

Female chauvinists

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STAR Blog,

I was terribly disturbed after watching an episode (27/12/2006) of Dr. Alice Prethima Michael's talk show "Pengal Pesinaal". She had a panel discussion on the behavior patterns of Indian women in modern relationships.

I felt she managed to reinforce many of the negative stereotypes associated with Indian women. She did not really explore the issues that were pertinent to Indian women today. For instance, she went into great detail about how an Indian woman should dress with her guest, Puan Sri T.D Ampikaipakan. The good Puan Sri very graciously related an example of how a man made a sexist remark about a girl's cleavage. She found the incident very hilarious and went to suggest that the girl should have been more modest in her dressing!

It is outrageous to suggest that it is all right for men to ridicule women but it is quite preposterous to justify such sexist remarks. Can imagine that this was coming from an authority on social etiquette? I also felt very disturbed by the other issues brought up, such as how women should take the back seat and allow their husbands' careers to flourish. I felt like it was an attempt to brainwash sensible women.

I wanted to see a realistic and informed critique of the social status of Indian women. It would have been a more progressive idea to really analyze structures within the Malaysian Indian society that oppresses women. Perhaps there could have been a session on how education can be used to undermine these oppressive structures. Instead, I witnessed the act of maintaining the status quo by justifying sexual discrimination by female chauvinists.