



## **UNLOCKING THE SECRETS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S SEXUAL FANTASIES IN SRI LANKAN PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEOS**

***P.Y.O. Perera***

*Department of Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo*

Internet pornography has become increasingly prevalent due to technological advancements. Existing research indicates that women's sexual fantasies in pornography are often depicted in unrealistic and stereotypical ways, reducing them to passive, submissive objects devoid of agency. This study conducts a comprehensive content analysis of women's sexual fantasies portrayed in Sri Lankan pornographic videos, considering behaviours, scenarios, and power dynamics. It assesses the portrayal of agency, autonomy, and consent, with a focus on gender equality, gender norms, and cultural values. The study utilizes a purposive sampling method to select most viewed 60 videos from the three most visited adult websites in Sri Lanka, according to their rankings in 2022. This researcher conducts the content analysis, employing a coding scheme developed based on the research objectives to examine the themes, scenarios, behaviours, power dynamics, agency, and cultural values depicted in the videos. The findings challenge prevailing trends and present a distinctive representation of power dynamics, agency, and gender norms. Women are portrayed as having equal power and agency in sexual activities. Romantic fantasies emerged as the predominant theme, while the schoolgirl fantasy also featured prominently. The data reveal that private homes are the most common setting, and vaginal sex is the most frequently depicted activity. These findings underscore the complex interplay between reinforcing and challenging traditional gender norms. The deliberate construction of power dynamics and the portrayal of agency in these videos highlight the creators' role in shaping narratives. The study concludes with recommendations for further research to examine the impact of schoolgirl fantasies, assess their influence on viewer attitudes, and explore evolving sexual and gender dispositions in Sri Lanka. This study sheds light on the demands and sexual interests of Sri Lankan pornography users and their attitudes towards women's sexuality and sex. It provides valuable insights into the specific context of Sri Lanka, allowing for a deeper exploration of the cultural factors that influence the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies and the responses of viewers.

Keywords: Pornography, Woman, Sexual Fantasy, Gender norms, Cultural Values

\* *Corresponding Author: oshadaperera54@gmail.com*



## UNLOCKING THE SECRETS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN'S SEXUAL FANTASIES IN SRI LANKAN PORNOGRAPHIC VIDEOS

*P.Y.O. Perera*

*Department of Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo*

### **Introduction**

Internet pornography refers to “professionally produced or user-generated (audio) visual material on or from the internet that typically intends to arouse the viewer and depicts sexual activities and (aroused) genitals in unconcealed ways” (Peter & Valkenburg, 2011). Because of advancements in technology, the consumption of internet pornography continues to increase (Döring, 2009). Pornography is a medium that has long been associated with the representation of sexual fantasies, including those involving women, while the depiction of women's sexual fantasies in pornography has been a topic of controversy and debate.

Research on the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies in pornography reveals a consistent pattern of unrealistic and stereotypical representations. Women are frequently depicted as passive, submissive, and objectified, lacking agency and reduced to sexual objects (Wills et al., 2010). Common themes in pornography include power imbalances, taboo relationships, and role-playing scenarios (Wills et al., 2010). Women in these videos engage in various sexual behaviours such as oral, vaginal, and anal sex, as well as masturbation, portrayed as deriving pleasure from these acts (Wills et al., 2010).

