CHAPTER 3

Pornography and Media

Introduction

Pornography is the representation of sexually explicit and erotic behavior in books, magazines, statues, paintings, films (motion pictures), pictures etc. that is intended primarily for the purpose of inducing sexual arousal in the viewers or readers. The word pornography comes from the Greek *porni* means ‘prostitute’ and *graphein* means ‘to write’ and hence defined as any work of art or literature depicting the life of prostitutes.

However, pornography has been the subject of significant disagreement and indeed the exact definition of what constitutes pornography is itself a matter of considerable debate. The reason lies in the great difficulty of defining something which may be obscene or pornographic to one person but a work of art to another. Something worthless to me may be of some value to my friends. What is depressing and disgusting for some people is entertainment for others. Thus, it becomes very difficult to decide what pornography is and what is not and we are left with definitional quagmire of pornography. As a result,
pornography as a contentious issue remains unresolved and always incites protest, debate and discussion.

**Historical Perspective**

Pornography, in primitive age, is very much evident with paintings on cave walls, clay and stone engravings. India has a very old history of eroticism. The ancient Indian literatures, paintings and medieval sculptures of the genre point to the prevalence of pornography in ancient Indian society. Pornography, sensuality and eroticism are part of Indian heritage and this claim is truly testified by ancient and extant literatures and works of arts. For instance, Holy Scriptures such as the *Vedas* and the *Puranas* contain numerous erotic passages.¹ The *Atharvaveda* has several hymns containing references to coitus and the organs of procreation. The *Rig-Veda* X, 86-6 bears out very clear reference to lusty utterings of Indrani and Indra.² The *Puranas* too record a number of passages relating to carnal knowledge. For instance, the *Shiva Purana* extols the virtues of divine genitalia. The *Linga Purana* has more forthright reference to lovemaking.³952

The great epic Mahabharata uninhibitedly narrates the story of its own author Veda Vyasa (an illegitimate son of Prashar), that how he got born of Satyavati (a maiden) when the great *rishi* Prashar had carnal knowledge with her.⁴
In addition, India has got a full-fledged manual on erotology i.e. *Kamasutra* written by Vatsyayana in about third or fourth century A.D. The *Kamasutra* guiltlessly describes clinic candor details of coition. However, erotic expression of lovemaking didn’t remain confined to only scriptures and literatures. Rather, it got expression in ancient paintings and medieval sculptures as well. For example, the erotic sculptures at facades and interiors of Hindu temples of Khajuraho, Konark, Bhubhneshwar etc. In all these temple-sculptures, erotic themes and their vivid pictures of unnatural modes of sex and the startling poses (*asanas*) of men and women, performing varied acts of physical love, have been shown. Nor is this a feature of only of medieval temples, there are Bacchanalian scenes in the Ajanta caves which are predominantly of Buddhist inspiration. In Nagarjunakonda, a most remarkable centre of Buddhist architecture and sculpture, there are many panels depicting *maithuna* scenes. Thus, all aforementioned examples of erotic literatures and arts justifiably testify the existence of widespread pornography in ancient Indian culture.

In western culture too, we find very clear historical evidences of pornography. The Greeks took a liberal and uninhibited view of sex and nudity. Eroticism was not looked upon as something tainted with guilt, something to be avoided and shunned. Extra-marital affairs and bastardy
were never considered as something shameful or handicap. No stigma was attached to a young unmarried mother in Homeric times, nor was the bastardy as an outcast. Outside every home in Athens, the capital of Greece, there stood phallic symbol, ‘Herm’, which was a square stone pillar crowned with a bearded head of Herms and an erect Phallus protruding in front. The young girls of the family would clean and dust the Herm every morning without any sense of shame. Statues of nude men and women were publicly displayed. Homer’s *Iliad and Odyssey* originally contained highly salacious passages, which were deleted by Christian moralists.

The Romans too discussed erotic themes frankly. In the *Golden Ass* of Apulius there is a candid expression of conjugation of a woman with an ass. In Rome, nude human body in painting or sculptures was found in all public places. The wall paintings and mosaic figures discovered in Pompeii, the vivid depiction of sexual intercourse on vases and Greek plates are the evidence of pornography. Roman poet Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria* (Art of Love), a classic written pornography, is a treatise on the art of seduction and sensual arousal.

