

Study on Sexual Attitude of Males and Females corresponding to the Socio-Economic Status of the Society

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ABSTRACT

Sexual Attitudes are values and beliefs about sexuality. Manifested in a person's individual sexual behavior, these attitudes are based on family and cultural values about sexuality, on sex education (both formal and informal) and on prior sexual experience. Investigation of sexual attitudes of youth contributes to understanding of their knowledge, emotions, thoughts and behavior towards sexuality. In this particular study, we made an attempt to analyze the sexual attitude of a total of 88 participants, (44 males and 44 females) belonging to the age group 18 to 30 years, involving college students and working professionals. The data collected is then compared among 2 classes of society, namely- lower class and upper class. Data was collected through convenient sampling method. Sexual attitude scale was used as a self-report measure consisting of 5 dimensions such as Pre-Marital Sex, Pornography, Polygamy, Lesbianism and Gay Marriages. The collected data was examined through t-test. The hypothesis of this study is that there is no significant difference in Sexual attitude of males and females. The null hypothesis stands true as the probability of having a difference is very less, that is 0.07. Findings showed that females have more favorable sexual attitude as compared to males. On the other hand, the participants who belonged to the upper socio-economic status showed more favorable sexual attitude than lower socio-economic status.

Keywords: *Sexual Attitude, Gender, Pre-Marital Sex, Polygamy*

The sexual attitude of an individual may show itself by positive or negative sexual behavior by being formed in accordance with the right and wrong knowledge, emotions, thoughts and beliefs about sexuality. It is accepted that individuals who are able to perceive sexuality as a concept and are aware of their own attitudes towards sexuality may be sexually healthier. In humans, sex may refer specifically to the act of copulation or heterosexual intercourse, but may extend to the related behaviors of the two individuals of the same morphological sex. The sexual impulse is an instinct like hunger and thirst.

A survey conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), a UN based body confirms that youngsters in India are getting more sexually active. "The reason why most kids had sex, was peer pressure. In case of girls, the commonest reason was

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pressure from the partner. Many were led to believe that refusing to have sex would ruin their relationship. Pleasure or experimentation was nowhere on the list.”

The Indian concept of Sexuality has evolved over time and has been immensely influenced by various rulers and religions. Indian Sexuality is manifested in our attire, behavior, recreation, literature, sculpture, scriptures, religion and sports. Sexuality means different things to different people. For some people, it could mean the act of sex and sexual practices, for others it could mean sexual orientation or identity and yet for others, it could mean desire and eroticism.

Vatsyayana's classic work 'Kamasutra' (Aphorisms of love) written somewhere between 1st and 6th centuries includes 3 pillars of the Hindu Religion- Dharma, Artha, and Kama. Kamasutra isn't all about sexual positions and likewise, but it also provides an attitude/perspective. Among adolescents, Reddy et al. (1983) found out in a study that the sample youth had their first sexual experience between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Homosexual activities were also reported in the study. 38% of women reported their first sexual activity had been with a partner of the same sex.

Between 1960's and 1980's, the sexual liberation movements flourished in Northern countries and gave rise to sexual revolution. The revolution consisted of a profound change in mentalities, values, knowledge and behavior towards a more optimistic and positive conception of sexuality. The optimistic conception of sexuality was developed in late 19th century, especially as a response to the repression of homosexuality- particularly in Germany and Great Britain. Previous studies conducted on sexuality revealed that sexual attitudes of youth were based on insufficient sexual knowledge and experience, risky sexual behaviors (such as unprotective sex and having sex with someone for money) are considerably common among youth. It is also reported that compared to societies where approach to sexuality is suppressive, a decrease in the age for the first sexual encounter is observed. However, an increase in the frequency of pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex during the youth are reported to occur in the societies with supportive or permissive attitudes.

There are namely two components of sexuality that include- 'Physical' and 'Emotional'. The physical urge finds its first relief from wet dreams and in the primitive form of masturbation. Later on this urge is no longer purely endogenous, but is aroused by the male/female body which the adolescence seeks to explore.

