Hindsighted perceived likelihood of rape was used in this study as an operational measure of causal responsibility attributed to a rape victim. The experiment had a factorial design of 2 (subject's sex) x 2 (physically attractive vs. unattractive victim) x 2 (physically hurt vs. not hurt victim) x 2 (emotionally disturbed vs. not disturbed victim) with 15 subjects per cell. Apart from subject's sex, the experimental conditions were manipulated through a passage describing an incident of rape. The dependent measures were: the length of recommended imprisonment for the rapist and the perceived likelihood of rape. Longer imprisonment was recommended for the rapist when the victim was physically hurt rather than not hurt, and emotionally disturbed rather than not disturbed. Greater likelihood of rape was perceived for the attractive rather than unattractive victim, the physically hurt rather than the not hurt victim, and the emotionally disturbed rather than the not disturbed victim. These findings were discussed in the context of a proposed theoretical distinction between causal and moral responsibility.

The credibility of the victim is a major consideration with respect to the crime of rape. Calhoun, Cann, Selby and Magee (1981) found that a rape victim, who was portrayed as emotionally upset as a consequence of the rape, was rated as more credible than a victim who was portrayed as emotionally controlled. But the perceived causal role of the victim, and the perceived causal role of factors external to the victim, were not affected by the victim's emotional style.

The findings of Calhoun et al. are relevant to a proposed distinction between the causal and moral responsibility of the rape victim (Kanekar, Kolsawalla and D'Souza, 1981). Moral responsibility appears to be involved in measures of blame or fault which is attributed to the rape victim for her own rape. Causal responsibility of the victim can be operationally represented by the measure of hindsighted perceived likelihood of rape as a function of the victim's attributes. A physically attractive woman is, perhaps, more likely to be raped than an unattractive woman; so also is a woman walking in a bikini on a lonely beach as compared to a fully dressed woman. While physical attractiveness of the victim may explain a rape, her sexual provocativeness will also probably justify it. In the former case, one is dealing with causal responsibility and in the latter case with moral responsibility, somewhat on the lines of the distinction between (accidental) manslaughter and (premeditated) murder as is made in most legal systems. A blind person may be held causally, but not morally, responsible for his falling into a ditch, whereas, an inebriated man would be held morally as well as causally responsible for doing the same. Perhaps, moral responsibility always implies causal responsibility but not the other way round, although the two kinds of responsibility may not together be attributionally undimensional in a simple manner.

Previous studies in this research programme (Kanekar and Kolsawalla, 1977, 1980, 1981; Kanekar, Kolsawalla and D'Souza, 1981; Kanekar, Pinto and Mazumdar, 1985; Kanekar and Vaz, 1983, 1988) have generally shown that, while male subjects tend to
attribute greater fault to the rape victim than female subjects, there is a reversal on
the measure of likelihood of rape. Apparently, female subjects, as compared to male
subjects, are more willing to attribute causal, rather than moral, responsibility to the
rape victim, a finding which is consistent with the principal of defensive attribution
(Chaikin and Darley, 1973; Shaver, 1970). It has also been found that the fault and
likelihood measures are similarly affected by the victim's provocativeness as
determined by her dress, but not by her marital status and physical attractiveness
(Kanekar and Kolsawalla, 1980; Kanekar, Kolsawalla and D'Souza, 1981; Kanekar and
Vaz, 1988).

Calhoun et al. (1981) found the emotional disturbance of the rape victim affecting
her credibility but not her causal role. Thus, it seems that a rape victim who is
portrayed as emotionally disturbed as a consequence of her rape, should be held
morally less responsible for her rape than a victim who was not disturbed. But
emotional disturbance should not have any effect on the victim's causal responsibility.
Calhoun et al. did not use in their study another potential determinant of the rape
victim's credibility. A physically hurt rape victim should be perceived as more
credible, and morally less responsible for her rape, than a victim who is not physically
hurt as a result of the rape. On the other hand, physical hurt may not be expected to
affect the victim's causal responsibility for her own rape.

Physical hurt and emotional disturbance of the victim are consequences of the rape,
unlike her physical attractiveness which is an antecedent and was expected to have
a direct positive effect on the perceived likelihood of rape, but not on her attributed
fault. Kanekar and Nazareth (1988) used a four-factor design, with two levels of each
of the four factors which were: subject's sex, victim's attractiveness, victim's physical
hurt and victim's emotional disturbance. The dependent measures were: imprisonment recommended for the rapist and fault (representing moral
responsibility) attributed to the victim for her own rape. Longer imprisonment was
recommended for the rapist by female subjects rather than male subjects, and also
when the victim was attractive rather than unattractive, physically hurt rather than not
hurt, and emotionally disturbed rather than not disturbed. Greater fault was in general
attributed to the victim by male subjects than by female subjects, and to the
emotionally not disturbed rather than disturbed victim, although, this did not hold for
all conditions as was revealed by a four-way interaction.

