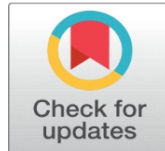
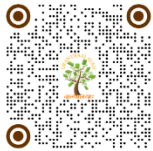


PUBLIC MAN AND PRIVATE WOMAN: AN ANALYSIS OF RADHIKA YADAV'S CASE

Bilal Ahmad Ganai ¹✉

¹ Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Law, School of Legal Studies, Central University of Kashmir, Ganderbal, Jammu & Kashmir, India



Received 28 July 2025
Accepted 29 August 2025
Published 22 September 2025

Corresponding Author

Bilal Ahmad Ganai,
bilalahmad@cukashmir.ac.in

DOI
[10.29121/ShodhSamajik.v2.i2.2025.27](https://doi.org/10.29121/ShodhSamajik.v2.i2.2025.27)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2025 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

The murder of Radhika Yadav by her father is an important case as it addresses many problematic issues that still afflict our sociocultural environment in India. The deeply entrenched patriarchal institutions continue to impact on our social interactions and familial affairs in ways that ultimately lead to the degradation of human life. In this paper, this case is examined from multiple perspectives to understand the backdrop within which it has taken place. The important lessons that can be drawn from this particular case, from a policymaking and lawmaking point of view, are also of significant importance in this paper.

Keywords: Radhika Yadav, Patriarchy, Manosphere, Gender and Masculinity

1. INTRODUCTION

Radhika Yadav, a 25-year-old state-level tennis player, was shot dead recently by her father at their residence in Gurgaon, India. This tragic incident involved a father gunning down his promising 25-year-old daughter.

Radhika, who was only 25 years of age, was at a very crucial juncture of her career. She was making continuous developments as a tennis player and was also developing an international image. Although she was just at the beginning of her career, she was already on the path to becoming an impressive tennis player. Even if she was not of very high caliber at that stage, all her tendencies towards the game indicated that she was going to become a respectable name in the history of tennis

in India. Radhika had competed in various national and international tournaments, achieving a career-best ranking of 75 in girls' 18, 53 in women's doubles, and 35 in women's singles, as per All India Tennis Association records.

However, her father, Deepak Yadav, a 54-year-old man, was not comfortable with his daughter's success. He allegedly took his licensed revolver and fired around five shots, three of which hit Radhika in the waist, leading to her death. When police rushed to the crime scene, they found Deepak Yadav, and the words that came from his mouth were that he had shot 'an international-level tennis player—his daughter'.

Reports about this crime indicated that Deepak Yadav had been upset for a while, as he was being taunted by his neighbors and locals for living off his daughter's earnings. He claimed he was taunted by locals whenever he went to buy milk at his village in Wazirabad in Gurgaon. He claimed that he would hear them saying that his house is running on her money and he too is dependent on that. It was under this pressure that he had earlier, on several occasions, asked her to stop working. But she didn't stop her journey of independent womanhood.

When approached by his brother Kuldeep Yadav later in the police station, Deepak Yadav requested to him that he should ensure writing the statement in the FIR in such a way so that he (Deepak Yadav) is hanged [Tennis Player's Uncle on Father's Statement to Police \(2025\)](#). Kuldeep Yadav further says that he could not have shot her from the front, looking her in the eye. Meaning thereby the father in him would not stand up to these shots which were fired at Radhika his daughter by him. But what led to this?

2. SOME RELEVANT QUESTIONS

If there are no other angles to this case than what we know so far, the tragic incident highlights several points that we need to zoom in on so that we are able to understand the fissures in our society that have led to the heinous murder of Radhika that too at the hands of her father who had given everything to her career and spent all that was necessary as per one close family member [Tennis Player's Uncle on Father's Statement to Police \(2025\)](#). What social expectations and pressures might have influenced the father's actions towards the daughter? How does this incident reflect broader issues of gender roles in society?

This paper is an attempt to dive in these questions. It is important as it will enable us to better understand the crime causation within the society and move beyond the analysis of these types of crimes from the prism of formal measures and open up the deep ideological and cultural recesses of our society to a critical examination. We need to carefully analyze the multiple ends of this spectrum from various angles.

3. THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

The man-dominated world has denied equality to woman for a very long time period. It was only after a lot of political, social and ideological struggles that the man-led world opened up and became comfortable with the rights of women. Women have always been treated as unequal to men. In fact, society has consistently denied equal status to women and has treated them as dependent on men. This characterization of woman as dependent and extension of man was created not only through various social institutions and ideologies but was also enforced through the legal systems that existed from time to time across the world.

There are many changes that have been created regarding the status of women in the present-day world; the world has been to a great extent successful also. Many political systems have successfully created institutions and laws that have gone a long way in ensuring the due space for women concerning their rights.

However, if we view the world today, especially from a feminist lens, it is rather like activating the 'Reveal Formatting Function' in Microsoft Word. It reveals the strenuous complex formatting that goes on below the surface of what looks smooth and complete [Menon \(2012\)](#).

Traditionally, women have always been treated as individuals who are supposed to look after household work and take care of the family. When it comes to family, this also implies the burden of reproduction that nature has placed upon them. Accordingly, women are expected to cook, keep the home clean, and care for the men in the family. They are expected to nurse them. As far as these responsibilities are concerned, they are treated as a natural arrangement. This is viewed as the sexual division of labor, which is believed to exist due to the sanction of nature itself.

There is work that is considered, as per Navedita Menon, to be women's work, and women are primarily seen as responsible for this. The entire debate around women's work is attributed to the biological traits of women. However, in actuality, apart from the childbearing capacity of women, all this women's work has nothing to do with their biological traits. This means that the division of labor between men and women has nothing to do with biology. On the other hand, this division of labor is an artificial process created by a society that is predominantly male dominated. In maintaining this division of labor, a number of cultural, social, and familial institutions and practices are employed.

So that way, there is so much work that was put down on the shoulders of women, which for a very long period of time was not recognized as any form of 'productive' or 'serious' work, but as a woman's natural tendency to look after that work.

However, after some time and with the advent of modernization, when some of this work traditionally done by women became professionalized for example cooking, we saw an interesting phenomenon wherein men started usurping those 'works and professions. For instance, professional chefs are still largely male-dominated, whether in New Delhi or in New York.

At the same time, when the manual work that women do is mechanized, this mechanization makes the work lighter and better paid. Men receive training to use the new machinery, and ultimately, women are edged out from these jobs. For example, electrically operated flour mills replace the hand pounding of grain, and in this situation, these electrically operated flour mills were ultimately encroached upon by men, while women were shown to the door [Menon \(2012\)](#).

This sexual division of labor has significant consequences on the role and status of women within society. This type of division of labor defines what an ideal woman is supposed to do and what an ideal man is supposed to do. It is this division of labor that has given rise to what has come to be known as the private woman and the public man.

4. PRIVATE WOMAN AND PUBLIC MAN

This notion around women being private and men being public goes back to the division of human life into public affairs and private affairs, and how the formal regulatory frameworks in the form of politics and laws must keep themselves

limited to the public affairs of human lives. The traditional understanding was that there is a difference between the political and the personal. The political aspect of a human being's life deals with public affairs, while the personal aspect deals with private affairs.

Lawmakers, politicians, and policymakers are supposed to work and concentrate only on public affairs, adopting, as per traditionalists, a policy of non-interference with private matters. However, the notion that politics should exclude the personal has always worked to the detriment of women's rights. From a feminist perspective, gender inequality has been preserved precisely because the sexual division of labor that runs through society has traditionally been thought of as natural rather than political. The public sphere of life, encompassing politics, work, art, and literature, has historically been the preserve of men, while women have been confined to an essentially private existence centered on family and domestic responsibilities [Heywood \(2019\)](#).

This equation has given rise to the idea of private women and public men. Man is essentially the political animal that Aristotle refers to, while women are, ipso facto, supposed to be led or subjected to the authority of men. In this way, men hold a superior position and possess more power because they are the individuals who are supposed to run the society, which is a public institution. They are responsible for running the state, which is also a public institution, and for lawmaking, which again is a public institution.

In contrast, women are subjects, and it is men who are supposed to decide what is to be done with them, what types of roles will fit them, and what types of responsibilities will be assigned to them.

5. MASCULINIZATION OF MEN-THE EMERGENCE OF MANOSPHERE

It is this idea of the public man that has led to the hard-nosed masculinization of men within society. The very idea of manhood is interpreted and understood in the backdrop of the equation that exists between women and men. According to this equation, men are supposed to be the providers for women. Men are supposed to earn, men are supposed to feed, and men are supposed to take care of their womenfolk.