Sri Lanka, a country in South Asia with a rich cultural heritage and social norms, has witnessed the emergence of a pornographic industry in recent years (Waduge, Rodrigo, & Peris, 2011). A study focusing on Sri Lankan students aged 18 to 19 revealed that 51% of males and 2% of females had been exposed to pornography, which reportedly influenced their sexual behaviour (Mettanada et al., 2008, as cited in Waduge, Rodrigo, & Peris, 2011). Also, according to a survey conducted by Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health, it was found that 29% of school children above the age of 15 frequently watched pornographic videos (Patranobis, 2009, as cited in Waduge, Rodrigo, & Peris, 2011). The representation and consumption of pornography in Sri Lanka have sparked inquiries into the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies in this particular context. However, studies addressing this subject are limited in number. The production and consumption of pornography in Sri Lanka have raised questions about the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies in this context, particularly considering the cultural and societal factors that shape gender roles and power dynamics. The purpose of this study is to explore how women's sexual fantasies are portrayed in Sri Lankan pornographic videos, and what underlying themes, scenarios, and behaviours are depicted? This study covers three main objectives. 1) Evaluate the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos, analyse themes, scenarios, and behaviours. This objective seeks to understand how women's sexual fantasies are depicted in this specific context, shedding light on the representation of desires and fantasies in Sri Lankan pornography. 2) Examine the relative frequency and prominence of sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos featuring women. This objective focuses on quantitatively assessing the prevalence and significance of different sexual fantasies within the selected videos, providing insights into the most common or emphasized elements. 3) Identify variations, contradictions, and power dynamics in the depiction of agency, autonomy, and consent within women's sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos; explore their implications for gender norms, power dynamics, and cultural values. This objective delves into the nuanced aspects of women's sexual fantasies, investigating the dynamics of agency, autonomy, and consent portrayed in the videos and their relationship to broader sociocultural factors. This study contributes to



existing literature by examining the portrayal of women's sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos, addressing a gap in current research. It provides valuable insights into how cultural norms influence the depiction of women's fantasies, shedding light on the interplay between pornography, gender roles, and power dynamics in Sri Lanka. The study also raises awareness about unrealistic representations of women in pornography and the potential negative effects they may have on perceptions of agency, autonomy, and consent.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a content analysis approach to evaluate the representation of women's sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos. The study utilized a purposive sampling method to select 60 videos from the three most visited adult websites in Sri Lanka, according to the ranking provided by SEMrush (Semrush, 2023). The purposive sampling method is chosen because it allows for the deliberate selection of videos that meet specific criteria, ensuring a focused examination of the research objectives. The sampling criteria include videos featuring women engaging in sexual acts and displaying explicit sexual content uploaded in the year 2022. The videos are selected based on the number of views which means most viewed Sri Lankan Pornographic videos in the year 2022.

The content analysis of the videos involves a systematic and comprehensive evaluation of the types, themes, scenarios, and behaviours depicted, as well as relative frequency and prominence of various sexual fantasies. The analysis is conducted by a single researcher who viewed and categorized the videos using a coding scheme. The coding scheme used in this study is a crucial framework for categorizing and analysing elements in the videos. It was developed through a thorough review of relevant literature, identifying key themes, acts, scenarios, settings, agency, consent, power dynamics, gender norms, and cultural values. The scheme went through iterative refinement, ensuring clarity and comprehensiveness. The scoring system within the coding scheme measured the presence and intensity of elements. The researcher carefully watched each video, noting relevant elements and assigning them to their respective categories with scores. Scores are assigned based on prominence and frequency. The researcher received training on the scheme to ensure consistent application and maintained detailed documentation for transparency. Quantitative analysis is conducted to determine the frequency and distribution of different categories, while qualitative analysis explores nuanced variations, contradictions, and power dynamics. By following this structured approach, the researcher obtained meaningful insights into the representation of women's sexual fantasies in these videos, ensuring reliable and valid findings.

### **Results and Discussion**

In the analysis of 60 Sri Lankan pornographic videos, the average video length was 7.09 minutes, ranging from 55 seconds to 45.11 minutes. The predominant theme observed in women's sexual fantasies was romantic fantasies, accounting for 68.33% of the identified themes. Compared with Western cultures, Asian cultures value romance, emotional connections, and relationships (Sprecher et al., 1994) and it can shape the content produced within the adult entertainment industry as well. Statistical analysis indicated a significant association between romantic fantasies and traditional cultural values ( $\chi^2(1) = 5.621, p < .018$ ) as well as the reinforcement of gender norms ( $\chi^2(1) = 9.095, p < .003$ ). However, romantic fantasies showed a weaker association with progressive cultural values ( $\chi^2(1) = 4.861, p < .027$ ). This suggests that while these videos may reinforce traditional expectations regarding romance and emotional connection (women often express a desire for emotional connection and intimacy in their sexual fantasies) (Basson, 2000), they may not align with more progressive perspectives.