The present experiment used precisely the same design and independent variables
as Kanekar and Nazareth's (1988), the only substantive difference between the two
studies being that the second measure was perceived likelihood of rape which was
assumed to represent the victim's causal responsibility.

**Method**

The subjects were 240 male and female undergraduate students of the University of
Bombay who were given written case accounts of a rape which varied only in the
description of the victim. The victim was described as either very good-looking or not
at all good-looking, either physically hurt or not physically hurt, and either emotionally
disturbed or not emotionally disturbed, the last two descriptions arising as a result of
the rape. Thus, the study had a 2 (subject's sex) x 2 (attractive vs. unattractive victim)
x 2 (physically hurt vs. not hurt victim) x 2 (emotionally disturbed vs. not disturbed
victim) factorial design with 15 subjects per cell.
After reading the report of the rape, subjects first indicated the length of imprisonment they recommended for the rapist on a scale from 0 to 45 years. The second item instructed the subjects to assume that they "had all the above information except for the occurrence of the rape itself and its consequences" and advised them to indicate "to what extent you think a rape is likely to take place under the above circumstances" on a 21-point scale from—10 which was labelled Not at all likely (almost impossible) to +10 which was labelled Extremely likely (almost certain).

Results

The product-moment correlation between imprisonment recommended for the rapist and perceived likelihood of rape was +.28 (df=238, p < .001).

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the years of imprisonment recommended for the rapist, gave only two significant effects. The main effect of physical hurt was significant, F (1,224) = 4.87, p < .05, with longer imprisonment being recommended when the victim was physically hurt rather than not hurt (24.15 vs. 20.08). The main effect of emotional disturbance was also significant, f (1, 224) = < 5.31, p < .025, with longer imprisonment being recommended when the victim was emotionally disturbed rather than not disturbed (24.24 vs. 19.98).

The ANOVA of the perceived likelihood of rape gave several significant main and interaction effects. Table 1 presents the cell means on the perceived likelihood measure. The main effect of victim's attractiveness was significant, F (1,224) = 9.24, p < .005, with perceived likelihood being greater for the attractive rather than unattractive victim. The main effect of physical hurt was significant, F (1,224) = 16.49, p < .001, with perceived likelihood being greater for the physically hurt rather than not hurt victim. The main effect of emotional disturbance was also significant, F (1,224) = 7.75, p < .01, with perceived likelihood being greater for the emotionally disturbed rather than not disturbed victim.

The interaction between the subject's sex and the victim's physical hurt was significant, F (1,224) = 4.18, p < .05. Male subjects indicated significantly greater likelihood of rape when the victim was physically hurt rather than not hurt, F (1,224) = 18.63, p < .001, whereas the same difference was not even marginally significant with female subjects.

| TABLE 1 | MEAN SCORES ON PERCEIVED LIKELIHOOD OF RAPE AS A FUNCTION OF SUBJECT'S SEX, VICTIMS ATTRACTIVENESS PHYSICAL HURT AND EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Subject's sex | Description of the victim | Attractive | | Unattractive | | |
| | | Physically hurt | Physically not hurt | | Physically hurt | Physically not hurt | | |
| | | Emotionally disturbed | Emotionally not disturbed | | Emotionally disturbed | Emotionally not disturbed | | |
| Male subjects | Attractive | 6.87 | 1.93 | 3.40 | 2.07 | 3.60 | 4.00 | 3.60 |
| Female subjects | Attractive | 0.33 | 1.93 | 4.33 | 2.07 | 4.00 | 3.67 | 3.67 |

The interaction between the subject's sex and the victim's physical hurt was significant, F (1,224) = 4.18, p < .05. Male subjects indicated significantly greater likelihood of rape when the victim was physically hurt rather than not hurt, F (1,224) = 18.63, p < .001, whereas the same difference was not even marginally significant with female subjects.
The interaction between the victim's attractiveness and emotional disturbance was significant, F (1,224) = 8.63, p < .005. Significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated for the emotionally not disturbed attractive victim than for the emotionally not disturbed unattractive victim, F (1,224) = 17.86, p < .001, while there was hardly any difference between the emotionally disturbed attractive and the emotionally disturbed unattractive victim. From a different perspective, one finds that significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated for the unattractive emotionally disturbed victim than for the unattractive emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 16.37, p < .001, whereas, there was hardly any difference between the attractive emotionally disturbed and the attractive emotionally not disturbed victim.