This role is drilled into the minds of men by a number of institutions that directly or indirectly play an important role in their socialization. Any weakness on the part of men to fit into this 'chauvinistic' role is always seen as a significant challenge, a great violation of the understanding and role of manhood within society. So much so that if, in a family, the husband happens to be a simple teacher and his wife happens to be a doctor, the financial situation between the teacher and the doctor is comparatively far different from each other. Teachers typically earn less, while doctors earn a lot of money.

This idea of masculinized self of men demands that the teacher husband take care of all the needs and requirements of his doctor wife. Rather than the doctor wife helping the family or her husband in any way, it is the teacher husband who is supposed to run the family, attend to the needs and requirements of the house, and take care of the day-to-day personal needs of his doctor wife. The author has come across a lot of such instances in his social circle. Men inflicted with this socially constructed notion of masculinity have been suffering in silence.

This idea of masculinity works like an inflection on the man. In that way, we can say that even men become victims of this artificial masculinity that patriarchal social

institutions impose on them. It is this artificial notion of masculinity that they are supposed to live their lives by. It works like a trap, and once they get locked into this misguided and ill-conceived notion of manhood, they end up suffering in many ways, living their lives under the shadow of this idea of manhood, which alienates them even from their own nature as it makes many unrealistic and non-human claims on them.

It is this notion of masculinity and manhood that has led to the emergence of the term known as manosphere, which refers to a network of blogs, online forums, podcasts, and social media channels that promote traditional masculinity and anti-feminist beliefs [Andrew Tate and the manosphere: A short guide \(2025\)](#).

The ecosystem within which the manosphere has developed is basically rooted in ideas such as how feminism has harmed men and society, and how the over-interference of women in public affairs has led to the belief that masculinity is under attack and that men must be defended. This artificial notion of masculinity also believes that male dominance is natural or desirable.

We can say that the manosphere is essentially another version of this misled masculinity, which is developing and trying to shape and fashion the idea of man and the concept of manhood in new avatars, further reinforcing unrealistic expectations of men.

Deepak Yadav got compromised as a father by this masculinity. He was inflicted with this masculinity while as Radhika Yadav became deviant in the eyes of her father because of the public woman that she was confidently striving to become. The people who were allegedly making fun of Radhika's father had assumed the role of enforcement officers of this ill-conceived notion of masculinity which makes even the hard-earned money of a promising daughter profane and degrading for her male-parent.

6. PATRIARCHICAL ECOSYSTEM

For mellenia, our brains have been equipped with the seven incredible features: filters, assumptions, predictions, memories, labels, emotions and exaggeration [Gowdat \(2019\)](#). Hundreds and thousands of years of conditioning in a patriarchal ecosystem have calibrated these features on the lines along the neural pathways of this false & fabricated notion of masculinity. Mo Gawdat, a famous thinker, talking about the negative intrusive thoughts interestingly refers to a biographical event involving his daughter and how the negative intrusive thoughts at one point of time had started tormenting him with the automatic negative thoughts (ANTS) like: "Aya (his daughter) doesn't love you anymore." So much so he remembers one day suddenly leaving the room where he was talking to his daughter after getting compromised by the negative intrusive thoughts and confronting these negative intrusive thoughts in a nearby park by rewiring his brain by choosing to think otherwise. Human beings have this capacity of choosing one thought over the other. And this gives rise to the power of agency and freedom of choice.

As Deepak Yadav was not able to deal with the negative thoughts that were going on in his head he ended up losing his power of agency and thereby failing to exercise his freedom of choice in ways which could have had been good for everybody. Was the environment so deterministic, that Deepak Yadav was not in a position to have an alternate course of action? Can we invoke such a deterministic logic to cover the deviant activities that we may end up committing out of our own volition?

Interestingly, there is a case adjudicated by the Madhya Pradesh High Court in June 2025, wherein the court commuted the death sentence to twenty-five years imprisonment in a four-year-old minor rape case. Some of the arguments made by the court can be relevant here for the sake of debate and discussion.