However, the invention of printing in western world led to the rebirth of ambitious written pornographic works. These frequently
contained elements of humor and romance and were written to entertain as well as to arouse. In the 18th century Europe, there appeared the first modern works that were both devoid of literary value and designed solely to arouse sexual excitement. A classic of this period was the widely read *Fanny Hill; Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) by John Cleland. But pornography, even after the invention of printing press, was not available to all class of people but only to social and political elite who were wealthy and educated gentlemen — who were apparently considered capable of withstanding its harmful effects. 

Pornography was so restricted to general people due in part to the scarcity and expensive books and rampant illiteracy. The law too reflected little concern with pornography when the circulation of pornography was so restricted to the general people. But the advances in printing, the development of pornography, and the expansion of educational opportunities to all class of people made sexually explicit material more widely available to a more diverse audience, and the attitude began to change. By the early part of the nineteenth century, however, the alarms had sounded. As sexually explicitly materials previously available only to the social elite became more widely circulated, private groups such as the Society for the Suppression of Vice pressed for legislation. The English Parliament responded with the
Vagrancy Act of 1824, which established criminal penalties for the publication of indecent pictures, and Lord Campbell’s Act of 1857, which gave magistrates authority to issue warrants for the seizure and destruction of obscene materials. In addition, criminal prosecution for obscene libel became more common particularly since English Law at the time permitted private persons such as members of the Society for the Suppression of Vice to initiate criminal proceedings.\(^9\)

**Moral Perspective**

Moralists are of the view that pornography is immoral. It is the record of abuse of vulnerable women and innocent children. It deals with deviant sexual practices and advocates adultery, rape, incest etc which impinge on traditional morality.\(^{10}\) It upholds barbaric inequality and hampers the cultivation of the civilized virtue of reciprocity. It has tendency to deprave or corrupt its readers and viewers by inciting lascivious thoughts or arousing lustful desire. It is the household of all immoral, illegal, illegitimate, illicit and violent activities. A heavy emphasis on sexual gratification and permissiveness encourages behavior that undermines other moral beliefs about women and sexuality and ultimately leads to the decay of family and other
traditional social structures.\textsuperscript{11} It lacks redeeming social importance; it invades a person’s privacy.

It creates permissive society that is in a way not good for society as a whole. It has become systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex, which differentially harms women.\textsuperscript{12} Pornography produces attitude of bigotry and contempt, fosters acts of aggression and harms women’s opportunity for equality and rights of all kinds.\textsuperscript{13}

Furthermore, it has following harmful effects on individual in general, women and children in particular, and on society or community as a whole.

**Arousal**

Pornography by virtue of its nature causes sexual arousal in non-rational way and strengthens preexisting desires to rape, incest and abuse women.\textsuperscript{14} Sexual arousal in a way is not good for sex–offender, force oriented men and adolescents, because these people are more likely to be aroused soon and commit sexual crimes in a society.

Pornography increases sexual arousal, and after viewing it one is more motivated to engage in sexual behavior. It has been found that men exposed to a steady diet of rape and sexual violence reported a higher
likelihood of committing rape themselves, compared to a control group that experienced no exposure. This is rightly supported by the Attorney General’s Commission on pornography which states that substantial exposure to sexually violent materials bears a causal relationship to antisocial acts of sexual violence.$^{15}$

Residual arousal from sexual violence has been found to intensify subsequent asocial feelings and destructive actions. A number of studies have shown that prolonged use of sexual materials is capable of facilitating aggression. The Hedonic theory says that pleasure seekers tend to escalate arousal which makes them respond more and more strongly to any stimulation which ultimately results in aggression against the nearest available females.$^{16}$

