

Stop reinforcing myths

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I read with exasperation the myth perpetuated by "Normal Man" in his letter today, "Some women do unknowingly invite advances".

He states that women should dress "properly" to help reduce rape. This is an extremely infuriating and uninformed view that merely reinforces myths and does not help the situation at all!

Dressing provocatively is not an invitation to rape. Rape happens to young children, to babies, to women regardless of the way they are dressed. It happens to mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, etc and is often committed by persons known to the survivor.

Take these statistics:

1. Rape survivors tend to be younger with 55.8% of the women who reported rape being younger than 16 (see the NGO Shadow Report on the Initial and Second Periodic Report of the Government of Malaysia (2006), found at http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/Malaysia_SR.pdf), and
2. Nearly 80% of rapists are people known by the survivor (see Women's Aid Organisation's website at http://www.wao.org.my/news/20030109talkp_rape.htm).

So what I am saying is this,

1. The way a woman dresses is NOT the cause of rape;
2. The rape survivor is NOT the person you should blame, instead the focus should be on the rapist.

We have to stop looking at rape as merely a crime of honour - it is a form of violence to which no human being should be subjected to. One should not equate the lack of control over sexual passion and over-eating to rape and sexual violence.