

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Vanshika Shukla^{1*}

ABSTRACT

Attachment styles that develop during one's unique life experiences also guide many aspects of their lives, especially governing the different kinds of relationships that they have. The young adults of India are going through several transformations due to the slowly changing attitudes and welcoming of opposite-sex relations, meaning that the chances of having pre-marital relations also is being accepted. Though studies and literature have provided evidence of associations between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs, this research helps bridge to an extent some cultural gap in terms of studying both the variables in Indian context. The aim of the study is to understand if there is any correlation of attachment styles and virginitly beliefs that young adults develop. Data from an urban population of young adults was collected, with 127 males and females between the ages of 18-30. The Measure of Attachment Style (MAOS) and The Virginitly Belief Scale (VBS) was used for the purpose data collection. The results were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Software. The results of the study significantly showed no significant correlation between the three attachment styles (Secure, Avoidant, Ambivalent) and the three virginitly beliefs (Process, Stigma, Gift). The findings though did find that men have more of "process-based virginitly belief" and women "gift-based virginitly belief" which could be due to several factors such as "virginitly" still being the honor of a girl's family and community, conforming to sexual double standards for men and women in India, where female sexuality is considered a "gift" to the husband and therefore, is something precious and to be protected until the consummation of marriage, wherein men are not held to the same moral standards and are freer to explore their sexual debut. The findings of this study calls for the implementation of programs and more research into devising ways that educate youth in non-threatening, non-judgmental, protective and confidential ways to know more regarding their own sexual scripts based on workings of their attachment styles and other life experiences, so as to better equip the young adult population to take safety measures and communicate effectively wanted outcomes.

Keywords: Attachment Styles, Virginitly Beliefs, Sexual Experiences, India

The very early research on Attachment Styles came from John Bowlby, a psychoanalyst like Sigmund Freud, who conceptualized "the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others". (Bowlby, 1977). He, also, believed that the root of mental illnesses and behavioral problems can be attributed to

¹Masters of Science in Psychology Mount Carmel College, (Affiliated to Bengaluru City University), India

*Corresponding Author

Received: June 14, 2023; Revision Received: August 16, 2023; Accepted: August 19, 2023

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

early childhood experiences. For Bowlby, attachment was an “all or nothing” process, based on a special bond he termed the “monotropic bond”, where infants require a qualitatively distinct and unique relationship to develop a sense of emotional maturity and internal working models. He identified two key features of the internal working model, with the first concerning the child’s image of other people and the second concerning the child’s image of self. (Bowlby, 1973). The maternal deprivation hypothesis put forth the idea that quality of the relationship that develops between the infant and mother during the first five years of socialization and contingent on the presence or absence of emotional care the child could suffer deprivation, which could also lead to long term consequences in the child’s emotional, social and intellectual development. (Bowlby, 1944). Though much of his theory on attachment was focused in monotropy, solely based on mother-infant dynamics, it had its limitations but also paved the way for new research and experiments on attachment styles and their theories. The conceptualization of attachment styles in regards with individual differences has been laid in connection with either security, anxiety and avoidance. (eg., Ainsworth et al. 1978, Carver, 1997, Hazan and Shaver, 1987, Simpson, 1990 and Gallith, Hart, Noffle & Stockdale, 2009). Research by Hazan and Shaver proposed and proved true the presumptions made about attachment between child and parent can be used to further understand the emotional bonding in their romantic adult relationships. (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Attachment styles are strongly believed to be a reflection of an individual’s cognitive-affective “working model” or “mental representations” of self and the other, and ensuing behavioral orientations toward close relationships.

Further developing Bowlby’s theory was who is known to be the second founder in the field of attachment is Mary Ainsworth, who critically contributed to putting forth the concept of a secure base with the attachment theory. In Ainsworth’s view, an infant needs a secure established base or dependence on caregivers before they feel safe enough to venture into the exploration world around them. The most important of her contributions was her Strange Situation experiment where the study was designed to understand the association between “attachment and infants’ exploration of their surroundings with and without their mother as well as having a presence of a stranger. It went on to drive the establishment of a classification system for attachment styles. It also distinguished behaviors of a child who is ambivalent from a child who is dismissive upon reuniting back with their mothers. What came to be known as the Strange Situation Classification (SSC), Ainsworth research became the cornerstone and hallmark of how we classify the attachment styles known today. The three attachment styles devised are – secure attachment style where in the child shows distress when there is separation from the mother but is also easily calmed by returning to their positive self upon reuniting. The second resistant attachment style is when the child displays deep intense distress when the mother leaves but also resists back contact with them upon reuniting. The third avoidant attachment style is when the child displays little to no distress when separated from the mother but also shows no interest when the mother returns back too.

Later research by Mary Main, one of the several Ph.D. students working with Mary Ainsworth extended the research on attachment and observed a unique behavior in one infant, where at the sound of thunder it ran towards the experimenter and not the mother, which made her focus on adopting research of peculiar behaviors which helped expand to the fourth attachment style which today is called as disorganized attachment style that had features of both dismissive and resistant behaviors.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Attachment style by nature is important because essentially human beings are social entities, that rely heavily upon the ability to form relationships with others. Dr. Amir Levine, who is a neuroscientist has put it in simple understanding by saying that “the need to be in a close relationship is embedded in our genes” and that we are all programmed to find love and build connections, bonds, and attachments.

Virginity, historically, demarcates between who is presumed to be a “virgin” and “non virgin” if they are subjected to first time penile-vaginal intercourse. The larger half of the population has this understanding of virginity loss when it comes to heterosexual relationships. Although, there is understanding to some level to the cultural significance of the same, such as transitioning into adulthood, loss of “sexual innocence” and in India specially, “association with marital status”. In India, virginity is highly valued, for females as they are societally expected to remain virgins till their marriage. While this standard is not for men, for women, this conformation to abide by the “virginity status” brings either rewards or punishments. Women who are known to be sexually active are bullied and if identified so lose their social status, putting their marital relations at risk if the knowledge comes in regard.

With this in mind, researcher Laura Carpenter (2001, 2002, 2005) was the first one to deconstruct the cultural and cognitive frameworks revolving around virginity is conceptualized to be as a gift, a stigma, or a process. They aid in shaping and defining sexual identities as the gateway to defining sexual debuts. Gift framework describes individuals who are proud and comfortable with their virginity both socially and personally, valuing matters of respect and mutual understanding of their intimate partner who is loved, also ideally reciprocating the “gift”. The search for the “right” person is of importance and special believed to be sharing the gift. On the other end of the spectrum is stigma related framework describes individuals who are shamed of their respective virginity status, thinking of the same as embarrassing and burdensome, and do not socially acknowledge their virginity, and would like to “free” or “rid” themselves from this burden at the most readable available opportunity. The major difference between gift and stigma framework of virginity belief is featured by physical pleasure more prominently as an outcome for stigma and process related framework than the gift-oriented individuals. The process framework of virginity belief is characterized by persons who perceive their virginity as an inevitable stage of life that is necessary for transitioning from youth to adulthood.