The schoolgirl fantasy emerged as the second most prevalent theme, constituting 16.67% of the identified themes. It is noteworthy that men exhibit a sexual attraction towards the idea of an adult female partner wearing a school uniform (Turner-Moore & Waterman, 2017). Research has shown that sexual fantasies involving children are associated with child sexual



abuse and a propensity for engaging in such behaviour (Klein et al., 2015). It is crucial to address the sexualisation of schoolgirl uniforms in popular media and conduct further investigations to explore the impact of schoolgirl sexual fantasies in pornography on actual behaviour. Moreover, the significant association between schoolgirl fantasies and progressive cultural values ( $\chi^2(1) = 4.951, p < .05$ ) indicates a potential deviation from traditional norms and an exploration of alternative sexual expressions. The least common themes were group sex fantasies, wife share fantasies, and infidelity fantasies, each of which accounted for only 1.67% to 3.33% of the total themes identified. In Sri Lankan pornographic videos, private homes were the most commonly depicted setting for women's sexual fantasies (85%), followed by role-playing scenarios (15%). Vaginal sex (penetration) was the most frequently depicted sexual activity (73.33%), followed by oral sex (giving/receiving) (50%), masturbation (33.33%), and non-penetrative sexual activities (28.33%). Also, Bondage, Discipline, Sadism, Masochism (BDSM) activities and anal sex were less commonly depicted (5% each). The findings align with previous studies indicating a higher prevalence of vaginal intercourse in adult videos compared to other sexual activities (Gorman et al., 2010).

The analysis of sexual fantasies portrayed in Sri Lankan pornographic videos provides insights into the implications for gender norms, power dynamics, and cultural values within society. The majority of these videos depict women in an active role (60%), suggesting an attempt to portray Sri Lankan women as sexually assertive. This portrayal may be influenced by men's performance fantasies and their attraction to women who actively participate in sexual activities (Knafo & Jaffe, 1984). This aligns with Freud's concept of the Madonna-Whore complex also (Freud, 1905, as cited in Hartmann 2009). Interestingly, findings contrast with previous literature, such as the study by Zhou and Paul (2016), which highlighted a lower agency in sexual activities for women, including Asian women, in pornography.

The majority of Sri Lankan pornographic videos depict consensual sexual activities (91.7%), with a small percentage portraying non-consensual activities (6.7%). Consent is predominantly communicated through non-verbal cues, such as body language and facial expressions (66.7%), while explicit verbal communication of consent is less common (31.7%). These findings align with previous studies that showed consent communication was often depicted and nonverbal cues were more frequent than verbal cues women use in pornography (Willis et al., 2020). Power dynamics in the videos are evenly split between equal power dynamics (46.67%) and unequal power dynamics (46.67%), with a minority showing women with more power (6.67%). The contrasting findings between the present study and previous researches highlight the complexity and variability in the representation of power dynamics in pornography. The observation that Sri Lankan pornography show women with equal power in sexual encounters challenges the traditional narrative of power dynamics in pornography, where men are typically depicted as dominant. It suggests that there may be cultural or contextual factors specific to Sri Lanka that shapes the representation of power dynamics in their pornography.

The depiction of women's sexual fantasies in Sri Lankan pornographic videos reveals a mixture of challenging (53.33%) and reinforcing (43.33%) traditional gender norms. This demonstrates the complexity and diversity of attitudes towards gender in the society and the on-going negotiation between traditional and progressive cultural values. Additionally, a significant proportion of the videos (58.33%) portray sexual fantasies aligned with progressive cultural values, challenging societal taboos and conservative beliefs. This provides a space for exploring alternative sexual expressions and desires, potentially contributing to the challenging of restrictive gender roles.