In this particular case, the court noted that the victim was aged four years and three months, and the DNA profile matched between the accused and the material recovered from the crime scene and the victim's clothes. While recognizing the heinous nature of this crime, the court also focused on the mitigating circumstances. Regarding these mitigating circumstances, the court listed them as follows: lack of prior criminal history, the tribal and impoverished background of the criminal, his employment in a roadside Dhaba, and how this 25-year-old person was abandoned by his family at a very young age [Scconline \(2025\)](#).

In light of all these facts, the court placed the present case outside the "rarest of the rare" category. However, a point can be raised here, and this point will be discussed as this particular case has gone to the Supreme Court of India. The question is whether, despite these circumstances affecting the life of this particular criminal, could he have had chosen otherwise. Was he unable to exercise his own mind and listen to his own conscience, thereby organizing his behavior by saying a strong No to the tendencies that led him to commit this brutal crime against a four-year-old girl? Were the circumstances of being abandoned by his family at a very young age and coming from a very poor background so deterministic in his life that he had no power of agency?

Our environment may present us with a number of cultural, religious, economic, and political influences. In this sense, the environment is always given, and we do not have any role in deciding, choosing or changing the environment at the primary level. However, the most important part that we play is our capacity to interpret these signs. In that regard, human beings possess the full power of agency. They can make their own interpretations and choices.

Thus, this deterministic logic, which was used as the basis for commuting the death sentence of a particular criminal for the heinous crime he committed, does not hold true when it comes to the power of agency of a human being. What we make of our environment and the life events we experience is wholly and solely the prerogative of our own interpretations. We are responsible for the interpretations we assign to various events and the sociopolitical, economic, and ideological facts that exist.

The exercise of this interpretive power is the core of the interface that human beings have with their environment. It is because of this power that human beings have over their environment and their life circumstances that they are squarely responsible for the actions they take. Therefore, the invocation of deterministic logic to place a protective umbrella of mitigating circumstances over individuals who have committed crimes is something we may need to examine. This approach suggests that every deviant behavior will always be attributed to societal influences, rather than placing the blame on the choices of the individual.

If society, the world at large, and our history are deemed responsible for any criminal act, it implies that no individual is actually responsible for their actions.

7. COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM

Modernization has introduced the idea of the occupation of the public sphere, who were previously excluded from empowering participation. However, it is also

true that modernization has given rise to new and subtler forms of domination, commodification, and sexualization of women in modern times, all in the name of freedom and empowerment.

For example, in the case of tennis, we have seen how female tennis players are often portrayed in a hypersexual manner, particularly through cameras that focus excessively on their bodies, especially their legs, skirts, and outfits.

In fact, so far as this sport is concerned, the male gaze has been at the center of these tournaments and these sports activities. Through this male gaze, the media, especially the sports media, has always ensured that female athletes are framed according to the demands of this perspective. Indeed, some critics have derided tennis skirts for being sexist and promoting the male gaze [Djangi \(2024\)](#). Although some participants and players have been comfortable adopting the glamorization that tennis as a sport has introduced, the degradation of women through this commodification ultimately reinforces the traditional notion of how women are supposed to look and appeal to the male eye.

In spite of being athletes, they are expected to appeal to the male gaze, which does not serve the concerns of women's empowerment.

When it comes to the larger interface that these types of sports activities have with society, various frictions may lead to multiple tensions. One important point highlighted in the case of Radhika was how her parents were uncomfortable with the kind of clothes she began wearing after developing an image as an international tennis player. This illustrates the strong social pressures and the intense ecosystem of sports that weigh on the minds of emerging tennis players. There are conflicts between the aura that she was expected to carry as a tennis player and her role as a daughter, belonging to a family that expects their children to adhere to the norms of their particular culture or society.

There is another incident from this sport that involved Serena Williams during the French Open in February 2018. Serena Williams preferred to wear a full body catsuit at the 2008 French Open, and the French Tennis Federation expressed their strong disapproval of this particular dress by stating that it would no longer be accepted. Serena Williams was going through a postpartum phase, which made it medically important for her to wear this dress.

This particular incident highlighted how the tennis sport focused on controlling the bodies of women and reinforcing traditional emphasis on femininity by making skirts an important part of this game.