Sexual intercourse or sexual coitus is generally and traditionally understood as “sexual union between a male and a female involving insertion of the penis into the vagina”. It is the most primitive and natural human need, and as Abraham Maslow conceptualized, the most basic of physiological needs that are the stepping stones to be completed before reaching the higher stages of self-actualization. It is the very core of human existence and is still considered the most controversial and taboo of subjects in India that houses the world’s second largest population. The way people’s perceptions vary in terms of talking about sex in India, has been some generational change by nature of influences of western and media culture, but is still shuns down due to the psychosocial context in which people live in India. There are many elements that have to be given weightage for the continuing existence of it as a taboo such as lack of sexual education, caretakers’ beliefs, social and religious norms, which add to the individual’s moral values that highly influence beliefs about sex or sexual intercourse in general.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

In India, on one spectrum in many cultures, when girls hit the onset of puberty, it is massively celebrated as a significant cultural ritual, yet sex becomes a hush matter, not to be spoken about openly and highly discouraged. These ideas and subversion of healthy sexual relationships is seen greatly from the start of schooling systems, where budding of even healthy heterosexual relationships are discouraged and looked down upon by teachers and other administrative authorities, where seating or working together is not appreciated. With all the technological advances in India, the concept and views of dating, having casual sexual relations, and homosexual relations are buried deep down from surfacing into normal day-to-day conversations.

What causes one to lose their virginitly is researched by many, such as Carpenter in 2001, and by Trotter and Alderson in 2007, who found that irrespective of one's gender, age, ethnicity, or sexual experiences, subjects understood their "first penile-vaginal penetration" as the defining act of losing their virginitly with some subjects believing that "oral sex" or "anal sex" can also be viewed as virginitly loss. This leads to the understanding that vaginal and anal intercourse, as an act of penetration is key factor in defining acts of sex.

In India, premarital sex is discouraged due to the social stigmatization that a female should be "pure" before marriage, and the physical relationship should lie within the realms of procreation. In India, none of the cultures are open to premarital sex, because of being rooted in traditional moral belief systems, and even sexuality itself is seen through different lens of cultural constructs that differs with age, gender, social class, freedom of social life and class/caste relationships.

One study that have interviewed college students and came to the conclusion that women are always stuck at the thresholds of being expected to hook up and meet the sexual desires of male counterparts but also remain "respectable". (Gilmartin, 2006; Bogle, 2008). Research also has stated men of the study did not feel held up to the same standard as women and are given more leeway coming to sexual behavior. Therefore, men are able to develop a more cavalier approach towards sexual relations which can include casual sex that doesn't threaten to have their reputation shaken to the same degree as with young women. (Gilmartin, 2006; Bogle, 2008)

There has always existed a sexual double standard that has put females and males in different positions of privilege and power. Through time and age, female sexuality has been controlled, stigmatized, and managed by men, and due to that women always have to walk a thin delicate line between being active agents of their own bodies and sexualities on one side and saving themselves to being labeled as a "whore", "slut", "easy" or "loose" character if found to be hooking up too or behaving/dressing in an overtly sexual way often or when perceived "going too far" with their sexual/romantic partners. (Bogle, 2007a).

In India, especially, traditional cultural and religious values till date still highly influence attitudes regarding virginitly and premarital sexual engagements. The concept of virginitly is learned quite early by children in India, yet they never understand the sheer preciousness of the same. Partaking in sexual activities before marriage is considered to be of immoral value and more than men, for women. The idea of virginitly loss before one's marriage is often seen as a black mark of guilt, shame, and dishonor for the girl and the family she belongs. There are myriad myths revolving around the female's sexuality that are labeled as "sacred". Due to the confluence of heavy media which includes soap operas and movies, the chronology of an Indian marriage that ends with the "Suhaag Raat" which is the night of the

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

consummation of marriage, where the newlyweds would have their first intercourse and interestingly everyone would know, an event which is also common knowledge. What the night signifies is the moment after the wedding that the bride is tested for her “virginitly” or “sexual purity” not just by the now-husband but also by the whole family. There is a community in India that is not afraid to even shy away from the fact of conducting virginitly tests a 400-year-old practice, named the Kanjarbhat community, is a tribe from the western state of Maharashtra. The newlyweds are sent to a hotel room by the relatives where it is ensured that the hotel room is covered with a white sheet so that specks of post-coital blood can be evaluated. This idea that the hymen breaks and bleeds after the first intercourse is the “verdict” on the woman’s chastity. The panchayat members ask the groom if the “maal (product) was pure or not”. If the groom replies “khara”, it means the woman is pure, but if not, the whole family of the bride would be socially boycotted by the community.

This phenomenon is nowhere ancient, and in India, this obsession with virginitly can be observed throughout history, mythology, and the present also. Indian diaspora is highly influenced by Hindu religious texts such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Manusmriti. In the mythological story of Ramayana, only Sita had to go through the “Agnipariksha”, a test in which walking through fire proves purity and loyalty to the husband. Ram was not put under the same scrutiny, reflecting the double standards the Indian diaspora has had about its men and women. In Mahabharata, Draupadi being the unconventional polygamous woman had five husbands and before moving to the next husband, had to chastise herself by walking through fire, to offer sexual purity to the husband she was moving. They have had a significant and profound influence on individuals’ perceptions and the sense they make of their sexualities. The 10th century onwards saw the arrival of the Muslim empire in the subcontinent with their own sanctions on premarital sex. British rule, starting in the 17th century had propagated Christian ideals, and the coming of the Victorian era, cultural notions regarding female sexuality became more rigid, particularly by preaching the stories of the Virgin Mary as the epitome of an ideal woman. Cultural and religious inferences have almost “fetishized” the concept of deflowering a girl. Also catering to the same is the popular cinematic representation of women which has been “overshadowed by the roles of being an ideal virginal woman, devoted wife, and a sacrificial mother who not only is chaste and pure but also advocates for social values rooted in patriarchy and maintains family honor”. Thus, in today’s date, the symbol of traditional values is linked with virginitly, and sexual liberation is equated with modernity and the blurring of boundaries which are frowned upon and undesired. The turning of the 21st century though because of liberalization, blurring of gender roles, and changing economic and cultural factors means that now many women step out to work outside the home in what had predominantly been male spheres, the traditional representations have become both unrealistic and unattainable.

