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## 1. Understanding Sexism in Anime

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*Junu Elapra*

*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Saint Claret College, Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh*

*email: [junubaba03@gmail.com](mailto:junubaba03@gmail.com)*

### **Abstract**

*Email- Anime is yet another phenomenon that is sweeping the interest of youth and teenagers in Arunachal Pradesh. Anime as a genre is currently one of the most celebrated and popular throughout the globe but significantly in Asian Countries. It is highly addictive and entertaining in its presentation, making it enjoyable for children, teenagers and adults as well. It can be easily excessed without proper guidance and restrictions. NETFLIX, Anime heaven, Chia Anime, 9anime, Gogoanime, Telegram, etc are some popular sites which make it convenient for anime lovers to watch, and download shows of their liking without any community guidelines or restrictions.*

*Though it is highly addicting, it has lots of Graphic content which makes it quite uncomfortable to watch. The over-sexualization of female characters is seen in most animes. To name some- The Seven Deadly Sins, Kuroko's Basketball, Naruto, Fairy Tail, One Piece, etc. Groping of the female genital is shown as a very casual act and the idea of consent is nowhere to be seen. A woman with big breasts fits the ideal type and flat chest women are seen questioning their sexual appearance. The bare minimum of clothing is seen to make a female character more sexually appealing with close-up shots of their chest as one of the techniques to make them sexually appealing.*

*After K-Pop, Anime is the next thing that swept the interest of Arunachali Youth and a big chunk of adults as well. The 'Otaku' or 'Weeb' culture is sweeping the state and can be seen in their discourse, Social Media handles and dressing as well.*

**Keywords:** *Anime, Sexualization, Consent*



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### **Introduction**

Anime as per the Oxford dictionary is a style of Japanese film and television animation, typically aimed at adults as well as children.

Initially, in 2004, Animax India began with a 12-hour Hindi feed targeted towards kids from 7-14 but upon the merging of the programming field with Animax Asia, their programs and demographic changed. Animax India slowly shifted to subbed anime from English dubbed anime.

Original and typical Shonen anime is characterized by high action, or sports for a competition featuring Male protagonists, which involves only a few characters.

Developed from Manga graphic books, the close relationship between printed manga and anime is evidenced by the statistic that 90% of anime films are based on manga (Mac Williams, 2008) Hentai and Ecchi series, which cater to an adult audience.

Through this article, we will try to understand the mindset of Adolescents, Youth and Adults and their experience in coming in contact with unguided explicit content that they find in Anime. How do they deal with such content and their understanding of sexist content?

### **Sexism and Anime**

Sexism has been part of mainstream creative platforms irrespective of genres and deliveries. In an Indian household when a child reaches adolescent age and is filled with curiosities about their physical attributes and sexual awakening but they have no one to turn to. Talking about physical changes, hormonal changes are not considered appropriate as it doesn't fit per the standard and principles of society. Sex Education has never been given importance and politician dismiss the idea of including them in mainstream education as they believe it will have an ill effect on the existing societal principles. Growing up adolescents has no guidance in learning about their sudden physical changes and sexual awakening as well.

Female characters like- Nico Robin from the famous series 'One Piece', Dorobo Neko Nami (One



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Piece), Lucy Heartfilia (Fairy Tail), Cana Alberona (Fairy Tail), Elizabeth Lioness (The Seven Deadly Sins) and many more have been portrayed with minimal clothing or protagonist with no say about their sexuality. They have a strong presence due to their sexuality, and bold clothing and garner a lot of interest from their partners.

While interacting with the respondents who are ardent anime watchers, it was highlighted that the explicit content makes them uncomfortable but due to the likeability of the show, it is ignored most of the time. One of them responded and talked about his encounter with the explicit content while watching anime; he was uncomfortable for a long time and was constantly trying to understand the opposite sex since he had just hit puberty. He thought that these kinds of unrestricted content shouldn't be easily available for the young ones as it might be a disturbing factor in understanding the value of consent and respect towards opposite sexuality. Another response stated the way female characters are dressed or projected with minimal clothing and with big breasts and curvy bodies. Objectification of female characters can be highly seen in most animes.

### **Anime and Its effect on Arunachali Youth**

Anime culture is trendy in Arunachal Pradesh. Most teenagers are seen either watching anime or talking about it. These last few years we see a rise in Anime popularity with a landscape margin. While interacting with a group of ten teenagers in a group, it was disclosed that 8 of them are ardent Anime consumers and the rest two were familiar with the Anime. While being questioned what makes it appealing to the audience? They responded that the content generated by the content creator is interesting, easy to access and fun to watch. It can be easily downloaded on a smartphone or can be bought from an internet café. The songs are catchy, the characters are very appealing, with good graphics and unique story line from across countries. It was also cited that the pandemic and lockdown made them consume it more since they could download it for free and it could be easily accessed.

The responders were questioned about the graphic content of the Anime they watch and how they overcome those details. It was frequently mentioned that they just let it pass since it would make

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them uncomfortable and they couldn't talk about these scenes with anyone but friends. Since the scenes were quite graphic and talking about it with someone elder would put them in a questionable light. The responders also mention how it becomes uncomfortable to talk about anything relating to attraction, hormonal changes, or understanding of the opposite sex or sex in general.

The consumption of Anime is high among the youth of the state along with a certain chunk of adults. Naruto is one of the anime which is known and watched by youths and adults as well and catered to a huge audience since it was televised in Animax India. Anime peaked its popularity highly during these last 5 years and there is no end to it. The popularity of anime among young consumers can be seen increasing on a rapid scale.

### Conclusion

The escalating rise of Anime consumers can be seen throughout Arunachal Pradesh, especially among the youths of the state. The unguided and easy access to such graphic content can be alarming for young minds as it may lead to misinformation and can lead to unnecessary mishaps. There should be necessary precautions for easy accessibility of such content and should be guided through proper channels. Healthy growth and the right knowledge in the context of consent, sex and a healthy way of life are important and should be addressed through proper platforms.

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