Woody presents the premise that healthy parental sexual attributes are likely to be reflected in the formation of positive attitudes by their children. Sexual Attitudes never exist in isolation, they are invariably connected to how we feel about ourselves, other people and life in general. According to Staples, the role of culture in patterning human sexual expressions is a phenomenon which needs to be understood not only for a greater comprehension of the dynamic factors that underlie the various forms of sexual attitudes and behavior, but for increasing our knowledge of human life. Researchers state that a person will acquire attitudes like those of one's parents, friends and other primary groups and the closer the relationship between the person and others- the greater the influence.

The theory of Female Erotic Plasticity was first proposed by Baumeister (2000). His review of literature on gender differences in sexuality revealed that women are more flexible when

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it comes to sexuality than men. It seems that female sexual responses and behaviors are largely shaped by cultural, social and situational factors. In contrast, male sexuality seems to be formed early in childhood and is less prone to change throughout the lifespan. There exist several factors contributing to sexual attitude, such as – culture/religion, social circumstances, family and peers, and social media.

The current research paper measures sexual attitude related to five aspects namely,- Pre-marital sex, Pornography, Homosexuality, Lesbianism and Polygamy. Urbanization had led to increased opportunities for education for young people, simultaneously; it has eased the transition from traditional extended families to nuclear families with minimal community support systems. The declining age at puberty and the increasing age at marriage have created a greater window of opportunity in which young people may engage in pre-marital, romantic and sexual relationships.

Research on "Sexual Attitude and Associated Factors of Risky Behaviors among College Students" was published by *Jahnfar and Pashaei* in 2020. In 2019, nine months were spent conducting a university-based study that included a cross-sectional survey. A self-administered structured questionnaire that was adapted from the World Health Organization's illustrative questionnaire to assess sexual attitudes among adolescents and young people was used to conduct a study on a total of 800 university students. Both genders showed unfavorable views about risky sexual conduct, and there was no discernible difference in the overall score of sexual attitudes between girls and boys (42/72). Attending events, pubs, or the cinema increases the likelihood of unsafe sexual conduct. Being religious is a key indicator of engaging in less dangerous conduct.

A study titled "Sexual knowledge, attitude, behavior and social influences among urban adolescents" was released in 2017 by *Dutt and Manjula*. The study's goals were to investigate sexual knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and sources of influence as well as to look at how sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in young people relate to one another. The sample was chosen (n = 300) from colleges using the snowball approach and from the community using the purposive sampling method. The sexual knowledge and attitude questionnaire (SKAQ-II), the socio-demographic data sheet, and the sexual behavior and sources of influence (SBSI) scale were the instruments employed. To assess the data, descriptive statistics and correlation were used. Although the adolescents had little sexual education, there was a strong correlation between attitudes and sexual education. sexual conduct with oneself and through the media or others were found to be low. Internet was found to be the major source for gathering information and was considered the most reliable source. Indian college youth continue to have poor sexual knowledge. Internet is a major source of information and is considered as the most reliable one among youth. More knowledge about sex is associated with liberal attitude toward sex.

A study titled "Sexual Attitudes, Patterns of Communication, and Sexual Behavior Among Unmarried Out of School Youth in China" was published by *Wang et al.* in 2007. 18% of the young people said they had had sexual contact. One-fifth of sexually active teenagers had consistently used a form of birth control, and one-quarter had given birth. In terms of the prevalence of premarital sex or the usage of contraceptives, there were no gender disparities. Age, education, family structure, parenting style, views about premarital sex, communication patterns, and dating were all strongly associated with young premarital sex, according to multivariate analysis.