The distribution of power dynamics ( $\chi^2(2) = 52.50, p = 0.00$ ), women's agency ( $\chi^2(1) = 55.94, p < .001$ ), and gender norms ( $\chi^2(1) = 56.07, p < .001$ ) in Sri Lankan pornographic videos was found to be significantly different from chance, indicating that these variables are deliberately constructed and portrayed within the videos. This suggests that video creators play a crucial role in shaping the narratives and dynamics, emphasizing the agency and active



participation of women. The intentional representation of these variables in the videos can influence viewers' perceptions and understanding, potentially contributing to the contestation or reinforcement of prevailing norms and stereotypes.

### Conclusions/Recommendation

In conclusion, the aforementioned analysis presents an alternative perspective on the exploration of sexual fantasies among Sri Lankan women within the context of pornography. Notably, it highlights a distinctive representation of power dynamics, agency and gender norms deviating from prevailing trends. Also, it is imperative to scrutinize the schoolgirl fantasies and assess their impact on the attitudes and desires of viewers, particularly within the Sri Lankan cultural framework. Furthermore, comprehensive studies are warranted to ascertain whether these portrayals truly signify a shift in Sri Lankan sexual attitudes or if they predominantly stem from male sexual imagination. Notably, research on the consumption of explicit video content in Sri Lanka is still in its nascent stages. Nevertheless, directing attention to this realm offers insights into the sexual and gender dispositions of Sri Lankan individuals and anticipates forthcoming transformations.

### References

- Basson, R. (2000). The female sexual response: A different model. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 26(1), 51-65.
- Bridges, A. J., Wosnitzer, R., Scharrer, E., Sun, C., & Liberman, R. (2010). Aggression and sexual behavior in best-selling pornography videos: A content analysis update. *Violence Against Women*, 16(10), 1065-1085.
- Döring, N. (2009). The internet's impact on sexuality: A critical review of 15 years of research. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(5), 1089-1101.
- Gorman, S., Monk-Turner, E., & Fish, J. N. (2010). Free adult Internet web sites: How prevalent are degrading acts? *Gender Issues*, 27(3-4), 131-145.
- Hartmann, U. (2009). Sigmund Freud and his impact on our understanding of male sexual dysfunction. *The journal of sexual medicine*, 6(8), 2332-2339.
- Klaassen, M. J., & Peter, J. (2015). Gender (in) equality in internet pornography: A content analysis of popular pornographic internet videos. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 52(7), 721-735.
- Klein, V., Schmidt, A. F., Turner, D., & Briken, P. (2015). Are sex drive and hypersexuality associated with pedophilic interest and child sexual abuse in a male community sample? *PLoS One*, 10, e0129730. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0129730>.
- Knafo, D., & Jaffe, Y. (1984). Sexual fantasizing in males and females. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 18(4), 451-462.
- Peter, J., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2011). The influence of sexually explicit internet material on sexual risk behavior: A comparison of adolescents and adults. *Journal of Health Communication*, 16(7), 750-765.
- Semrush. (2023). Most visited adult websites in Sri Lanka in 2022. Retrieved from [<https://www.semrush.com/trending-websites/lk/adult>]
- Sprecher, S., Aron, A., Hatfield, E., Cortese, A., Potapova, E., & Levitskaya, A. (1994)
- Turner-Moore, T., & Waterman, M. (2017). Men presenting with sexual thoughts of children or coercion: Flights of fancy or plans for crime? *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 14, 113-124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsxm.2016.11.003>
- Waduge, R., Rodrigo, A., & Peris, U. (2011). Imposing restrictions on pornography: its potential impact and effectiveness in Sri Lanka. *Sri Lanka Journal of Psychiatry*, 2(1).
- Willis, M., Canan, S. N., Jozkowski, K. N., & Bridges, A. J. (2020). Sexual consent communication in best-selling pornography films: A content analysis. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 57(1), 52-63.
- Zhou, Y., & Paul, B. (2016). Lotus blossom or dragon lady: A content analysis of "Asian women" online pornography. *Sexuality & Culture*, 20, 1083-1100