In India, the unrealistic and conflated idea of sexy virginal girls and mothers is produced not only by Indian cinema but also has been overtly emphasized by cultural influences setting girls and women up into the playing hands of the patriarchal system. Studies and surveys, though have shown that the current generation is quite slowly opening to premarital sex even though traditional Indian representations still emphasize women’s virginitly and assume the “role of the non-sexual dutiful wife”.

However, the current state of Indian research done on unmarried youth pertaining their sexual experiences has also been largely governed by traditional norms, therefore is little and sparse. Although, the societal and traditional norms with the changing roles of family

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

are headed towards losing the gravity of the same in governing the youth's sexual exploration in India, and therefore it is necessary that schools and other important information in regards to healthy and informative sexual behaviors should be provided to students so better-informed choices are made.

Need for Study

There is a growing shift from traditional norms that guide pre-marital relations and sexual norms in Indian society. The present research aims to understand the different attachment styles that individuals of the sample possess and their related thoughts regarding virginity. As "virginity" is still largely a controversial and taboo topic in Indian spheres, the research on changing trends, the current mental state of youth due to decreasing age of puberty, increasing age of marriage, and more time to sexually experiment as there is growing freedom to explore and understand one's own sexuality, the many perspectives on the same lines should be extensively studied to add to the body of literature that govern the debut and further experiences.

The current study aims to understand the relationship between the different attachment styles and virginity beliefs that are held by urban young adults from the data sample collected. The study will also extend to see if there is any change or shift between what through literature, is understood as pre-dominantly held virginity beliefs respectively for males and females and how the normative double sexual standards have adults on their whims, and how the two binary genders experience the same. It will also check for any discrepancies due to cultural differences in research based on attachment styles and virginity beliefs.

It hopes to provide direction to research related to growing liberal consenting relationships that young adults experience and the underlying causes of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the freedom of exploring their sexualities further, and if any attachment injury which pre-exists can be worked out through therapy and supportive environments which encourage conversations around debuting into sexual encounters.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bowlby from his research studies highlighted that Attachment and Sexual Mating are two distinct behavioral systems that have evolved to serve very different goals. The attachment system is the biological function of the attachment system which serves to protect an individual from danger by the assurance that he/she maintains a certain amount of proximity to the caregiver. The major function of the sexual system is passing of the genetic code or material from one generation to the next. (Buss & Kendrick, 1998). Both behavioral manifestations occur in isolation, such as having sexual relations without affectional bonding, by adulthood, it is essential that smooth operations of attachment systems and the sexual systems occur to maintain satisfying relationships. (Shaver & Mikulincer, in press). Research by Sprecher & Cate, in 2004, found that the quality of couples' sex life has a significant contribution to relationship satisfaction and stability, and that attachment systems have an influence that shapes people's way of construing their sexual interactions.

The literature lacks tremendously, especially in India when it comes to knowledge regarding the contribution of distinctions in caregiving or sexual systems to individuals' attachment dynamics, as well as the way the behavioral systems are also coordinated and integrated. Studies are sparse that look into the interplay between attachment styles and exploration systems.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Oftentimes, attachment styles are assumed to be of stable personality dimensions, and a significant amount of literature studies have supported the same idea. ((e.g., Kirkpatrick and Hazan, 1994, Simpson et al., 2007 and Waters et al., 2000). Yet, contemporary conceptualizations have argued that there is more depth to attachment styles than its stable dispositions, and hence the came the birth of the terms “working models” and “dynamic behavioural systems”. And according to Bowlby (1969, 1982), these cognitive mental representations of the self and the other are revised and updated as an when the individual enters a new relationship and has new experiences, even though the embedded working models that are formed early in life will be particularly strong and tend to persist. Research also shows empirical findings also have provided evidence that working models and attachment styles are flexible, even across very short spans of time, and remind people of times they have felt secure, anxious or avoidant, which activates a specific attachment schema, which temporarily dominates the stable dispositions when influencing “expectations, perceptions and behaviours”. (Baldwin et al., 1993 and Baldwin et al., 1996 and Gallith, Hart, Nofle & Stockdale, 2009).

This research aims to add to the body and knowledge of studies in relation to attachment styles and virginitly beliefs taking a sample of young adults in India. As research on pre-marital marriage, and virginitly beliefs is growing and attitudes are shifting towards being somewhat liberal, this research aims to connect attachment theories with virginitly beliefs and ideas that govern the debut of sexual practices and further experiences.

According to studies by Brennan & Shaver in 1995, and Stephan & Bachman in 1999, securely attached individuals address to prefer sexual activity in committed romantic relationships. Studies by Tracy, Shaver, Albino & Cooper (2003) found that as adolescents individuals who were securely attached had engaged in sexual intercourse only for the expression of love for their then partners, due to which they also reported experiencing lesser negative emotions, and more passionate positive emotions during sexual activity than insecure counterparts. Along the same lines research done by Cyranowski & Anderson, 1998 concluded that secure individuals in adulthood have “more positive sexual self-schemas” and Hazan, Zeifman, & Middleton (1994) got responses which catered to that of greater enjoyment of “exploratory sexual experiences with long-term partners” These research findings establish some ground and sense that there are advantages of attachment security in establishing long-term romantic relationships, and that security attached individuals sense of sexual confidence, being comfortable with showing intimacy sexually, and the overall enjoyment of those interactions may add up to their satisfying and long-lasting romantic relationships.

Empirical researches have evidence that highly avoidant people attempt to deactivate their attachment system which are then manifested in relatively fewer stable relationships, often characterized by fear of intimacy, low emotional involvement, cohesion, trust and satisfaction. (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Mikulincer & Florian, 1999; Shaver & Brennan, 1992).

Birnbaum & Gillath also supported the argument that highly avoidant people reported experiencing more negative emotions and greater detachment from the sexual event, meaning that individuals that are high in avoidance seemed to paradoxically use sex to avoid closeness.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

In India, pre-marital sex is still considered taboo and hence assumed that traditionally rigid societal norms are still governing the same, studies have shown that some amount of dynamic shift has taken place and more liberal attitudes towards pre-marital sex are observed.

In the research paper titled “Cognitive Frameworks of Virginity and First Intercourse” by Terry P. Humphreys in July, 2012, the authors put forth the argument that the most logical explanation and association between age of sexual intercourse debut and virginity frameworks are with gift-based stigma belief and stigma-based virginity belief. Given the rush to rid themselves of their virginity status, it makes ‘intuitive’ sense that stigma-oriented individuals might be the youngest at sexual debut. The reverse is also argued to be true that it is quite easy to imagine that the individuals who feel stigma-based virginity belief only feel the same because maybe their own sexual debut has not happened and is not consistent with their peers. The stigma orientation grows from the fact that sexual encounter should have already occurred. The Gift-based individuals with planning their partner carefully take longer and are older when they sexually debut. Although the same belief could also induce the feelings that the time to sexually debut is right thing to do earlier than the other two frameworks of virginity beliefs which are stigma and process. With regards to process-based virginity framework, it is likely to fall between gift and stigma given that process-oriented belief has a more neutral approach to intercourse.