**Addiction**

Pornography for certain people is addictive and progressive. Like the addiction to drugs, alcohol, or food, those who are hooked on sex become obsessed by their need.$^{17}$ It fills their world, night and day. Solomen’s opponent–process theory of addiction proposed that any behavioral excess could lead to dependence on that particular excessive behavior (addiction) to feel normal. And too often, their families are destroyed in the process.$^{18}$ The serious danger associated with
habituation to media sex and violence comes from the fact the human will not resign to the naturally decreasing stimulation from the same stimuli. They will seek increasingly sexual and violent sources of stimulation (entertainments), which will drive up sexuality and violence in media content.\(^{19}\)

**Attitudes and Values**

Apart from arousal pornography may affect people’s attitudes and values. Pornography affects people’s attitude and values in two ways (1) it erodes previously acquired attitude and values from family, society, culture, tradition, peer groups etc. and (2) instills new permissive attitudes and values.

Sex is most important and private part of human life. It needs very serious treatment. On the contrary, pornography encourages people not to take sexual issues as seriously as they should. Rather, it co-modifies sex and shows it as plaything. This approach of pornography is very dangerous for society as whole. Sex is inherently private and becomes less meaningful, perhaps ever less enjoyable, if it becomes more public. A number of researches have shown effects on sexual attitudes and values after exposure to sexually explicit materials. After seeing slides and movies of beautiful female nudes engaged in sexual activity, men in
one study rated their own partners as being less physically endowed although they reported undiminished sexual satisfaction with their partners. In another study, men reported that they loved their own partners less after seeing sexual videos of highly attractive models.

Such effects are not limited to only man, rather both men and women who watched pornographic films on weekly basis later reported less satisfaction with love, physical appearance, sexual curiosity and sexual performance of their real life partners. They also saw sex without emotional involvement and being relatively more important than the control group did. They showed greater acceptance of premarital and extramarital sex and a lower evaluation of marriage and monogamy. They also reported less desire to have children and greater acceptance of male dominance and female submission.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{Desensitization}

Repeated exposure to violent pornography may lead to desensitization toward violence against woman in general and rape in particular. The desensitization hypothesis argues that repeated exposure to media-sex and violence causes a reduction in emotional responsiveness and increase callousness. This notion has widely been touted to explain, for example, why onlookers fail to come to the aid of
nagging victims and not even make an anonymous phone call to the police from the privacy of their homes.

Regular consumers of sexually violent media content become desensitized to such media stimuli and more importantly to similar real-life stimuli. With increasing exposure to sexual materials, people are gradually showing less interest in sex and resorting to sexual stimulant medicines.

**Disinhibition**

According to disinhibition theory watching, reading, or listening to sexual and violent media may serve to weaken previously learned social sanctions against using violence that usually restrain aggressive behavior. For example, watching a pornographic video with oral sex or bondage may weaken the prior inhibitions of the viewer against engaging in such behavior. Watching a rape scene where a woman is portrayed as enjoying the assault may disinhibit the constraint against the secret urge of some men to commit such a crime. Furthermore, the weakened inhibition resulting from watching sexually explicit and violent media enables people to justify using violence in real life.

The desensitization and disinhibition manages twist between entertainment and real life violent behavior. Scripts of violent behaviors
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depicted by the media in realistic settings can easily be enacted in real life by audience members who believe such scripts to have potential for pleasure as suggested by scripts which omit negative effects and overemphasized positive effects of violent actions. As per hedonic perspective, the intense pleasure temporarily tilts the hedonic balance in the viewer’s consciousness. The danger is perceived as insignificant and the fear is minimized. However, disinhibition is emotion – caused misjudgment.²³

Children

Pornography seeks exploitation of women and children. It impinges on the welfare of children and people’s own concepts of normal family life. At an age when elementary school children should be reading Tom Sawyer and viewing traditional entertainment in the sprit of Walt Disney, they are learning perverted facts which neither their minds nor bodies are equipped to handle, on the contrary. It is my belief, accordingly, that the behavior of entire generation of teenagers is being adversely affected by the current emphasis on premarital sexuality and general eroticism seen late night on television, in the movies, and in the other sources of pornography.
Moralists are concerned that adults and children may adopt behavioral patterns and attitudes that are based at least in part on media portrayals. The 1999 shooting at Columbia High School in Littleton, Colorado, reinforced the belief of many critics that constant repetition of graphic violence and sex in all forms of media sends the wrong message, especially, to young viewers about the world around them. The scenes grab viewers’ attention but rarely show the consequences associated with violence and indiscriminate sexual acts.