So, the desexualization of this sport is very important when it comes to widening, deepening, and diversifying the participation of women across the world in these types of sports activities. As the cultures, ideologies, and ways of life differ diametrically across the world, it will be very important for many participants to enter this sport without bearing the brunt of any cultural friction or the tension between the demands that their cultures make on them and the demands that the particular sport places on them. Therefore, this process of desexualization is important and one of the important demands of the multicultural world order.

8. CONCLUSION

The present-day world is in the process of reconfiguring itself politically, economically and socially. Any transitional phase is always full of tensions for all the stake holders. As old norms are giving way to new norms frictions are bound to arise. The negotiation of these frictions in a careful and cautious manner is important. The new generation who is quickly adapting to these norms require to

be guided by the practical considerations of the Indian society. Any change or social transformation have to grow out of the Indian conditions. Ample research has been conducted to highlight how the ethical and cultural doctrines that earlier were supposed to exit from the public sphere have reestablished themselves as important determinants in the modern world. The role of religion in modern world can be cited as an example.

As stated by Peter L. Berger, "Those who neglect religion in their analyses of contemporary affairs do so at great peril." [Berger \(1999\)](#) Jose Casanova, while also criticizing the theory of secularisation, believes that religion has got deprivitised and concluded that religion, rather than disappearing from the public space, has adapted and not declined in response to societal developments. Thus, comprehensive doctrines have re-entered the public space [Casanova \(1994\)](#). Casanova clarifies that this public sphere is not a Habermasian public sphere, which is restricted to rational debate [Habermas \(1989\)](#), but it is a discursive or agonic space in principle open to all citizens and all issues, including issues of power and the power to set the terms of the debate." Sudipta Kaviraj states that the secularisation theory is at odds with the facts of history and needs some re-examination [Kaviraj \(2010\)](#).

Accordingly, our pathways to modernization and individuality have to be negotiated with the unique ethos and civilizational heritage of our past. Any attempt to tread on the pathways of modernization by observing a complete break or rejection of our cumulative cultural wisdom will be to the detriment of all the stakeholders and will be a great disservice to our society and nation.

We are not supposed to remain stuck with our past but the methods and means that we adopt for negating our way through it have to be carefully calibrated. Any atomistic understanding of human beings is alien to the ideological traditions of India. Indian tradition does not understand this world through binaries. There is no conflict between an individual and a society. Any attempt on the part of individuals to crave for freedom by dissecting themselves from the society or from their families will be a hollow freedom.

It equally becomes important for the older generation to understand that the present-day world works on the new wavelengths of individual autonomy and freedom. Any attempt on their part to superimpose their idea of good life or choices is bound to be met with resistance, disaffection and alienation. The present-day world has been experiencing the breakdown of the moral consensus. Accordingly, the relationship between parents and children is in need of reconfiguration. Parents have to be more considerate and flexible in dealing with their children and bank on the power of persuasion and discussion when it comes to the questions of socialization and mentorship.

Both Radhika Yadav and Deepak Yadav are the victims of this social eco-system. It is this ecosystem which conspired to make a father to fire around four bullets at somebody who apart from being his daughter had been the pupil of his eyes.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES

- Andrew Tate and the manosphere: A short guide. (2025, April 26). The Week UK.
- Berger, P. L. (1999). *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Casanova, J. (1994). Private and Public Religions. *Social Research*, 61(1), 1–20. JSTOR.
- Djangi, P. (2024, May 3). A Short History of Tennis Skirts. National Geographic.
- Father kills tennis player. (2025, July 12). The Indian Express.
- Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into the Category of Bourgeois Society*. MIT Press.
- Heywood, A. (2019). *Politics* (5th ed.). Red Globe Press.
- Kaviraj, S. (2010). On Thick and Thin Religion: Some Critical Reflections on Secularization Theory. In I. Katznelson & G. Stedman Jones (Eds.), *Religion and the political imagination* (pp. 335–355). Cambridge University Press.
- Menon, N. (2012). *Seeing Like a Feminist*. Penguin Books.
- Mo, G. (2019). *Solve for Happy: Engineer your Path to Joy*. Bluebird Books for Life.
- MP High Court Commutes Death Sentence to 25 Years Imprisonment in 4-year-old Minor Rape Case. (2025, June 21). SCC Online Times.
- Tennis Player's Uncle on Father's Statement to Police. (2025, July 13). The Indian Express.