Previous studies by Laffin, Wang & Barry (2008) have had their concentration of first sexual intercourse in relation with negative consequences like sexually transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancies, and poor academic performance, delinquency (Armour & Haynie, 2007) and its various predictors such as religiosity, race, gender and education. Research that has been done in understanding cognitive frameworks in terms of attachment styles and how they would influence virginity beliefs, which would dictate the type of sexual debut and experiences they encounter has not been explored by many studies.

In the study conducted by Dr. Shaikh Ezaz, in 2022, titled “A Study of Sexual Debut among Indian Adults: Role of Virginity Beliefs and Gender” emphasized that “Process- Oriented Virginity Beliefs” consider virginity as a stepping stone in the development process, that also correlates with the individuals that identify as securely attached as indicated in previous studies. Individuals that have securely attached individuals have more of positive self and their relating sexual schemas, it can also be thought to be in line in cognition towards process oriented virginity belief because they perceive sexual intercourse as an inevitable part of the development of one’s sexuality, which is also followed by sexual excitement, exploration and experimentation, and feel sexual encounters means gaining knowledge and know more about their sexuality, and also are known to engage in safe sex practices. (Carpenter, 2001, 2005).

The study by Carpenter (2001, 2005) also put the notion that “stigma-oriented virginity beliefs” were higher in men than women, which is also in line with research done by Carpenter (2001, 2005) and Eriksson and Humphrey (2014). There are also gender differences that exist on “gift-oriented virginity beliefs”, men less than women hold “stigma-oriented virginity beliefs” also backed by the same researchers. Therefore, it was only partially accepted that gender differences significantly exist in the paradigm of virginity beliefs of the participants, revealing that beliefs based on virginity among males have more stigma-oriented virginity belief and women held more gift-oriented virginity belief. (Carpenter, 2001, 2005; Eriksson & Humphreys, 2014)

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

The prediction that there is an association between attachment orientations and sexualities between the two heteronomous genders, has been predicted in the research study titled “Attachment Style and Sexual Permissiveness: The Moderating Role of Gender” by Susan Sprecher, which was published back in January 2013, concluded that there is an individual variable capable of predicting variation in young adults’ sexual attitudes and behaviors that relate with attachment orientation.

The study also extends its knowledge by reporting that avoidant females were not any more approving of casual sex or sexually permissive than females belonging to other attachment styles, establishing that the findings of the present study is consistent with previous arguments that gender moderated the effects of avoidant attachment on sexuality. (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004). The justification for this was that “men are more likely to be sex initiators than women to be sexually permissive overall and to be sex initiators” (Sprecher et al. 2011; Petersen & Hyde, 2011). To a great extent, men avoidant than their female counterparts and may have more engagement in casual sex as a way to avoid emotional intimacy.

The findings of the study also confirm the consensus of prior research conclusions that securely attached women have lower scores on sociosexuality, which is associated with reduced chances of casual sex. (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). The study also added that securely attached men more than insecurely attached men did not score low on sociosexuality indicating they might be more comfortable in expressing emotional intimacy through sex.

The male subjects of this particular study who matched with dismissive-avoidant attachment style scored significantly higher on sociosexuality and attitudes towards casual sex than any other attachment style possessed by men.

Secure attachment style has been associated with the belief that sex should occur in the boundary of relationships, having fewer partners, and decreased likelihood of being in “hookups and extra-dyadic relationships”. (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Hazan, Zeifman, & Middleton, 1994; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Tracy et al., 2003). This pattern of sexuality is in line with the theorization and conceptualization that securely attached people value emotional intimacy. Individuals with “Process-oriented virginitly beliefs” consider their virginitly a part of their growing and developing sexualities, which is characterized by sexual excitement, exploration, and experimentation. For them, it is considered an act of debuting and experiencing sexual activity and that is also better learning from mistakes than look at it or regard it as a source of shame. Securely attached individuals are also more sexually permissive. (Eriksson & Humphreys, 2014) They also would prefer to engage with older partners and safe sex practices. (Carpenter, 2001, 2005)

Research has also established that avoidant individuals relatively exhibit a distinct line or pattern of behavior in their sexual/romantic relationships. They were found to be less receptive and interested in romantic relationships, especially long-term committed ones. (Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Individuals and people that score high on avoidance than less scoring avoidant counterparts are less likely to fall in love (Hatfield et al., 1989) and their style of love is prone and inclined towards game-playing (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). As Tracy et al., have stated in their 2003 research that “attachment avoidance interferes with intimate, relaxed sexuality because sex inherently calls for physical closeness and psychological intimacy, a major source of discomfort for avoidant individuals”. The research also stated that adolescents who are avoidant also tend to avoid sexual relationships altogether, and

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Tracy et al., also found that these individuals were also less likely than secure or anxious individuals to have had a date or any kind of sexual experience, with that of avoidant virgins who score high on the measure of erotophobia which is the phobia of any aspect of sex including its physiological, psychological, or emotional aspects, which can also impair one's desire to have sexual relationships. Though when they actually begin to have sexual relations, they seem to get into the experience only to "lose their virginitly" and have fewer positive experiences related to the debut, and are also more likely than secure or anxious attachment styles individuals to consume alcoholic drinks or use substances prior to having sexual intercourse. (Tracy et., 2003). As Carpenter theorized that "Stigma oriented virginitly beliefs' if held by individuals feel embarrassed and fear being labelled "inept" due to their virginitly status, and therefore, prefer to keep it hidden and try to seek relief from being embarrassed as soon as possible. The decision making of partner selection is not influenced by emotional factors like romance love but by non-emotional factors such as convenience and opportunity. Stigma oriented virginitly belief held by individuals are more concentrated and inwards with only their pleasure and are less likely to engage in safe sex practices as they do not wish to put another obstacle in their way of engaging in or debuting in intercourse (Carpenter, 2001, 2005). "They are ones who hold sexual double standards, tend to be more sexually permissive and agree to have sex for some possible gains". (Eriksson & Humphreys, 2014).

Similarly, individuals that are high in anxiety characterize themselves by low satisfaction and tend to have a high break-up rate (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994) and also show being low in intimacy (Levy & Davis, 1988).

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To explore if there is any correlation between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs of young adults aged 18-30 years.