Scholars believe that watching a few indiscriminate sex acts on television will cause a teenager to be sexually active, and a multiplicity of such shows help to shape a child’s view of normative behavior.24

Adolescents who are exposed to media-sex are more likely to accept stereotypical sex roles and believe that the unusual sexual behavior presented on talks shows is realistic. One recent national survey actually found that 40% of teenagers said they have learned ideas about how to talk with their boyfriends and girlfriends about sex directly from media portrayals.

Given that the media are filled with sexual talk, behavior, innuendoes and a lot of inaccurate information, how do children and adolescents interpret such content? Children often believe that what they
watch on TV is real. Therefore, they would believe that premarital sex, extra marital sex, rape and prostitution are all more common than they really are.

Regular exposure to sexually explicit materials on TV might alter teenager’s self-perceptions as well. They might be less satisfied with their own sex lives or would have higher expectations from their prospective partners.\textsuperscript{25}

The incidence of unwed pregnancy and abortion has increased since 1970 as a side effect of pornography. Teens are merely doing what they have been taught, that they should get into sexual intimacy early and often. Moreover, to the large degree, pornography has done this to them.

**Permissive Society**

Pornography creates permissive society, which is in a way not good for society as a whole. According to moral conservatives, pornography depicts sexuality as if it were completely divorced from what they see as its essential surrounding context of love, commitment, and procreation. As a result, they argue, it is not illogical to assume that pornography also has the effect of denigrating these values in the wider
community, thereby undermining traditional family arrangements and encouraging promiscuity.26

Pornography emphasizes on sexual gratification and permissiveness which undermines the beliefs about women and sexuality and leads to the destruction of family and other traditional social values. Just to prove the effect of pornography in creating permissive society moralists cite the example of advertisers notion that exposure to certain symbols and fictional experiences will influence buying behavior. It is reasonable to suppose that an increasing flow of violent pornography will influence other social behavior.27 For example, effect of viewing pornography may have relationship with sex crimes. In careful review of such studies, it can be argued that there is in fact a correlation of availability of pornography and certain sex crimes. Most western nations have experienced a large increase both in the availability of pornography and the rise in reported rapes since the 1960s.28

Finally, pornography is a source of significant harm to the institution of the family and to society. Can any thing which devastates vulnerable little children, as we have seen, be considered innocuous to the parents who produced them? Raising healthy children is the primary
occupation of families, and anything that invades the childhoods and twists the minds of boys and girls must be seen as abhorrent to the mothers and fathers who gave them birth. Furthermore, what is at stake here is the future of the family itself. We are sexual creature, and the physical attraction between males and females provides the basis for every dimension of marriage and parenthood. Thus, anything that interjects itself into that relationship must be embraced with great caution. Until we know that pornography is not addictive and progressive, until we are certain that the passion of fantasy does not destroy the passion of reality, until we are sure that obsessive use of obscene materials will not lead to perversions and conflict between husbands and wives, then we dare not adorn them with the crown of responsibility.

Liberal Perspective

Libertarians see the morality of pornography as a matter for individual conscience. They recognize and believe that the existence of sound moral standards is of vital importance to individuals and to society. Nevertheless, to be effective and meaningful these standards must be based upon deep personal commitment flowing from values instilled in home, in education and religious training, and through
individual resolutions of personal confrontations with human experience.

Moreover, the realm of private morality and immorality is not the business of law or government. Government should not pass any moral legislation to suppress private and individual indulgence, which does no harm to others in the name of traditional moral standard. Since, the regulation of moral choice can deprive the individual of the responsibility for personal decision, which is essential to the formation of genuine moral standards. And such regulation would also tend to establish an official moral orthodoxy. Morality of older day should not remain legitimate aim of government with social import outweighing growing claims of individual freedom. It does not sound to be good reason to outweigh the freedom of speech and expression in the name of morality. You cannot suppress any idea on the ground that it is immoral or corrupts morals. And those who wish to restrict pornography in the name of morality are trying to impose their own morality on others, and in the process advocate a violation of the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression.

The fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression holds very serious concern for any democratic countries. In almost every
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democratic country, constitution guarantees the right of freedom of speech and expression to promote democratic ideals and values. It includes right to write, right to read, right to speak, and right to watch what one desires. Pornography falls under this right and deserves for full protection under the law of the land. Hence, censoring or regulating pornography is in the violation of the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression.

Outcry against pornography is principally for sexual theme depicted in it. Moralists and conservatives find it immoral and offending. However, for liberals all ideas have their own social importance, nothing is bad and nothing is good. Should all serious works of art and science which deal with so-called adult themes be banned? All works, according to liberals, have, someway or other, artistic, aesthetic, literary, educational, political, social and scientific value and must be protected for learning, improving, educating people and for bringing political and social changes in the society. Justice Black said that the first amendment in American constitution was adopted in urging the court to recognize that sex is like any other aspect of life and is so much a part of society that its discussion should not be made a crime.²⁹
However, regulation of obscenity & pornography limits freedom. Since it brings pleasure to many so their legal restriction in a liberal society cannot be advocated unless a plausible case can be made that lack of restriction does substantial harm to potential majority interest. If we suppress obscenity at the cost of minority's rights of liberty then it is not a government. Moreover, this is unfair and not right.

The suppression of obscenity is the deprivation of liberty or property of a person who indulge in it. A state should not suppress obscenity to preserve some traditional or prevailing view of private morality. A living conservative tradition must be a changing one, or else we will fail to preserve social integration, community identity, and cherished values. If the rights to freedom of speech cannot protect unpopular or controversial forms of expression such as pornography, liberals argue, it becomes useless. Because popular and non-controversial forms of expression hardly need protection.

We violate the autonomy of adults when we censor speech because we regard them as so impressionable or feebleminded that they can be easily persuaded to act wrongly. By censoring pornography the government treat us as an immature, children, irrational, and do not trust our intelligence. Ronald Dworkin says “Morally responsible people
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insist on making up their own minds about what is good or bad in life or in politics, or what is true and false in matters of justice or faith. So, government insults its citizens and denies their moral responsibility when it decrees that they can not be trusted to hear opinions that might persuade them to dangerous or offensive convictions.” Liberals reject persuasive principle (argument for banning pornography) and preferred Kantian injunction to respect one’s own and others’ autonomy. We need to develop greater faith in ourselves, in our institutions, and in the judgment of our citizens. Do you think that exposure to erotic material through media somehow will negate all values that have been taught in home, family, school, church, or through peer relationships? Are the values of our society built on such a weak, questionable foundation that they can easily be broken by media’s portrayal of pornography?

Pornography may promote sexual arousal but this does not mean that it leads to deviant and socially condemnable practices. Rather sexually explicit material allows open expression of sexual urges and thus decreases the rate of sex crimes. Pornography may be beneficial for sexually dysfunction people. The catharsis argument says that consuming pornography relieves sexual urges, with the magazine or video acting (perhaps in conjunction with masturbation) as a sort of imperfect substitute for the real behavior. Sexual depictions trigger
fantasies but these fantasies are not acted out and thus no one is hurt. They may even be socially beneficial through liberating a person’s excessive prudishness.\textsuperscript{32} A pornographic book is an instrument for procuring a sexual catharsis, but it rarely promotes the desire to achieve this through a social mode, an act of erotic congress. It can enhance sexual fantasy for individuals and couples, give information and ideas about sexual practices and techniques and provide safe sex in the era of HIV and AIDS. It provides a sense of community as well as practical safer sex information and a passionate affirmation of marginalized sexualities in homophobic culture.

