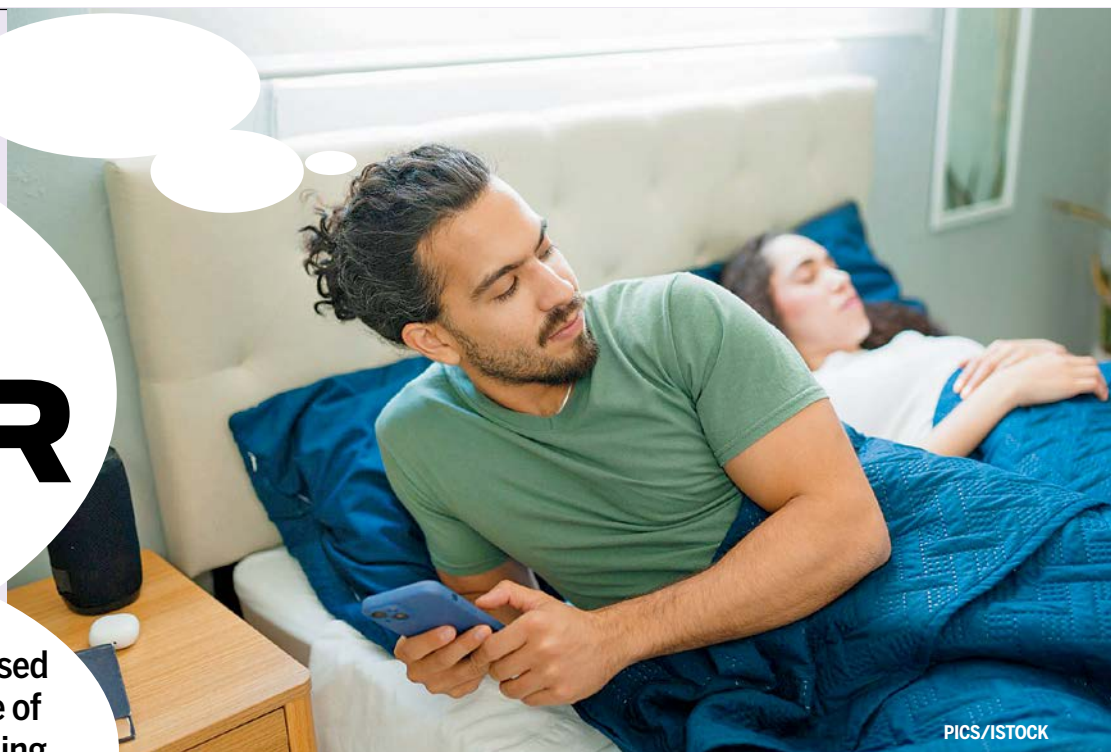


# 'MY KINK IS NOT YOUR CRIME'

In the wake of CNN's report on an organised rape academy online, the enduring allure of 'rape fantasy' comes under scrutiny, raising urgent questions about consent and the thin line between roleplay and reality



PICS/ISTOCK

NSFW

Good girls keep their mouth open  
(consensual CNC)

73 upvotes · 7 comments

NSFW

She accepted a drink from the wrong  
person. (consensual CNC)

1.5k upvotes · 40 comments

NSFW

Wearing a skirt is enough consent  
(consensual cnc)

Some posts  
on Reddit under  
threads about CNC.  
PICS/REDDIT

NSFW

Would you follow me home or  
would you kidnap me and take me  
to your place? (Consensual CNC)

NSFW

(Consensual cnc) drank too much  
and I'm passing out i hope no one  
takes advantage of me

For a layperson, the understanding is that it's [consensual non-consent] probably to fetishise your fantasy to rape somebody. It requires clear communication with your partner to begin with Rudra [name changed]

## TANISHA BANERJEE

THE recent CNN investigation into an "online rape academy", where men allegedly coached others on how to drug and sexually assault their partners without consent, has sent chills up everyone's spines globally. It exposes how violence can be often intertwined with fantasy. In such spaces, what is being normalised as "rape fantasy" bears no resemblance to what clinicians define as consensual non-consent (CNC) — negotiated, explicitly agreed-upon roleplay rooted in trust and continuous consent.

While India-specific data on rape fantasies is limited, a non-fiction book *Tell Me What You Want* (2019) surveyed more than 4000 Americans revealing that 60 per cent of men report having had fantasies involving sexual coercion or forced sex. But the distinction needs to be critical. CNC begins with consent. When consent is erased and acted upon, it is no longer desire. It is violence.