The three-factor interaction among subject's sex, victim's attractiveness, and victim's emotional disturbance was significant, F (1,224) = 5.52, p < .025. Male subjects indicated significantly greater likelihood of rape than female subjects in the case of the attractive emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 4.49, p < .05, and significantly less likelihood of rape than female subjects in the case of the unattractive emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 4.07, p < .05. Significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated by female subjects for the unattractive emotionally disturbed victim than for the attractive emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 15.67, p < .001. Within this three-factor interaction, significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated for the attractive rather than unattractive victim in three conditions, the difference being the smallest for male subjects and the emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 4.49, p < .05, larger for male subjects and the emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 7.33, p < .01, and the largest for female subjects and the emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 10.69, p < .005. In the remaining condition, involving female subjects and the emotionally disturbed victim, perceived likelihood of rape was greater for the unattractive rather than attractive victim, F (1,224) = 4.07, p < .05.

The three-factor interaction among subject's sex, victim's physical hurt, and victim's emotional disturbance was significant, F (1,224) = 3.97, p < .05. Male subjects indicated significantly greater likelihood of rape than female subjects in the case of the physically hurt and emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 4.28, p < .05, and less likelihood, almost significantly, than female subjects in the case of the physically not hurt and emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 3.87, p < .10. Significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated by female subjects for the physically not hurt and emotionally disturbed victim than for the physically not hurt and emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 9.71, p < .005. Significantly greater likelihood of rape was indicated for the physically hurt rather than not hurt victim by male subjects with the emotionally disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 10.52, p < .005, by male subjects with the emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 8.18, p < .005, and by female subjects with the emotionally not disturbed victim, F (1,224) = 7.89, p < .01, but not by female subjects with the emotionally disturbed victim.

Discussion

Since the present study, and the earlier one (Kanekar and Nazareth, 1988), had exactly the same independent variables, the results of the two studies will be considered in juxtaposition, as and when necessary, especially in the context of the proposed theoretical distinction between causal and moral responsibility.
The significant negative correlation between the rapist's punishment and the victim's attributed fault in the earlier study, and the significant positive correlation between rapist's punishment and perceived likelihood of rape in the present study, are consistent with previous findings (Kanekar and Vaz, 1988).

The results on the measure of the rapist's recommended punishment were quite simple in both studies. The most parsimonious explanation of all the main effects on this measure would be that the recommended punishment was commensurate with the harm or damage done by the criminal as perceived by the subjects. In both studies, more punishment was recommended when the victim was physically hurt rather than not hurt, and when the victim was emotionally disturbed rather than not disturbed. Only in the earlier study, female subjects recommended more punishment than male subjects, and more punishment was recommended when the victim was attractive rather than unattractive. While the generalizability of these two effects may be limited, since they were not replicated in the present study, it appears that greater injury is perceived in a rape by females than by males, and also the rape of an attractive victim is perceived as more injurious than that of an unattractive victim.

The results on the fault and likelihood measures are not easy to interpret in view of the complex interactions. Ignoring the interactions, one finds exactly opposing effects of the victim's emotional disturbance on the two measures, with more fault attributed to the emotionally not disturbed victim, rather than the emotionally disturbed victim, and more likelihood of rape being perceived in the case of the emotionally disturbed victim, rather than in that of the emotionally not disturbed victim. The main effect of emotional disturbance on the victim's fault was expected, and so was the main effect of subject's sex on the same measure, which was consistent with the previous findings (e.g., Kanekar and Kolsawalla, 1980). Contrary to expectations, physical hurt did not have a main effect on the measure of the victim's fault, while it did have a main effect on the likelihood measure which was similar to that of emotional disturbance. Perceived likelihood of rape was greater for the attractive rather than unattractive victim, which is consistent with the proposed distinction between causal and moral responsibility according to which an attractive victim was expected to be held causally, but not morally, responsible for her own rape. The unexpected greater perceived likelihood of rape in the case of the physically hurt, and the emotionally disturbed victims, is probably due to the greater salience of the event in view of its consequences. Wherever there is an interaction between two persons in which one injures another, the greater the injury of the victim, the greater moral responsibility might be attributed to the perpetrator of the injury and also greater responsibility might be attributed to the victim of the injury (cf. Walster, 1966). This speculation seems to receive further support from the positive correlation obtained between recommended rapist's punishment and perceived likelihood of rape, and the negative correlation obtained between the former and attributed victim's fault.