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In 1986, Somasundaram wrote a study titled "Sexuality in the Kamasutra of Vatsayana." The harmony of three pursuits—Dharma, Artha, and Kama—is central to the Hindu idea of a fulfilled life. When Purusha (matter) and Prakriti (energy), Shiva and Shakti, and other forces came together to form Kama, it was thought of as the life of the senses and as the antithesis of creation. Thus, the idea of Ardhanareeshwar was born. Nandi, a devotee of Mahadeva, established the law governing how men and women should live their sexual lives in a thousand chapters.

A Comparative Study of Sexual Attitudes Toward Lesbianism and Homosexuality with Reference to Age and Gender was published by Sharma.S in 2019. A sample of 100 people was chosen, 50 of whom were in the age range of 18 to 28 and 50 of whom were between the ages of 50 and 60, separated according to gender. Using ANOVA, it was discovered that scores significantly varied between genders and between various age groups. Here, homophobia has also been brought to light.

A study named "Exploring Sexual Attitudes of Students in Health Professions" was published by Papaharitou.S. et al. A self-administering questionnaire was utilized to gather information from first- and fourth-year students who served as the sample. The findings demonstrated that students' sexual attitudes have a big impact on their sexual behavior. Particularly, those who had more open-minded attitudes toward sexuality were more likely to engage in sexual acts (intercourse) (OR: 4.88, 95% CI: 2.97-8.02), and they also reported having more partners ($r = 0.255$, $P = 0.001$). However, no meaningful correlation between sexual attitudes and the age of first sexual encounter was found.

Yu. J (2012) "*Teenage Sexual Attitudes and Behavior in China: a literature review*", It has been found out that 38% of participants in Wuhan and 67% in Dalian were not in favor of the idea of per-marital sex. Respondents who reported in favor of teenage sex seemed generally lower. Respondents who agreed to one-night stands were 17% in Chongqing and 29% Guandong.

Herlitz. C et al. "*Assessment of Sexual Behavior, Sexual Attitude and Sexual Risks in Sweden*" Younger women were significantly less inclined than women in the oldest age group to agree with the statement that sexual intercourse should only take place in a stable relationship. According to relationship status, educational standard, residence, and number of sexual partners, the analyses showed the same differences for men as for women.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

- To know and compare the sexual attitudes of men and women aged between 18 to 30 years.
- To understand and compare the sexual attitude between different socio-economic status among male and female.

Hypothesis

- There is no difference in Sexual Attitudes of Males and Females.
- There is no difference in Sexual Attitude of Upper Class and Lower Class

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Sample

The study is conducted on males and females aged between 18 to 30 years. A sample was consisted of 88 subjects (44 males and 44 females) selected through purposive sampling technique from urban and sub-urban areas of Indore (India). Data was collected by the help of Sexual Attitude Scale constructed and standardized by Amit Abraham, obtained data was analyzed through t-test.

Instruments

The tool used is the Manual for Sexual Attitude Scale (SA-AA) by Amit Abraham, Associate Professor and Head, department of Psychology, Agra. The scale consists of a total of 50 questions ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Agree.

Procedure

The subjects were both male and female approached individually. Their consent was taken for participation in the study. Request was made to the subjects to fill the questionnaire given to them. Brief directions were given prior to the administration of the test. After filling the questionnaire, it was ensured that the data was kept confidential.

RESULTS

The obtained results are interpreted in two ways, first the difference in Sexual Attitude of Males and Females and second, the difference in Sexual Attitude of Lower and Upper Socio-economic status

Table-1 Showing difference between males and females on sexual attitude.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	sig
Male	44	121.93	5.68	1.68	0.05
Female	44	132.86	5.33		

The above table showed a significant difference between male and female with respect to Sexual Attitude on 5 aspects namely- Pre-marital sex, Pornography, Lesbianism, Gay marriages and Homosexuality. The mean of Females showing sexual attitudes is higher as compared to males.

Table-2 Showing difference between male and female belonging to upper and lower socioeconomic status on sexual attitude.