Variables

- Variable 1 – Attachment Style
- Variable 2 – Virginitly Belief

Operational definition

Attachment Style

It accounts for a unique portion of the variation of individuals in their psychological, behavioral, and relationship outcomes which includes emotions, interpersonal communications, fulfillment, and relationship constancy.

Virginitly belief

It is the set of ideas, motivations, and beliefs that lead one to first engage in sexual intercourse.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant correlation between secure attachment style and process- based virginitly belief.
2. There is a significant correlation between avoidant attachment style and stigma-based virginitly belief.
3. There is a significant correlation between ambivalent attachment style and gift-based virginitly belief.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Sample

The sample consisted of 127 participants where 56 males and 71 females who have had at least one sexual experience, ranging between 18-30 years of age from the Indian population.

Sampling Technique

Snowball sampling was adopted for the data collection.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- Indian young adults from the age of 18-30 who have had at least one sexual experience. Such individuals should identify as either male or female
- Individuals from the age of 0 to 17 years (Children and adolescents) and 30 or above, and those who have had no sexual experience. Since the study focuses only on males and females, any individual who identifies as non-binary and from the LGBTQ+ community is excluded from the present study. Since the study focuses on the Indian population, any individual who is not an Indian or an Indian but not presently residing in India were also excluded from the present study.

Research Design

Correlational and between-group design.

Tools and Psychometric Properties

The two scales used to measure the variables were the Measure of Attachment Style (MAOS) and Virginitly Beliefs Scale (VBS)

Measure Of Attachment Styles (MAOS) by Naseem Ahmad, Azmat Jahan, and Nasheed Imitiaz

This scale consisted of 27 items that aim to measure perceived attachment styles including secure attachment, which has 8 items, Avoidant attachment which has 10 items, and ambivalent attachment which has 9 items. The higher the score shows the more dominant the attachment style or pattern.

Virginitly Beliefs Scale (VBS) by Eriksson and Humphreys (2014)

It is based on the conceptualization and theoretical framework proposed by Carpenter (2002,2005) which measures the three frames of virginitly beliefs – Process, Stigma and Gift. The scale contains 22 items on a 7-point rating scale ranging from (1=strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), and is designed to measure the three types of beliefs that are held about virginitly in which Process consists of 4 items, Stigma consists of 8 items, and Gift consists of 10 items.

	Measures of Attachment Style	Virginitly Beliefs Scale
Authors	Naseem Ahmad, Azmat Jahan, and Nasheed Imitiaz	Eriksson and Humphreys
Year	2016	2014
Number of Forms	1 form	1 form
Number of items	27 items	22 items
Dimensions of Measurement	Secure Attachment Style, Avoidant Attachment Style	Process Virginitly Belief Stigma Virginitly Belief & Gift Virginitly Belief

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

	& Ambivalent Attachment Style.	
Description of the test	The construction of this scale was to assess the attachment patterns of participants.	Statements that are contained in the scale were developed using the qualitative study of Virginity Loss by Carpenter (2002). It presents to support the idea of how people perceive their virginity loss that shapes their sexual development and behavior in the following years of engaging
Scoring	Consists of 27 items that measures the perceived styles of attachment covering secure (8 items), Ambivalent (9 items) and Avoidant (10 items), and whichever has the higher score is the dominant style of attachment.	in first sexual intercourse. Three frames/beliefs are scored separately with items in Process being 4, Gift being 10, and Stigma being 8 and whichever frame's sum and mean score is higher is the participant's virginity belief.
Validity	For the establishment of the validity, Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation was adopted, in which data screening was done to see if there is singularity or multi- collinearity. The testing was done through R-Matrix and the "determinant" is greater than 0.00001.	.80 for Process, .92 for Stigma & .89 for Gift
Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the reliability which came to be 0.80 for the whole scale.	.266 for Process, .436 for Stigma & .144 for Gift

Research Design

The present study was a Non-experimental Quantitative study that adopts an Exploratory Design approach to test the hypotheses predicted.

Procedure

The current study focuses on if there is any relationship between attachment styles and virginity beliefs. The study was conducted in the month of January. The study included Indians, Pan- India from the age of 18-30 who identify themselves as male or female. The

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

aforementioned tools were typed out in Google Forms and circulated through Whatsapp and Instagram. Consent was taken and to participate was completely voluntary.

Participants were required to take the two categorical scales which include the Measure of Attachment Style (Ahmad, Jahan, et.al, 2016) consisting of 27 items and the Virginitly Beliefs Scale (Eriksson, Humphreys 2014) consisting of 22 items were given. Instructions on how to proceed with filling the forms were mentioned on the Google form. Scoring was done according to the norms of respective scales and the data was then statistically analyzed using SPSS version 16. In order to relate both the variables, and quantitatively analyse the data, a Non-parametric test, from descriptive statistics Chi-Square analysis was used.

Data Analysis

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis used to score the participants' responses was done with the help of SPSS v16. The test of normality and descriptive statistics using Chi-Square gave results that determined if

- There is any correlation between secure attachment style and process-based virginitly belief.
- There is any correlation between avoidant attachment style and stigma-based virginitly belief.
- There is any correlation between ambivalent attachment style and gift-based virginitly belief.
- There is any gender difference in terms of virginitly beliefs between males and females.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations taken are:

1. Minimal risk: The participants were made to feel comfortable and the study did not put them through any physiological or psychological harm.
2. Confidentiality: All the responses of the participants were kept anonymous and confidential to protect them from social injury and ensure that the responses will be used for research purposes only.
3. Informed consent: All the participants were aware of the study, the potential risks involved and had the right to withdraw at anytime.
4. Privacy: Privacy was maintained and participants had the right to decide which information should be communicated.
5. Debriefing: All the participants were debriefed about the nature and purpose of the study.

All other ethics prescribed by American Psychological Association was followed (APA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this research study was to understand if attachment styles influenced the kind of virginitly beliefs one developed, and if there were any gender differences in terms of virginitly beliefs held by young adults aged between 18-30 years.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Based on the review of the literature and numerous research findings, it was hypothesized that-

H1: There is a significant correlation between secure attachment style and process-based virginitly belief.

H2: There is a significant correlation between avoidant attachment style and stigma-based virginitly belief.

H3: There is a significant correlation between ambivalent attachment style and gift-based virginitly belief.

The sample for the purpose of this study included 127 participants where 71 were young adult females and 56 were young adult males from the Indian population.

The tools used for this research were the two scales: The Measure of Attachment Styles (MAOS) by Naseem Ahmad, Azmat Jahan, and Nasheed Imitiaz (2016) and the Virginitly Beliefs Scale by Eriksson and Humphreys (2014).

The Measure of Attachment Style (MAOS) concludes from three dimensions of attachment style namely Secure attachment style, Avoidant attachment style, and Ambivalent attachment style. The dimension with dominant scores will give the scores for the respondents' perceived attachment style.