On the likelihood measure, considering first the two-factor interactions only, it appears that the effect of victim's physical hurt was limited to male subjects, the effect of victim's attractiveness was limited to the emotionally not disturbed victim, and the effect of victim's emotional disturbance was limited to the unattractive victim. These statements, of course, have to be qualified by the three-factor interactions. The crux of the three-factor interaction, among subject's sex, victim's attractiveness, and victim's emotional disturbance, seems to be the finding that perceived likelihood of rape was greater for the unattractive rather than attractive victim with female
subjects and an emotionally disturbed victim, while in all the remaining conditions perceived likelihood was greater for the attractive rather than unattractive victim. Similarly, perhaps the crux of the three-factor interaction among subject’s sex, victim’s physical hurt, and victim’s emotional disturbance is the finding that greater likelihood of rape was perceived for the physically hurt, rather than not hurt victim, in all the conditions, except with female subjects and an emotionally disturbed victim.

It is interesting to note from Table 1 that the largest cell mean on the perceived likelihood measure was obtained from male subjects with the attractive, physically hurt, and emotionally disturbed victim and the smallest perceived likelihood was given by female subjects with the unattractive, physically not hurt, and emotionally not disturbed victim. The interactions on this measure suggest that for attribution of causal responsibility the victim’s emotional disturbance is a more salient cue to female subject than to male subjects, while the victim’s physical hurt seems to have a greater impact on the perceptions of male subjects than on those of female subjects.

Emotional disturbance is more of a subjective phenomenon than physical hurt and female subjects are probably more affected by the victim’s emotional disturbance because they identify more with the victim as compared to male subjects (Deitz, Blackwell, Daley and Bentley, 1982; Krulewitz and Nash, 1979; Krulewitz and Payne, 1978). For female subjects, the fact of emotional disturbance perhaps renders physical hurt somewhat irrelevant, but apparently not the attractiveness of the victim.

The greater perceived likelihood indicated by female subjects for the unattractive, rather that the attractive, emotionally disturbed victim may represent an effort to minimize the subjective probability of their being in a similar plight (cf. Janoff-Bulman, 1982), the assumption here being that female subjects are more likely to identify with the attractive, rather than unattractive, victim. This reverse difference between the unattractive and attractive victims was obtained from female subject for the emotionally disturbed victim only, probably because victim’s emotional disturbance may have made the event of rape more threatening and stimulated an attempt to disassociate oneself from such a possibility by attributing greater causal responsibility to the unattractive, rather than attractive, victim for her own rape. This observation receives some support from the results of Kanekar, Kolsawalla and D'Souza (1981), but not from those of Kanekar and Vaz (1988). It should be noted that there was no main effect of subject’s sex on perceived likelihood in this study, with female subjects indicating greater likelihood than male subjects, as was found in the above mentioned prior investigations. Also the effects of victim’s physical hurt and emotional disturbance are not likely to be the same irrespective of the contexts or other variables (Kanekar and Vaz, 1983).

To summarize the results of the present as well as the earlier study, the rapist’s recommended punishment seemed to be a direct function of the perceived injury for which he was responsible. The victim was attributed more fault by male subjects than by female subjects, and when she was emotionally not disturbed rather than disturbed. However, a four-way interaction suggested that the effects of subject’s sex and victim’s emotional disturbance, on the attribution of fault to the victim for her own rape, were confined to conditions wherein the victim’s credibility was otherwise ambiguous. Perceived likelihood of rape was enhanced by the attractiveness, physical hurt, and emotional disturbance of the victim. The interactions on this measure suggest that female subjects, as compared to male subjects, are more likely
to identify with the victim, are more affected by the victim's emotional disturbance relative to her physical hurt, and are more likely to display defensive attribution as indicated by the greater perceived likelihood of rape for an unattractive (rather than attractive) emotionally disturbed victim. The findings have obvious implications for the differential perception of a rape victim by male versus female judges and jury members in rape trials. It should also be noted that while the likelihood measure is assumed to be an operational representation of the causal responsibility of the rape victim, it has not been adequately validated as such. On the other hand, the findings of this investigation, along with the results of previous research in this area, probably justify a theoretical distinction between causal and moral attribution of responsibility.

REFERENCES


