

'Blame that sexy dress' game has got to stop

Janarthani Arumugam, published 13 December 2006 in Malaysiakini

I must say the letter "Women, respect yourself" (7 December) annoyed me so much, that I had to respond to the ignorance of the writer. It is becoming apparent, Malaysian women are unfortunate scapegoats of a repressive society. We never get tired of playing "Blame that sexy dress" game. Unfortunately, we forget that we are talking about things that affect our sisters, mothers and daughters.

It is your individual and unalienable right to dress they way you want to. It should not be a yardstick for how people look at you. Women should feel free to express themselves the way they want. You have the right to disagree, but to claim that they deserved to be sexually assaulted for it is extreme and inhumane. Making unrelated analogies to protecting your home and the honor of a woman is ludicrous as well.

When women are relegated to a lower social status, they are prime targets for oppression. This manifests itself in instances of violence against women.

We have to eliminate the power structures within our society that perpetuate oppression of women in any form. Telling them that their dressing is inviting the crime that is being committed against them is wrong. In fact, we are super imposing the message that they are weak and the deserved to be oppressed.