

Liberalism has Stolen the Innocence of Children

News:

A report by the Children's Commission for England, published on 31st January 2022, reported that 1 in 10 children in the country have been exposed to online pornography by the time they are 9 years old, and by the age of 13, 50% of children have seen pornography. The report also stated that a quarter of 16-21 year olds first saw pornography on the internet while still at primary school, while almost 50% of young people in the same age group believe that girls "expect physical aggression" in sex, mainly due to the normalisation of sexual violence depicted in pornography. And almost 80% of young adults aged 18-21 had seen pornography involving sexual violence as children. Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza commented that the consumption of pornography is "widespread" amongst children and highlighted the consequential harmful impacts on the youth.

Comment:

The superficial solutions called for to the shocking scale of this sickening problem is better regulation of children's access to these harmful sites, such as age-verification measures on various online and social media platforms, or to improve sex-education teaching in schools. However, what liberal societies fail to question or accept is the destructive impact of sexual freedom itself which sanctions the open production and dissemination of pornography and other sexualised images and ideas in advertising and the entertainment industries. This is despite knowing the damage it causes with regards to the devaluing of women, inciting sexual harassment and violence against women, cheapening the relationship between the genders, and harming marriage and the integrity of the family unit. This is because under the capitalist liberal system, pleasure and profit will always prevail over the safety of women and wellbeing of children and society overall.

Liberal sexual freedoms have also normalised and celebrated promiscuity within societies, and glamourised and romanticized extramarital relationships – which has inevitably affected the youth. Around half (54%) of adolescents in the US aged 15-19 have had some type of sexual experience. Among high school students, 10% of males and 7% of girls report having 4 or more sexual partners in their lifetime. And of the 26 million new sexually transmitted infections (STI's) reported in the country every year, nearly half are found among young people aged 15-24. (ACT for Youth Centre for Community Action). Such views have also unfortunately impacted the Muslim lands. In the 2012 **Indonesian** Health and Demography Survey (SDKI) on reproductive health among youth, only 77% of female respondents and 66% of male respondents said it was important to keep their virginity before marriage, down from the 2007 survey, where 99% of female and 98% of male teenagers interviewed said they valued virginity. (Jakarta Post)

The introduction of sex education in schools is itself a product of the problems caused by liberal values, and used by governments to try to desperately 'patch-up' problems such as high teenage pregnancies, children watching pornography, the spread of STI's in the youth, and the horrific scale of sexual harassment and violence conducted by boys against girls in schools, colleges and higher education institutions, as well as the epidemic levels of rape and other crimes against women in society generally. According to Ofsted, the body responsible for inspecting educational institutions in England, 59% of girls and young women

between 13 and 21 say they have experienced sexual harassment at school or college, but victims “*don’t often see the point of challenging or reporting this harmful behaviour because it’s seen as a normal experience.*” In fact, many schoolchildren described sexual harassment and online sexual abuse as a routine part of life. In the 32 schools and colleges that Ofsted inspectors visited as part of their review into the problem, 9 out of 10 girls said that that being sent explicit pictures or videos happened “a lot” or “sometimes” to them or their peers, while three-quarters of girls reported that pressure to provide sexual images of themselves happens a lot or sometimes at schools and colleges.

Sex education classes add further to the erosion of the innocence of children by showing explicit imagery and videos and engaging in explicit discussions, and promoting freedom of choice – which inevitably exacerbates the problem. The subject is focussed on ensuring ‘consent’ in relationships and preventing pregnancy and catching STI’s, rather than tackling the underlying concepts that lead to promiscuity and extramarital relationships as well as attacks on women - which are the liberal freedoms that allow men and women to have any relationship they wish and encourages men to view and treat women according to their individual whims and desires.

This is the horrific state of affairs affecting children and youth within liberal states across the world. And yet we see regimes in the Muslim lands eager to follow in the heels of Western liberal states by strengthening the spread of liberal values within their societies through entertainment and other industries, as well as introducing their own forms of sex education into their curricula. The question that surely needs to be asked as Muslims is – what type of future do we want for our youth? What type of future generation are we shaping? What kind of society do we want to produce in our lands? Is it one that mirrors the plethora of problems affecting youth, women, families and the relationship between the genders? Or is it one in which our young are nurtured with sublime, virtuous, moral and righteous values that makes them outstanding citizens of the state; a society where the dignity and safety of women is preserved and the sanctity of marriage and the family unit protected; and a society where the relationship between men and women is based on respect and cooperation?

It is only the system of Islam, and its social laws which effectively regulate the relationship between men and women that can create such a society and state. It is this system alone, implemented by the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood that can protect the innocence of children and build personalities that embrace and celebrate concepts such as *Hayah* and chastity and that shun all forms of debased ideas, lifestyles and behaviours.

﴿وَلَوْ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾

“If the Truth conformed to their desires, truly, the heavens and the earth, and whoever is in them would have been corrupted. Instead, We have given them their Reminder. But they turn away from it.” [Al-Mu’minun: 71]

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