

Pre-Marital Sexual Anxiety among Adolescents

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Abstract:

Adolescents are really the future of any nation. It is also the time of transition from child to adult. The change that happens during this period has a lot of influence on their future life. Most of the changes the changes are physical and if we are not able to help them to understand these changes, it may influence then negatively.

The current paper evaluates the pre-marital sexual anxiety among adolescents. To evaluate the pre-marital sexual anxiety, a small scale empirical research conducted amongst adolescents studying in various organisations.

In the conclusion one will find a discussion of the relevant research findings which showed that sexual anxiety was significantly high among females.

Key words: Pre-Marital Sexual Anxiety; Adolescents; Sexual Potency; Sexual Inhibition; Sexual Attractiveness; Sexual Monotony

1. Introduction

Adolescents of today seem to value sexual activities more than their counterparts of the past years. At the close of the 1970s, Conger observed that of all the developmental events of adolescents the most dramatic is the increased sexual drive and the new and often mysterious feelings and thoughts that accompany it. A major hurdle for the adolescent at this stage is

the successful integration of sexual activities with other aspects of the emerging sense of self without having to undergo too much conflict and anxiety. Berman and Berman thus believes that sexual adjustment is an important developmental task of adolescents quite difficult to cope with when societies are both permissive and prohibitive to sexual activities.

Growing up under the influence of heavily mystified world of sex—a considerable number of young male and females experience sexual anxiety to varying degrees depending on their developmental level and maturation stage. The underlying symptom of sexual anxiety tends to be manifested as both a chronic physical desire for multiple partners and risky sex as well as a cognitive preoccupation and ideation with sex in general. In some, sexual anxiety may advance over and beyond the generalized physical sexual desire and ideation levels manifesting itself as a constant worry about sex that may be hard to control (Beck et al. 1995; Buchbinder, 1998). Such sexual worrying has no objective basis but is fuelled, instead, by a constant preoccupation—a constant yearning—to live up to the idealized and unattainable socio-cultural standards in a vain effort to satisfy one's need for intimacy. Sexual anxiety may also come to bear a modest indirect influence in other areas of a person's interpersonal life including one's relationships with their significant others and his workplace and daily functioning; not as much as generalized anxiety disorder or any other psychiatric disorder. Since the majority of men find it difficult to externalize their innermost fears and desires—and even more difficult to openly discuss sexuality and intimacy issues with their significant others—it is not unusual for them to be silently suffering from sexual anxiety from their early years without even personally coming to terms with the issue (Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). After all, the manifestations of sexual anxiety tend to be so covert that most of the individuals are not even aware of them. Perhaps this is due to the considerable mystification of sex and the stigma surrounding it.

The purpose of this quantitative study is to shed some light into the pre-marital sexual anxiety among young males and females.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Rationale of the research

In a developing country like India adolescents can play a vital role in the development process of the community as well as the country itself. It is a period when one gets transformed into an adult from a child. While transition, they will go through many changes, both physical as well as mental. At that time proper understanding of sexuality is a requisite for the young ones. But in India, most of the young people prepares for their sexual life after marriage, with the help of unscientific information. For that they rely on their peers as well as pornographic materials. Absence of enough scientific knowledge about sexuality creates space for certain myths. These myths often result in fear and apprehensions in their mind and undoubtedly affect their sexual life.

This study is to assess the sexual anxiety among youth by measuring their fears and apprehensions about their sexual attractiveness, sexual inhibition, sexual potency and sexual monotony. It will be beneficial to all concerned adolescents and people from early adulthood stage in their development. Besides it must be useful to Social Workers and other professionals who are interested in adolescents, young adults and their welfare.

2.2 Objectives of the research

The current study's general objective is to explore the premarital sexual anxiety levels of college going adolescents.

Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the Socio-demographic profile of the respondents
- To study the gender based differences in sexual anxiety.

- To study about the anxiety about sexual monotony.
- To assess the anxiety about sexual attractiveness.
- To study the anxiety about Sexual Potency.
- To evaluate the sexual inhibition of the respondents.

2.3 Research Sample- Limitations

The research sample consisted of 100 adolescents studying in various colleges in the state of Kerala. The research sample is too small, selected using multi stage random sampling method. Thus, the research findings cannot -and should not-be generalized.

2.4 Data Collection

The tool used in this study is the Sexual Anxiety Scale (SAS). This is a 16 highly sensitive items presented in a 4-point rating format developed by P. Kumar (1992) to measure Pre-marital Sexual Anxiety. It was chosen as the data collection tool, since it allows the gathering of multitude information in a short period of time.