The Virginitly Beliefs Scale (VBS) gives us the dominant idea from the three types of virginitly beliefs which are Process based virginitly belief, Stigma based virginitly belief, and Gift based virginitly belief the respondents' held.

Based on the responses obtained, the data was scored and statistically analyzed by using SPSS v16.0. the data was coded and put into the SPSS software for analyzing the results. The final data was tested using the Chi-Square test which is also known as Pearson's Chi-Square test of association used to discover relationships between two categorical variables. It is a non-parametric measure of test that was used to test all four hypotheses. The two categorical category scales Measure of Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Scale from the final data was calculated for analyzing the relationship between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs held by the subjects/participants of the study.

The Chi-Square test of association was used to test the significance of the mean difference between the two groups on attachment styles and virginitly beliefs.

The data resulting from the statistical analysis are presented, and discussed below:

Table 1 Showing descriptive statistics for the entire sample (n=127)

		Virginitly Based Belief			Total
		Gift	Stigma	Process	
Attachment Style	Secure	12	0	13	25
	Avoidant	25	5	23	53
	Ambivalent	28	4	17	49
Total		65	9	53	127

The descriptive statistics for the scores obtained by the sample on the Measure Of Attachment Style Scale (MAOS).

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

The sample contains the three attachment style categories and 3 virginitly beliefs category, and the study was successful in collecting data from n=127 respondents.

From the table, it can be observed that the sample inclined towards “Gift-based virginitly belief” with that of “Ambivalent attachment style” the most, followed by “Process-based virginitly belief” with majority responses from both “Ambivalent and Avoidant attachment style” and then “Stigma-based virginitly belief” with that of “Avoidant attachment style” being the lowest on associations between the two.

Table 2 Showing the Chi-Square analysis based on attachment styles and virginitly beliefs- Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.069 ^a	4	.397
Likelihood Ratio	5.779	4	.216
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.470	1	.225
N of Valid Cases	127		

Table 2 shows the sample used in the study being put for scrutiny using the Chi- Square test was found to have a mean score of .397 which is lesser than the critical value of 4.069. This means that the main hypothesis that attachment styles and virginitly beliefs are correlated is rejected from this sample as a whole.

This also shows to reject the three proposed hypotheses that secure attachment style would have a process-based virginitly belief, ambivalent attachment style would possess gift- based virginitly belief, and avoidant attachment style would possess stigma-based virginitly belief.

This does not correlate with the studies backed by literature found on the connection between attachment styles and factors that influence sexual experiences such as virginitly beliefs.

Although research done by Eriksson & Humphreys, (2014) theorized that securely attached individuals value intimacy, and are open to sexual explorations, therefore could be believed to relate to having Process related virginitly belief also, which is the first hypothesis, is not proven by this research. Therefore, it has been rejected.

Research has studied that highly avoidant individuals often attempt to deactivate their attachment system which is then manifested in fewer stable relationships, and often characterized by fear of intimacy and low emotional involvement, could be related to individuals with stigma-related virginitly beliefs that tend to be influenced by non-emotional factors such as convenience and opportunity (Carpenter, 2001, 2005), characterized by low satisfaction and high break up rate. (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994).

The second hypothesis which tried to find if there is any relation between avoidant attachment style and stigma virginitly belief has also been rejected.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Though there is sparse research on ambivalent attachment style and their construes of sexual experiences research by Birnbaum, Reis, Mikulincer, Gillath, And Orpaz (2006), found that attachment anxiety was associated with a relatively ambivalent construal of sexual experience, regardless of gender, attachment anxiety is characterized by the extreme need for interpersonal closeness, love, and support and continuous worrying about being rejected or abandoned. Based on Indian sexual standards, it can be thought that gift-based virginitly beliefs are also characterized by making “love the catalyst” and finding the “right” individual who understands that the status of being a virgin is valuable and mutual respect and understanding of a committed intimate partner is required who can also ideally reciprocate the gift.

Although being a non-virgin has negative social consequences due to the frowning upon pre-marital sex and the social burden of “virginitly” that women more than men carry in India, the third hypothesis which was if there is a relationship between ambivalent attachment style and gift-based virginitly belief is also rejected in the current study conducted.

The current research is by knowledge the first research to have predicted correlations between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs. The associations predicted came to be non-significant and could be due to the lack of the number of studies done in India, which are based on virginitly beliefs and ways sexual experiences are formulated based on gender from the environment one grows in. Also, the difference in sample characteristics of related studies which have shown said associations, the consideration of the fact that “virginitly” is still a taboo subject in India, often hushed down, and not many are willing to openly discuss the same.

Table 3 Showing the descriptive statistics for gender (males and females) and virginitly beliefs-

Virginitly Based Belief					Total
		Gift	Stigma	Process	
Gender	Male	21	6	29	56
	Female	44	3	24	71
Total		65	9	53	127

Table 3 shows that out of 56 males in the sample, 29 scored dominantly towards having a more “Process-based virginitly belief”, from the total sample of 127 subjects. The study titled “Sexual Experiences Among Students in Mumbai City” by Leena Abraham and K. Anil Kumar in 1999 concluded from their focus-group interviews and discussions that male students’ liberal attitude towards pre-marital sex could be applied only to them and additionally are marked with sexual double standards and contradictions. This is not in line with interviews done by Carpenter that stated that 57% of men perceived their own virginitly as a stigma or something they feel embarrassed about, and losing their virginitly was the path to losing that same stigma. This could be due to cultural and sample size differences adopted in respective studies.

On the other hand, out of 71 females in the sample, 44 scored dominantly towards having a more “Gift-based virginitly belief”, from the total sample of 127 subjects which is in line with the findings of Carpenter (2002) that women were more likely to classify themselves as “gift-oriented”.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

From Table 3 and the sample of this study which has 127 subjects, it was observed that for both males and females' stigma-based virginitly belief was less, (Males = 6, Females=3) which could reflect a positive shift towards the courting experience. Since there is also a decline in the age of puberty, with an increase of marriage age, there is a growing window of opportunity to experience sexual relations (M Alexander et al, 2006), with changing attitudes towards premarital sex.

Table 4 Showing the Chi-Square analysis of gender differences based on males and females and virginitly beliefs

Chi-Square Tests	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.949 ^a	2	.019
Likelihood Ratio	8.033	2	.018
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.084	1	.014
N of Valid Cases	127		

Table 4 finds significant gender differences between virginitly-based beliefs in male and female populations from the data collected for this particular study. The Chi-Square analysis of virginitly belief and gender revealed a p-value of .019 which is smaller than 0.05 meaning that there is a significant difference in gender and virginitly beliefs.