There is nothing inherently wrong with learning about sexuality from a sexually explicit publication. It serves as a sex education in another way. Pornography, as sex education, not only teaches certain mechanism of sex but also teaches attitudes about gender, sexuality, pleasure and resistance – an education that is reflected and reinforced in more mainstream representation of sex and sexuality. It might be beneficial to society as a vicarious outlet or escape valve.\textsuperscript{33} An individual needs information about sex in order to understand himself, to place his new experiences in proper context and to cope with his new feelings. The basic institutions of marriage and family are built in our society primarily on sexual attraction, love and sexual expression. These
institutions can function successfully only to the extent that they have a healthy base. Thus, the very foundation of our society rests upon healthy sexual attitudes grounded in appropriate and accurate sexual information. Sexual information is so important and so necessary that if people cannot obtain it openly and directly from legitimate sources and through accurate and legitimate channels, they will seek it through some other means (whatever channels and sources are available). And clandestine sources may not only be inaccurate but may also be distorted and provide a warped context.

However, the attitudes and orientations towards sex produced by the open communication of appropriate sex information from reliable sources and through legitimate channels will be normal and healthy and will provide a solid foundation for the basic institutions of our society.

According to liberals, censoring pornography amounts to infringement of right to private sphere of life that guarantees the development of individuality, human dignity etc. Liberals are of the view that right to privacy is one of the fundamental rights therefore privacy of people must be ensured by the authority and government should not intrude into one’s privacy. He noted that Government should not have the business of telling a man, sitting alone in his house,
what books he may read or what films he may watch. We should not
give the power to our government to control our mind and to dictate us
what we should read and what we should not. Public has right to receive
information and ideas through whatever sources they like without
government’s intrusion into privacy.

As against the hypothesis that pornography gives rise to sex
crimes, liberals ask if pornography causes sex crimes then there should
be a surge in rates of sex crimes once pornography became freely
available. The hypothesis was proved wrong with experiment in
Denmark where virtually all legal control on pornography was
abandoned in the mid 1960s, and sexually explicit materials had been
freely available for several years. The data collected in the period 1958
to 1969 shows that there was a reduction in sex crimes reported to
Copenhagen police. There was 48% decline in rape, a 69% decline in
exhibitionism, a 77% decline in peeping, and a 78% decline in
homosexual offences. Thus, the data proved that freeing pornography
from legal controls does not give rise to sex crime.³⁵

Liberals reject harm principle (the view that the only good reason
to prevent harm is to ban pornography) on the ground that there are
types of harm such as harm to which a person consents, the prevention
of which does not justify the call to ban pornography. Even if expected good of banning pornography exceeds expected harm, liberals would not support banning it. They say they have an interest in acquiring true beliefs and avoiding false ones. This should be left to readers to decide what is vulgar, harmful and absurd. Furthermore, this also should be reader’s or viewer’s decisions whether they want to put themselves to harmful story.\textsuperscript{36}

Liberals contend the view of moralists who claim that pornography endorses sexual objectification and denigration of women. They say that the objectification and denigration of women is not only confined to sexually explicit media. Abusers consume a variety of other media or literary texts as well and not only those which we have recognized as pornography. Read any true crime anthology and you are likely to find obsessive Bible-readers among the anthologized sexual murderers as you are to find pornography consumers. The eroticization of power in the Bible is not an issue, but the sexual murder / Bible reading connection surely highlights the difficulty of identifying individual representation as causative in a culture steeped in violence. It also, of course, raises questions about effective and appropriate mechanism for the regulation of texts – would we seriously consider
banning the Bible because a serial sex killer took inspiration from its pages.\textsuperscript{37}

**Feminist Perspective**

Feminists are of the view that pornography is anti-women in ideological sense. It exploits women and children in the name of literature, artistic, scientific and political value. It erodes women's autonomy and privacy and maintains their inequality and subordination in all spheres of life.\textsuperscript{38} Pornography has become multibillion-dollar industry based on the buying and selling of women and children internationally as sexual commodities. Women and children are used as objects and depicted in situations that are humiliating, demeaning and subjugating. For instance, they are shown as tied up, mutilated, penetrated by objects or animals, urinated upon, covered in blood or kneeling submissively in the act of fellatio. In making of pornography, women and children are co-modified and coerced to bear pain, discomfort, physical injuries and humiliation in posing and performing of pornography.