2.5 Data Analysis

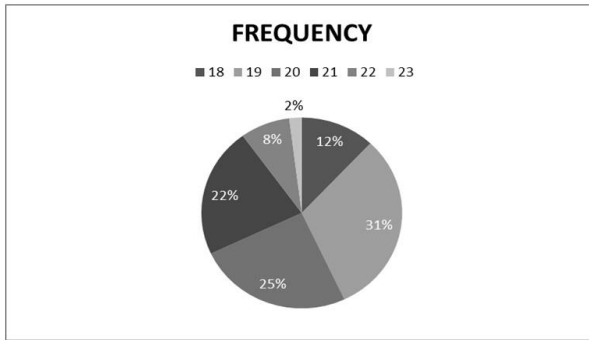
The data collected by the Sexual Anxiety Scale (SAS) were analyzed by SPSS V. 21. It is a widely used statistical analysis program in the Social Sciences field.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Characteristics

The research sample's distribution in relation to demographic characteristics is as follows:

Gender: 50 male members (50%) and 50 female members (50%).



Age: From the chart it can be seen that, most of the respondents were of the age 19 (31%). Respondents of Age 20 (25%) and 21 (22%) were of almost same number. Respondents of ages 18, 22 and 23 were 12%, 8% and 2% respectively.

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations Obtained by the Male and Female College Students in Various Sexual Anxiety Measures and Corresponding ‘T’ Values.

	MALE (N=50)		FEMALE (N=50)		‘t’
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	
SEXUAL POTENCY	14.84	3.73	17.14	4.51	-2.8
SEXUAL INHIBITION	6.16	2.68	8.7	2.8	-4.7
SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS	3.86	1.12	4.04	1.49	-0.679
SEXUAL MONOTONY	3.24	1.2	3.98	1.38	2.8
TOTAL	28.10	7.38	33.90	8.69	95.47

From the table it can be seen that in most of the measures there are no significant differences between the male and female college students. The mean scores show that, females (M=17.14) have significantly high level of anxiety about sexual potency compared to males (M=14.84). Mean score of Sexual inhibition shows that females (M=8.7) have comparatively high score than males (M=6.16). The Sexual attractiveness score also points out that female (M=4.04) are slightly more anxious about their sexual attractiveness than males (M=3.86), even though it

is not significant. Scores for Sexual Monotony also implies that females (M=3.98) are more felt by sexual monotony compared to males (M=3.24).It is also clear that females (M=33.9) have significantly high sexual anxiety among males (M=28.1).

Mean Scores and S.D.'S of Different Sexual Anxiety Measures Obtained from College Students Belonging to Nuclear and Joint Families and Corresponding 'T' Values.

	NUCLEAR FAMILY (N=91)		JOINT FAMILY (N=9)		't'
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	
SEXUAL POTANCY	15.89	4.296	17.0	4.21	-0.741
SEXUAL INHIBITION	7.42	3.02	7.78	2.94	-0.342
SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS	3.99	1.31	3.56	1.42	0.938
SEXUAL MONOTONY	3.68	1.35	2.89	0.92	1.709
TOTAL	30.98	8.63	91.22	7.90	-0.081

The mean scores show that, students from joint family (M=17.0) have slightly high level of anxiety about sexual potency compared to students from nuclear family (M=15.89). Mean score of Sexual inhibition shows that students from joint family (M=7.78) have slightly high score than students from nuclear family (M=7.42). The Sexual attractiveness score points out that student from nuclear family (M=3.99) are slightly more anxious about their sexual attractiveness than students from joint family (M=3.56), even though it is not significant. Scores for Sexual Monotony also implies that student from nuclear family (M=3.68) are more anxious about sexual monotony compared to students from joint family (M=2.89). It is also clear that students from joint family (M=91.22) have significantly high sexual anxiety than student from nuclear family (M=30.98).

Mean Scores and S.D.'S of Different Sexual Anxiety Measures Obtained From College Students Belonging to Rural and Urban Areas and Their Corresponding 'T' Values.

	RURAL (N=42)		URBAN (N=58)		t'
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	
SEXUAL POTENCY	15.57	4.66	16.29	3.99	-0.831
SEXUAL INHIBITION	7.19	3.35	7.64	2.732	-0.734
SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS	3.83	1.286	4.03	1.350	-0.750
SEXUAL MONOTONY	3.62	1.168	3.60	1.462	0.57
TOTAL	30.21	9.092	31.57	8.144	-0.782

The mean scores show that, students from urban area (M=16.29) have slightly high level of anxiety about sexual potency compared to students from rural area (M=15.57). Mean score of Sexual inhibition shows that students from urban area (M=7.64) have slightly high score than students from rural area (M=7.19). The Sexual attractiveness score points out that student from urban area (M=4.03) are slightly more anxious about their sexual attractiveness than students from rural area (M=3.83). Scores for Sexual Monotony also implies that student from urban area (M=3.60) and students from rural area (M=3.62) have almost same level of anxiety about sexual monotony. It is also clear that students from urban area (M=31.57) have slightly high sexual anxiety than student from rural area (M=30.21).

Mean Scores and S.D.'S of Different Sexual Anxiety Measures Obtained from College Students Belonging to Professional and Non-Professional Colleges and Their Corresponding 'T' Values.