Socioeconomic Status	N	Mean	SD	t-value	sig
Upper	38	133.78	5.19	1.75	0.05
Lower	50	122.32	5.71		

The above table exhibited a significant difference in Sexual Attitude between upper class and lower class, with upper class showing more favorable attitude or greater mean as compared to lower class.

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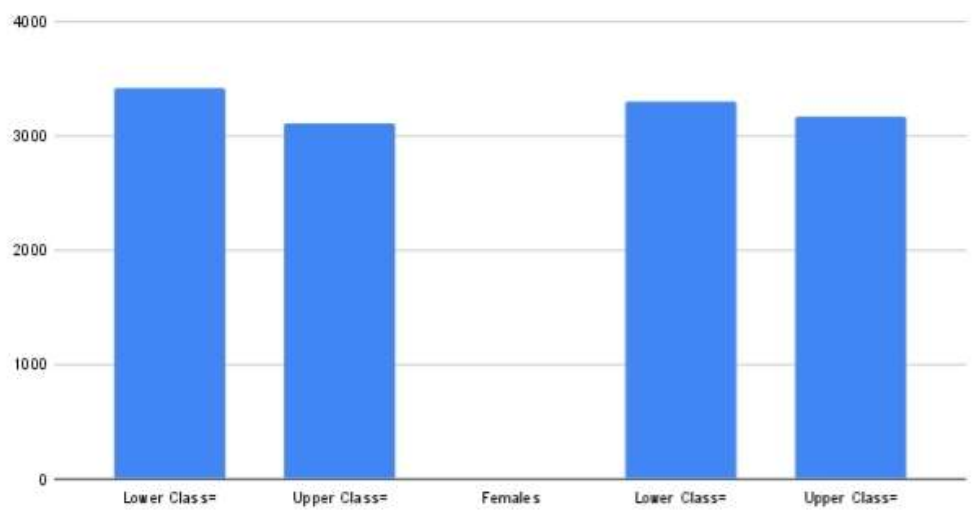


Diagram showing difference between Upper Class and Lower Class

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was carried out to examine the relationship between Sexual Attitude and Gender differences corresponding to the upper and lower socio-economic status. Obtained results demonstrated significant difference holding to the fact that Females showed higher sexual attitude along with upper socio-economic status. This can be interpreted as whether or not the target population is educative of various sexual health challenges in the present era. Results strongly hold that females have open and clear communication channels to convey messages pertaining to sexual attitudes. They also hold stronger beliefs and values about what remains acceptable during dating or before marriage. With respect to views about Monogamy or Pornography, the upper socio-economic group exhibited a more healthier perspective thereby, being more acceptable. These people also have high confidence in setting up boundaries and greater self-esteem.

In a hypothesis by King et al., religious self attitude is postulated to be more closely related to sexual attitude than sexual behavior. In a research, Robert Zajonc, showed that a mere exposure of an individual to a stimulus is sufficient for the enhancement of his attitude towards it. The above described phenomenon of psychological reactance can also be used to explain the finding that due to the growing surge of exposure of sexually explicit material to contemporary youth in form of both visual and auditory media and simultaneous regulation by the parent/ parental figures might push them more to 'try out' and liberalize their attitude. A study conducted by Roger Christensen (1985) on "Self esteem and Adolescent Sexual Attitudes and Behavior" found out that self-esteem would be negatively or positively related to permissive sexual attitudes and behavior.

Some examples of the statement included in the assessment of the current study were-

- Pre-marital affairs are not a menace to marriage.
- Sexual relations should be meaningful and permanent with one partner.
- Pornography dehumanizes men and women.
- For sexual pleasure, women are free to relate sexually to both men and women.
- Homosexuality is sexually deviant behavior.

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The scoring of all items was done on a 5 point likert scale ranging from- Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

Small sample size was the limitation of this study, so the larger sample size for further studies gets more reliable and valid results. We included only the participants belonging to Indore or sub-urban areas of Madhya Pradesh. Hence, other states could be included for more significant results. In further research duration of service should also include in the research design for getting more reliable results.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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