CNC is often misunderstood because people confuse it with violence, when in reality it is "essentially roleplay" grounded in clear boundaries, trust and explicit agreement. Having practised CNC for years, Rudra [name changed] explains that the term itself is relatively new in common conversations; earlier, many referred to it simply as "rape fantasy", a phrase that he says dangerously distorts its meaning. "For a layperson, the understanding is that it's probably to fetishise your fantasy to rape somebody," he says, adding that this assumption erases the importance of consent.

Within queer spaces, where conversations around sexual freedom may be comparatively more open, Rudra says CNC is understood as a negotiated dynamic. "You need to have a clear conversation with your partner to begin with. In some setups, it's also a written conversation," he says. He also stresses

that consent cannot exist under the influence of alcohol or drugs. "If anybody is under the influence of any substance, consent dissolves there. That's where I draw the line."

For Rudra, CNC's appeal lies in the mutually agreed power exchange, where "the dominance over your partner sexually gives you that extra kick", but only when both partners remain safe and willing. "Once, when I used the safe word because I was exhausted, my partner did not stop," says Rudra. "Now I know that it was sexual abuse; that was rape."

CNC begins with consent, and without that, the act ceases to be fantasy and becomes abuse. Assuming otherwise is dangerous.

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## 'What's missing is intent'

Cybercrime expert  
**RITESH BHATIA** points  
out the lack of legal  
support in such cases



When intimate content is shared digitally without consent, the first step, says Ritesh Bhatia, is to establish traceability. "Do a Google reverse image search; that's the best way to do it," he suggests, using tools like Google Lens to identify where images or videos may have surfaced.

However, removal is far more complex. Once uploaded, "By the time you remove it from one platform, it has gone to 40-50 different websites." Legal recourse becomes essential, often requiring court orders to prove violation of privacy — a process that can take months. While technology exists, Bhatia notes, enforcement is slow, "What's missing is intent. There are few resources that have the right intent in the country, especially with the amount of overwhelming cases and work."

## 'There has to be written consent in BDSM'

Founder of The Coping Central and therapist **UTKARSHA JAGGA** talks about the importance of proper communication and consent in areas of BDSM and kink



FOUNDER of mental healthcare organisation The Coping Central and therapist Utkarsha Jagga situates CNC within larger structures of gender and power, cautioning that it cannot be viewed in isolation. "Rape is also rooted in so much power and absolute abuse of physical, sexual, emotional boundaries," she says, adding that fantasies are shaped by the social contexts people inhabit. "We really have to understand whose kink is it? Where did you learn it? What purpose should it be serving for you?" Within BDSM communities, she notes, CNC is carefully negotiated. "There has to be a written sort of consent; a set of ground rules," she explains, stressing that without aftercare and prior

discussion, it can "very simply just go into the territory of abuse and violence."

Having worked on sexuality and pleasure, Jagga also points to the varied motivations behind such fantasies from curiosity about surrender to deeper, sometimes problematic, dynamics shaped by desire or conditioning. But concern arises when these patterns spill into everyday interactions. For her, ethical practice begins with conversation and gradual exploration. "You have to start small. With smaller conversations that then lead to bigger ideas." At the same time, she acknowledges limits within therapy itself, choosing to step back if engagement risks enabling harm or violence. "I can choose to take a step back from it because I don't want to enable any sort of violence to be reflected in my politics and practice."

## 'Rape is the sexual expression of aggression'

Sexologist **DR PRAKASH KOTHARI** explains that it's not a crime to play out a rape fantasy under consent

FROM a clinical lens, Founder Head of the Department of Sexual Medicine at the King Edward Memorial Hospital and Seth Gordhandas Sunderdas Medical College in Mumbai, Dr Prakash Kothari draws a sharp distinction between consent-driven kink and violence. "Rape is not the expression of sexuality. It is the sexual expression of aggression," he says, underscoring that the absence of consent is what defines harm. While consensual non-consent may function as a negotiated "variety" to enhance arousal, he adds, "he's taking consent. I don't think that's a crime." He also points out that, "A good doctor should not impose his



own values on the client."

In cases like so-called "rape academies", the issue, he notes, is not kink but the complete erasure of that conversation. "People think that they are carrying out a kink without consent for the kink," he says.

On whether rape fantasy can translate into abusive behaviour, Kothari maintains that fantasies are common and often harmless as "fantasies are always more colourful than reality". Clinical concern arises only when accompanied by deeper psychiatric indicators. Crucially, he emphasises fantasies may be "fake", but the ethics of acting on them hinge entirely on consent.