	PROFESSIONAL (N=50)		NON-PROFESSIONAL (N=50)		t'
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	
SEXUAL POTENCY	16.34	4.434	15.64	4.134	0.816
SEXUAL INHIBITION	7.68	2.938	7.22	3.079	0.764
SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS	3.80	1.414	4.10	1.216	-1.137
SEXUAL MONOTONY	3.60	1.443	3.62	1.244	-0.074
TOTAL	31.42	8.811	30.58	8.320	0.490

Research was done among students from both professional and non-professional students. There were 25 females and 25 males from both professional and non-professional streams. Among the professional students the mean score for sexual potency was recorded as M=16.34 and for non-professional students, it was M=15.64. Sexual inhibition scores for professional and non-professional students were M=7.68 and M=7.22 respectively. While in the case of sexual attraction professional students scored M=3.80 and non-professionals M=4.10. Mean scores for sexual monotony was M=3.60 for professional students and M=3.62 for non-professionals. Professional students had mean score M=31.42 for sexual anxiety and M=30.58 for non-professionals.

Different Measures of Sexual Anxiety and Their Correlations with Age of the Respondents

AGE	SEXUAL POTENCY	SEXUAL INHIBITION	SEXUAL ATTRACTIVENESS	SEXUAL MONOTONY	TOTAL
	0.048	0.011	-0.010	0.066	0.037

Correlation between age and sexual potency was 0.048. In Age and sexual inhibition correlation was 0.011. Sexual attractiveness and age had a correlation of -0.010. In the case of Sexual monotony and age correlation was 0.066.

Socio demographic profile

The parameters chosen for understanding the socio demographic profile were sex, age, religion, family, living area and socio-economic status.

The researcher collected equal number of boys and girls i.e. 50 each. 18-23 is the age group of representation of all respondents. Most of the respondents belonged to the age of 19 i.e. 31%. The religion wise distribution says that majority of the respondents from Hindu families. The majority of nuclear family shows that the universe is following the shifting pattern of families, from joint to nuclear i.e., the universe is following the current trend in the family type. Researcher selected respondents as equal from professional and non-professional colleges. Major part of the respondents are from urban area i.e., 58% which shows. The socio economic backgrounds of respondents are mostly from middle socio economic background i.e. 90%.

Sexual Potency

Sexual potency is all about ones concerns regarding their capacity to perform during sex. The researcher conducted his study among 50 males and 50 females. Most of the scores were found slightly high in females compared to males. In the case of sexual potency, females have more anxiety compared to males. When it was calculated according to the family type of the respondents, people from joint family had slightly high anxiety about their sexual potency. From the analysis of the data it was also clear that urban student's feel more anxious compared to the students from rural area. Professional students had a slightly high anxiety about their sexual potency.

Sexual Inhibition

Sexual inhibition is a conscious or unconscious constraint or curtailment by a person of behaviour relating to specific sexual matters or practices. One might be defined as having high sexual inhibitions in the events of fearing or being repelled by

any sexual practice or discourse. Alternatively, one might have low sexual inhibitions by unashamedly welcoming a variety of erotic techniques. People having sexual inhibition are very much vulnerable to carry sexual anxiety.

Present study points out that female were highly inhibited about their sexuality. It was also clear that there were no absolute difference in sexual inhibition among students from nuclear and joint family. It was also the same in students from rural and urban areas. Sexual inhibition among professionals and non-professionals students had no significant differences.

Sexual Attractiveness

Sexual attraction refers to a person being drawn to another in order to have a sexual relationship. Anxiety about their appearance and attraction can lead to sexual anxiety.

In the case of sexual attractiveness, females are bit more concerned about their attractiveness compared to their male counterpart. The difference among students belonging to joint family and nuclear family was also negligible. Students from rural and urban living areas also possessed only negligible differences. Anxiety about sexual attraction among professional and non-professional students was almost same.

Sexual Monotony

Sexual Monotony is more felt by females compared to males. Students from nuclear families are more anxious about sexual monotony compared to students from joint family. Almost same level of anxiety about sexual monotony was seen in both rural and urban students. Professional and Non-professional background also had any influence on difference in sexual monotony results.

Sexual Anxiety

Sexual anxiety refers to fears and apprehensions one holds about his being successful as far as sexual relationships are concerned. These fears and apprehensions are mainly caused by

distorted notions one developed about sex during his developmental years, mostly based on unscientific information he gets about sex from his friends, acquaintances and pornographic materials.

In this study it was found that sexual anxiety was significantly high among females. It was also significantly high among students from joint families. Even though there were no significant differences in other scores for sexual anxiety, there were slight differences. Students from urban area had slightly high sexual anxiety compared to students from rural area. It was also slightly high among professional students.

4. Conclusion

Results suggested that there is a significant difference in sexual anxiety between females and males. Females feel more anxious compared to males. It is also found that students from joint family had high sexual anxiety compared to students from nuclear family.

Still alive myths about sex and sexual life may be the cause for anxiety about sex after marriage. We have to do more research in this field to generate a much clearer picture. Proper scientific sex education or family life education and counselling sessions will help in removing these kinds of anxieties among youth, whom are the driving force of tomorrow.

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