

Videos and panel discussion to explore lines between intimacy and harassment

Focusing on consent and rejection — both points where most faultlines occur, these videos are an attempt to encourage the critical, self-aware expressions of intimacy



Representational photo

At the vibrant cultural space G5A at Laxmi Mills Estate in Mahalaxmi, a much-needed conversation on friendship, intimacy, consent and rejection will take place after screening a series of videos on the subject. Focusing on consent and rejection — both points where most faultlines occur, these videos are an attempt to encourage the critical, self-aware expressions of intimacy.

Directed by Co:Motion pictures and enacted by actors, these are stories based on real cases documented by Partners for Law in Development (PLD), a legal resource group that works towards social justice and equality for women. In the course of the last five years, while providing technical assistance to the government, private sector, and educational institutions to implement laws on sexual harassment at workplace, this series was filmed.

 Madhu Mehra
Madhu Mehra

While these stories are mostly centred around the workplace, they would resonate in situations elsewhere too. Madhu Mehra, executive director, PLD says, "Women's marginalisation is shaped not by sex alone, but also by gender, sexuality, poverty, culture and conflict. Young adults in India today grow up with an awareness of sexuality being stigmatised and taboo, with little or no guidance provided for navigating gender relations, attraction and desire. Confusions and misunderstandings are only to be expected. Through these videos, we are encouraging engagement with sexuality in non-judgmental and empathetic ways with a wider audience, largely aiming at youth and young adults."



A Still from the video series

The panelist for the discussion include Madhu Mehra, Sumit Pawar (QKnit), Harnidh Kaur, policy analyst and poet and Micky Bhatia, psychoanalyst, moderated by Bishakha Datta, the co-founder and executive director of Point of View, a Mumbai-based non-profit that works to strengthen and amplify women's voices, and remove barriers to voice, speech and expression.

When you sent those
messages, did you know
this could happen?



A Still from the video series

"In navigating the line between friendships and intimacy between peers, questions that crop up are often confusing — 'is it okay if I compliment her', 'will he misunderstand if I ask him out' and so on. What signals one might read as consent is not clear. And that could spoil the organic chemistry between people, says Nikita Patodia, POV. She continues, "Another distinct pattern relates to the fallout of rejection — when feelings of hurt turn into loss of self-esteem, revenge or self-harm.

Confusions and fears around romance, love and desire — fed by popular culture and peer pressure — often find no space in media debates which are primarily focused on cases of predatory harassment and violence. Yet, it's precisely these issues that help explore attraction and relationships better."

WHEN: 7 to 8 pm, August 27 (doors open 6.30 pm)

WHERE: G-5A, Laxmi Mills Estate, Shakti Mills Lane, Mahalakshmi West

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