were consensual. The others dismiss the claims as untrue. This is also true that most of the women who are coming out now never complained before or registered the complaint with authorities.



The New York Times' Maureen Dowd recently cited an excerpt from the autobiography of Shirley Temple in which the most famous child star of her era recalls having to cope, at the age of 11, with an associate producer exposing himself to her, while the head of MGM was trying to grope her mother in a nearby office. I wonder what her mother was thinking. That was something like 80 years ago. Unfortunately, nothing has changed since then. We reelected Mr. Clinton to a second term despite his taking advantage of women (of course, they were willing too). Later, we elected Mr. Trump to the highest office in the land despite his vulgar admission of viewing women as sexual objects. The sexploitation did not cease with the advent of the feminist movement, and it is unrealistic to assume that it can be washed away just because of the present complaints.

This age old problem is not just Weinstein, it is not just Hollywood either. Nor is it just an American malaise. And it is not restricted to one walk of life. The exploitation of women as potential sex objects is rife from the media to academia and everywhere in between. It needs soul searching and honesty on part of both men and women. No one should exploit or be a willing victim. Otherwise, as long as there will be givers, so will be takers.