Young females are largely dominated by traditional standards towards “pre-marital sex” and that reflects on their attitudes toward sexual behavior and sexuality. The arena of female sexuality is limited only to the institution of marriage and only for the purpose of procreation. Honor and dignity also are attached to female virginitly and therefore are expected to postpone their sexual debuts until they marry considered being faithful to their husband, and if not jeopardize their marriage prospects and bring shame to their community in general. Virginitly, therefore, is realized to be a “gift” by females to their husbands as the potential consequences for pre-marital sex include “pregnancy desertion by one’s future husband, domestic discord and loss of “honor” for self and family” (Leena Abraham and K. Anil Kumar, 1999).

Carpenter (2001,2005) in her research though also highlighted the sexual double standards for men and women, as for young men their response to sex was more positive and viewed their experience as empowering which relates to the “process-based virginitly belief” conducive to this study’s research finding and also conducive with the view that women are more concerned with managing the loss of their virginitly, supporting the argument that they are likely to view their virginitly as a “gift”, something considered valuable and precious relating to the dominance of “gift based virginitly belief”.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs of young adults aged 18-30 years.

Taking the review of related literature into considerations, it was hypothesized that

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

- H1: There is a significant correlation between secure attachment style and process virginitly belief.
- H2: There is a significant correlation between avoidant attachment style and stigma of virginitly belief.
- H3: There is a significant correlation between ambivalent attachment style and gift virginitly belief.

127 participants out of which 56 were males and 71 were females, ranging from the ages of 18-30 years old from the Indian population were included in the sample collection.

The Measure of Attachment Style (MAOS) by Naseem Ahmad, Azmat Jahan, and Nasheed Imitiaz (2016) and the Virginitly Beliefs Scale (VBS) by Eriksson & Humphrey (2014) were used to aid the data collected.

The responses thus obtained were scored and statistically analyzed. The normality of the data was tested and non-parametric test of Chi-Square analysis was adopted to test the hypotheses. The results showed no correlations between the three hypothesized attachment styles and corresponding virginitly beliefs. Though, there was found to be a difference in virginitly beliefs of males and females, with males scoring higher on “Process-based virginitly belief” and females more on “Gift-based virginitly beliefs”.

CONCLUSION

Even though many studies extend to the knowledge of how attachment styles or orientations are associated with individuals’ sexual behaviors and related attitudes, the current study could not validate the associations predicted by taking a sample of the urban educated class of young Indian adults.

The major findings of the study are:

There is no significant correlation between attachment styles and virginitly beliefs.

1. The first hypothesis that said the “secure attachment style” would be significantly correlated with “process-based virginitly belief” was rejected.
2. The second hypothesis that said the “avoidant attachment style” would be significantly correlated with “stigma-based virginitly belief” was rejected.
3. The third hypothesis that said the “ambivalent attachment style” would be significantly correlated with “gift-based virginitly belief” was rejected.

Studies done by Feeney and Noller (1982) found that when the formation of a secure relationship led to more attachment security and a decrease in attachment insecurity. A 4-year long longitudinal study done by Kirkpatrick and Hazan (1994) found evidence that relationship experiences moderate stability of attachment style and relationship breakups were associated with a change from secure to insecure and the avoidant individuals were less likely to remain of the same attachment style when forming new relationships than those who did not.

The important finding from Davila and Saegent (2003) was the fact that trait levels of attachment security did not cause changes in these associations thus suggesting that the state attachment or fluctuations of security are independent and noninfluential of an individual’s dispositional attachment style, which could also support the rejection of all three conceptualized hypotheses of this current study.

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginitly Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

Though there was a significant difference found between gender and virginitly-based beliefs with males having more “process-based virginitly belief” and females having more “gift-based virginitly belief. This shows that females, more than males in India, due to its contradictory traditional values, high moral regard, societal impositions, and implications on female sexuality and “virginitly”, females of this sample are at par with the existing body of literature.

Implications of the Findings

The current study tried to extend research based on how attachment styles could be a predictor of virginitly-based beliefs and hence thereon their experiences of sexual exploration. The body of literature on the ideas that guide the sexual debuting of young adults in India has focused on predictors such as gender, religion, race, and religiosity and more on the negative aspects of pre-marital affairs such as unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, poor academic performances (Laffin, Wang, & Barry, 2008), and also of delinquency (Armour & Haynie, 2007). Though all the hypotheses in the findings have been rejected, previous studies have suggested significant correlations between attachment styles, and sexual experiences.

The findings of this study though related to males possessing process-based virginitly belief which see losing virginitly as a part of growing up and females possessing more of gift-based virginitly belief, protecting, or gatekeeping till marriage as per traditional Indian norms, so as to protect themselves from societal scrutiny, indicative of the fact that women are still more policed by society in general and that virginitly in their view and society’s view is where “dignity” resides, and these double sexual standards that exist for men and women have a long way to go for female sexuality to be free and governed by their own will.

Therefore, this research could be the starting point for examining other correlates of attachment styles and sexual scripts that are guided by virginitly beliefs. This could help predict the level of sexual satisfaction, and positive or negative effects of attachment security or insecurity. More Indian research on the same paradigm can lead to a better knowledge of the sexual aspects of young adults entering relationships and ones who consider therapy and want to work through the embedded network of life experiences that are guided by attachment styles. Therapists can through the body of future culturally defined can help identify manifestations of an individual’s attachment style that have contributed to the development of virginitly and sexual beliefs., to prevent harm from attachment injuries that might have been caused by their sexual interactions (Johnson & Whiffen, 2003).

Research being normalized on sexual behaviour could pave the much-needed way for sexuality education to become universally available, addressing consenting adult relationships. It is important for India to also be inclusive of unmarried young adults and recognize their rights to correct information about sexual conduct, in a non-judgmental, non-threatening confidential manner.

Limitations of the study

The sample characteristics of this particular study were only limited to the urban educated class who were either studying or working, therefore there could be differences based on distinct sociodemographics. The sample size was also limited to 127 participants who consented to the study and there is also an acknowledgment of the traditional mindset which govern pervasive norms, inhibiting any sexual interactions with the opposite sex, the

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

respondents could be unwilling to express their true beliefs and hence, the possibility of under-reporting is not out of question.

The data collection only consisted of quantitatively analyzed data and subjective interpretations of why there is no significant difference between attachment styles and virginity beliefs that could be based on shifting positive and negative life experiences could not be collected due to constraints in time and other resources.

The research also highlights the need for a scale that is solely dedicated to the measurement of studying traits or fluctuating attachment styles that can also co-exist with the dominant attachment style present in the individual (Gallith, Hart, Nofle and Stockdale, 2009). Scales that have been culturally standardized could help give a better idea of how various ethnic and cultural influences influence attachment styles and confounding virginity beliefs.