Pornography degrades and humiliates women by portraying them as mere outlets for male sexual desires and fantasies. It promotes a climate in which an ideology of rape is not only tolerated but also
promoted when women are shown as sexual commodities that enjoy pain or humiliation and being aroused by the assault or rape. This portrayal of women as being turned on by rape is not only distasteful deviation from reality but also a potential danger one as sexual violence is arousing to sex offenders, force-oriented man and sometimes even to normal young men especially if the woman is portrayed as being aroused by the assault. This kind of portrayal also produces and strengthens in male consumers desires to rape, incest and abuse women, and the end result is an increased number of sexual assaults in society.

Pornography teaches, encourages and maintains sexual domination of women by men, which is in violation of the principle of equality and autonomy. Research on men’s use of pornography shows that some men recognize and enjoy the sense of power over women they get from these texts and, indeed, acknowledge that pornography promotes sexual selfishness in man. It promotes insensitivity towards victims of sexual violence and contributes to man’s sexual callousness toward women.

Pornography causes misogynistic beliefs and endorses violence against women. It does condone misogyny in general and sexual violence in particular. The abuse and degradation of women in
pornography is real rather than simulated and inflicted on unwilling models or actresses afraid to report their victimization because of their vulnerability to further harm. For adult survivors pornography can reinforce the messages about sex learned from their abusers and further alienate the survivor from her/his own body and desires. Survivors have described how their rapists used pornographic videos, magazines and texts to pressure and force them into performing specific sexual acts.

Pornography performs speech act with illocutionary force of subordinating and the prelocutionary force of reinforcing women’s subordinate socio-political status.

Exposure to pornography also means acceptance of violence against women and contribute to men’s acceptance of rape myth. Feminist scholars such as Catharine Mackinnon and Andrea Dworkin argue that pornography is inherently degrading to women because it treats them as sex objects who exist for the pleasure of men. According to these feminists pornography is a form of rape because in viewing the pornographic image the male viewer seizes and possesses all women in his mind and, thereafter, carries that perception of ownership into his daily life. It non-rationally causes what is to be harmless immorality of lusting for someone who is not one’s spouse. It produces new or
reinforces preexisting desires, or urges to harm women through a process akin to operant conditioning.

Pornography brings emotional trauma, social stigma and make it difficult for women/children involved to live in a society. It exposes women/children involved to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection. Finally, it creates permissive society, facilitate the entry of helpless women and gives rise to sex industry.

**Kantian Perspective**

Kantians would not justify the depiction or promotion of pornography in media. Pornography has been perceived as negative value. It cannot be universalized or universally practiced or can become universal moral law. Thus it does not comply to the first categorical imperative of Kant and hence stands unjustified. The second categorical imperative would also not support pornography on the ground that in making of pornography women and girls are used as a means, which is strictly prohibited by the maxim. Third categorical imperative of Kant also seems to be against pornography as pornographic film makers themselves would not like to be shot nude or naked. Then how they will choose to shoot others nude or naked. However, pornography in no way
gets any support from Kantian ethics and remains unjustified according to Kantians.

**Utilitarian Perspective**

Utilitarians would also not support pornography as they are concerned to maximize happiness for maximum number. Pornography does not seem to be the reason to maximize happiness because the persons who really enjoy pornography are less in number than the persons who feel offended or disappointed by pornography. However, it seems to maximize unhappiness rather than increasing happiness and hence stands unjustified in utilitarian perspective as well.

**Conclusion**

My understanding of pornography is that we should assess the work alleged to be pornographic before allowing or banning it. In fact, there are several works which have artistic, aesthetic, political, literary, medical and educational value. Therefore, the work alleged to be pornographic must be assessed to have one of the abovementioned values. If the work alleged to be pornographic has one of the aforementioned values, and is not sensual and titillating in any sense, then it should be allowed and ensured protection. And if the work alleged to be pornography has no any value and is utterly sensual and
titillating, meant only for sexual arousal and not for benefiting society positively, then it should be censored or banned so that it could not affect a society negatively.