**Rape is not the expression of sexuality. It is the sexual expression of aggression. If there is consent. I don't think that's a crime. A good doctor should not impose his own values on the client**

Dr Prakash Kothari, Sexiologist



### Telling signs of being drugged

Drugging someone to sexually assault them is known as drug-facilitated sexual assault (DFSA). These substances can cause symptoms similar to extreme intoxication, including weakness, slurred speech, poor coordination, and blurred vision, often within 15 to 30 minutes, according to Stanford University. If you suspect you've been drugged, seek immediate help and get tested as soon as possible, ideally within 12 to 72 hours, with the support of someone you trust.

PICS/ISTOCK

## 'CNC (consensual non-consent) can involve non-sexual acts'

Kink and sex educator and author **TANISHA RAO** draws a visual of what motivates a person to indulge in CNC, and rape fantasy

KINK and sex educator and author of *You're Somebody's Kink* Tanisha Rao explains that consensual non-consent (CNC) sits firmly within the broader BDSM framework, but is often flattened by public discourse into something far more dangerous than it is. "CNC can involve non-sexual acts as well," she explains, emphasising that every aspect of such a dynamic is pre-negotiated. In this context, what is commonly referred to as a "rape fantasy" is simply one form of CNC. Yet the phrase itself, she notes, has gained traction online without a deeper understanding of its implications.

"The idea is that sometimes a partner just wants to experience something that feels a little more animalistic. Their partner is so driven by the attraction and desire that they would act entirely differently," she says. While for some, this may intersect with past trauma and healing, for many others it is about heightened intimacy, adrenaline and the feeling of being deeply desired.

Rao points out that participation in CNC often stems from mutual trust rather than control alone. "If you're handing over control to me willingly then it also means that you can trust me," she says, adding that this trust itself can be a source of arousal. Crucially, she warns against conflating consensual

practices with abuse. What is unfolding in cases like the recent investigation, she argues, is not kink but "entitlement, aggression, and violence." CNC, she stresses, is "teamwork" which people choose to do together, never something imposed. "What happened in the report is far from what CNC is about."

Rao also talks about the connection between the rape fantasy and popular Hindi cinema, which has long flirted with troubling tropes where refusal is framed as coyness and persistence is rewarded as romance. As the late author Sudhir Kakar notes in *Intimate Relations*, cultural scripts often blur desire and dominance. Films like *Darr*,



Dil and Raanjhanaa have, at times, normalised pursuit despite a woman's

"no," reinforcing the dangerous myth that resistance is performative rather than real.

Rao says, "In India, sex is a taboo only at surface level." From films where "men are forcing themselves on women and it turns out that she liked it in the long run," to erotic comics that mirror similar dynamics, Rao argues that aggression has been repeatedly romanticised. "We're very conditioned to see it that way. It's quite deeply embedded in our culture," she adds.



**Rape is rooted in so much power and absolute abuse of physical, sexual, emotional boundaries. We really have to understand whose kink is it? Where did you learn it? What purpose should it be serving you?**

Utkarsha Jagga, therapist

## 'There is always a feeling of an entitlement for sex itself'

Criminologist **P MADHAVA SOMA SUNDARAM** explains that rape fantasy is a spectrum of human thought which is not always turned into real behaviour

From a criminological standpoint, Professor P Madhava Soma Sundaram, also the Chairman of Indian Society of Criminology, frames rape fantasy along a spectrum of human behaviour, where thoughts do not always translate into action. "It can be something which is pleasurable at one extreme and something which is not at all pleasurable at the other extreme," he explains, noting that many individuals may have fantasies but never act on them. The distinction, he emphasises, lies in consent. "When you go into action, then the next important thing is consent according to the Indian law. So consent must be there."



He points to a broader cultural issue of sexual entitlement in India, where assumptions around access to sex, even within marriage, blur ethical boundaries. "There is always a question of entitlement for sex itself," he says, linking this mindset to both marital and non-marital sexual violence.

Sundaram also highlights how fantasies can carry strong motivational force. "Motivation to satisfy a fantasy is very, very high," he notes, warning that in the absence of consent, this can escalate into coercive or criminal acts. Crucially, he underlines that consent is continuous and revocable. At any stage, a person must be able to stop the act through "body language, gestures or words," and that decision must be respected. "But this kind of discussion, whether people are aware of it or not, is something which we won't know unless trained by proper professionals," he ends.