Suggestions for Future Research

Sexual scripts of youth are guided by a number of factors, and with changing trends, and “hooking up” culture becoming normal with the advent of dating apps, it is necessary to dwell on the factors that shape these behaviors.

Therefore, research into how the realm of Indian youth being shaped through technology, media, westernization, freedom of opportunity to explore, becoming active agents of their own sexualities, moving beyond the traditional narrative of “pre-marital sex” having negative sexual connotations, research should shift its focus on growing the body of research on shifting virginity beliefs in the youth of India, and how this could, in turn, be the start point of changing attachment styles. Changes in sexual attitudes especially pre-marital due to liberal attitudes being adopted by young adults, and rejection of traditional norms, research could also grow into finding through longitudinal studies the shift in generational attitudes and mentalities of changing Indian standards when it come comes to virginity and other sexual beliefs.

Also, finding ways to implement programs and cultivate supportive environments to address parental inhibition and gender contradiction when discussing sexual matters with their children can encourage healthy conversations and safe sex practices.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, N., Jahan, A., & Imtiaz, N. (2016). Measure of Attachment Style. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.25215/0304.082>
- An Investigation into the Pattern of Delayed Marriage in India*. (2011).
- Birnbaum, G. E. (2007). Attachment orientations, sexual functioning, and relationship satisfaction in a community sample of women. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 24(1), 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407507072576>
- Birnbaum, G. E., Reis, H. T., Mikulincer, M., Gillath, O., & Orpaz, A. (2006). When sex is more than just sex: Attachment orientations, sexual experience, and relationship quality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 91(5), 929–943. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.91.5.929>
- Busby, D. M., Hanna-Walker, V., & Yorgason, J. B. (2020). A closer look at attachment, sexuality, and couple relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(4), 1362–1385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407519896022>
- Carpenter, L. A. (2006). Virginity lost: an intimate portrait of first sexual experiences. *ChoiceReviews Online*, 44(03), 44–1825. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.44-1825>

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

- Carpenter, L. A. (2010). Toward a Social Science of Sexual Satisfaction: Commentary on “Virginity Lost, Satisfaction Gained? Physiological and Psychological Sexual Satisfaction at Heterosexual Debut.” *Journal of Sex Research*, 47(4), 395–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224491003774875>
- Development of the Virginity Beliefs Scale on JSTOR*. (n.d.). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43701755>
- Exploring Safe Sex Awareness and Sexual Experiences of Adolescents in Patna on JSTOR*. (n.d.). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276717>
- Ezaz, S. (2022). A Study of Sexual Debut among Indian Adults: Role of Virginity Beliefs and Gender & The International Journal of Indian Psychology. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1003.126>
- Feeney, J. A., Peterson, C. C., Gallois, C., & Terry, D. J. (2000). Attachment style as a predictor of sexual attitudes and behavior in late Adolescence. *Psychology & Health*, 14(6), 1105–1122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08870440008407370>
- Fraley, R. C., Davis, K. L., & Shaver, P. R. (1998). Dismissing-avoidance and the defensive organization of emotion, cognition, and behavior. *APA PsycNet*.
- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult Romantic Attachment: Theoretical Developments, Emerging Controversies, and Unanswered Questions. *Review of General Psychology*, 4(2), 132–154. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.4.2.132>
- Gentzler, A. L., & Kerns, K. A. (2004). Associations between insecure attachment and sexual experiences. *Personal Relationships*, 11(2), 249–265. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2004.00081.x>
- Higgins, J. A., Trussell, J., Moore, N. B., & Davidson, J. K. (2010). Virginity Lost, Satisfaction Gained? Physiological and Psychological Sexual Satisfaction at Heterosexual Debut. *Journal of Sex Research*, 47(4), 384–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224491003774792>
- “Hookups”: Characteristics and Correlates of College Students’ Spontaneous and Anonymous Sexual Experiences on JSTOR. (n.d.). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3813373>
- Humphreys, T. (2017). Cognitive Frameworks of Virginity and First Intercourse. *Trentu*. https://www.academia.edu/32494177/Cognitive_Frameworks_of_Virginity_and_First_Intercourse
- Humphreys, T. P. (2013). Cognitive Frameworks of Virginity and First Intercourse. *Journal of Sex Research*, 50(7), 664–675. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2012.677868>
- Jungari, S., Pardhi, A., & Bomble, P. (2015). Attitudes and Experiences of Indian Youth regarding Romantic Relationships and Physical Intimacy. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295402368_Attitudes_and_Experiences_of_Indian_Youth_regarding_Romantic_Relationships_and_Physical_Intimacy
- Laflin, M. T., Wang, J., & Barry, M. (2008). A Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Transition from Virgin to Nonvirgin Status. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 42(3), 228–236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2007.08.014>
- Looti, M. (2022). Virginity Beliefs Scale. *Psychological Scales*. <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/s/virginity-beliefs-scale/>
- Romance and Sex: Pre-Marital Partnership Formation among Young Women and Men, Pune District, India on JSTOR*. (n.d.-a). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25475263>
- Romance and Sex: Pre-Marital Partnership Formation among Young Women and Men, Pune District, India on JSTOR*. (n.d.-b). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25475263>
- Santelli, J. S., Kaiser, J., Hirsch, L., Radosh, A., Simkin, L., & Middlestadt, S. E. (2004). Initiation of sexual intercourse among middle school adolescents: the influence of

A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India

- psychosocial factors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2003.06.004>
- Sexual Experiences and Their Correlates Among College Students in Mumbai City, India on JSTOR*. (n.d.). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2991963>
- Sprecher, S. (2013). Attachment style and sexual permissiveness: The moderating role of gender. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 55(4), 428–432. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.04.005>
- Sprecher, S. (2021). Attachment orientation and reasons for and reactions to “virginity” in college. *Current Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01535-8>
- Tanner, A. E., Hensel, D. J., & Fortenberry, J. D. (2010). A Prospective Study of the Sexual, Emotional, and Behavioral Correlates Associated with Young Women’s First and Usual Coital Events. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 47(1), 20–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.12.031>
- Tholia, G., & Suri, S. (2020). Attachment Styles and Emotion Regulation: Mediating Effect of Personality. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342338632_Attachment_Styles_and_Emotion_Regulation_Mediating_Effect_of_Personality
- Zhang, F., & Labouvie-Vief, G. (2004). Stability and fluctuation in adult attachment style over a 6-year period. *Attachment & Human Development*, 6(4), 419–437. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461673042000303127>

Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Shukla, V. (2023). A Study on Attachment Styles and Virginity Beliefs Based on Young Adults in India. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 2332-2353. DIP:18.01.219.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.219