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Perception of female students towards intimate and sexual intimacy: A sociological study of university students of Kolkata

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Abstract

University is a place where most of the young women adults feel that they have come to a place of a new social setting where they feel more independence from their school and home. It is a place to form new friendships, a place to get involve in sexual or romantic relationships. In traditional days, Indian societies strongly oppose pre-marital sexual relationships of a woman. The gradual rise in age during marriage of women in India during the last few decades with a gap between puberty & marital sex has perhaps contributed to an increasing practice of pre-marital sex. Premarital intimacy and one-night stands are now common in urban India. Sexual intimacy including sexual intercourse characterizes the time pass relationship. Times have changed. Today for women, particularly university students, “dating” and mating have become a common feature. Recently, a national study on college women’s sexual attitudes showed that instead of dating, many students were “hooking up.” Against this backdrop, the present study defined a hookup as “when a girl and a boy get together for a physical encounter and they rarely expect anything further.” It also explores the meaning and the impact of intimacy on their everyday lives. The study also debunks the perception of female students regarding the concept of intimate relationships along with ‘hook up’ dating. Methodologically, the present study has been conducted by using mixed methodology from thirty female college students aged within 19-25 years pursuing graduation and post-graduation from Jadavpur University of Kolkata. Since in my study there is more emphasis on quantitative data, so I have used questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The data for this study were obtained from a questionnaire completed by 30 consenting women college students in Jadavpur University. Out of 30 students, 18 students are from Master of Arts 2nd year, 5 students are from M.A. 1st year & remaining is doing graduation. The findings revealed that women College students are “partying” with large numbers of friends and classmates. It also highlights how the college women define sexual intimacy and its impact on their intimate relationship followed by rules of sexual intimacy. The findings also debunk the attitudes of female adolescents toward casual sex, pre-marital, extra-marital relationships, one-night stand, and physical intimacy. Such analysis helps to understand new dimensions which have evolved in the nature of intimate relationships along with sexual intimacy in contemporary society.

Keywords: Research, hook-up, dating, erotic fantasy, partying, one-night stand, free love

Introduction

University is a place where most of the young women adults feel that they have come to a place of a new social setting where they feel more independence from their school and home. It is a place to form new friendships, a place to get involve in sexual or romantic relationships. Emerging adulthood means a time of searching new. Young adults experience a change in interpersonal relationships and sexuality. For many college students, moving away from parents offers much a new domain of independence, less adult supervision, more pressure from peers and increased self- focus and an opportunity to create own personal values and beliefs.

Parent’s attitudes towards sexual behavior may affect the nature of their college-aged children. Fisher (1988) indicated that college students whose parents are conservative minded about sex, their children are being reported of engaging more in premarital sexual behavior.

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All humans are sexual beings, whether or not one expresses it" (Casey T. Tobin, Jenny Duncan and Courtney Frank). We live in an era obsessed with sex. Sex has been sold as entertainment. There are few people for whom sex is not so important and for some people sex has played a dominant part in their lives. Sex brings two people into intimate contact. In traditional days, Indian societies strongly oppose pre-marital sexual relationships of women. The gradual rise in age during marriage of a woman in India during the last few decades with a gap between puberty & marital sex has perhaps contributed to an increasing practice of pre-marital sex. Increasing exposure in recent years to sexually explicit music, dance & other performances in television programmes, cinemas, videos & recently Internet are also expected to do the same.

Many women say they want a sensitive, caring man, yet find them attracted to the "bad boy" with an edge of danger. Sexual fantasies allow playing with the idea of living a dream within a dream. (Zen sex, Philip Toshio Sudo).

The metropolitan context also exposes some young women to liberal sexual culture. Dr. Sanjay Chugh, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, Delhi, says, "Sexual intimacy is a form of love and affection that people feel for each other. If two people are mentally and emotionally attached then there is little reason to hold back. All that is important is the awareness of what one are getting into, the reasons for it and the result of it.

Traditionally, premarital sex activity was not common in India. As elders mostly arranged the marriages, premarital sex was not very common feature. Although premarital sex among the tribal societies of India has been reported, there is very little data on this topic in either the rural or urban areas. Although premarital sex is considered immoral in contemporary India, the majority of the young generation does not find it objectionable. Openness about sex in Films, video music, television, magazines, etc., is clearly influencing the young adults in India to be more open about premarital sex than their parents and elders. (International encyclopedia of sexuality, India).

Premarital intimacy and one-night stands are now common in urban India (Shoma A. Chatterji). Are you a virgin?" was the first question Preity Zinta asked Shah Rukh Khan in Dil Se, when the two met on arrangement by their respective families before finalizing a marriage between them. Shah Rukh was too shocked to respond and Preity let it go, flashing her dimpled smile. This shows our attitude towards pre-marital sex nowadays.

Sexual intimacy including sexual intercourse characterizes the time pass relationship. True love is more romantic, signifies emotional involvement and sexual intercourse is usually postponed until marriage. By postponing sexual intimacy, the virtue of fidelity is emphasized.

Since female sexuality is closely linked to personal and family honor, it is generally held that girls with izzat (with self-respect, of good character), of Ghareloo (domestically oriented) nature and from 'good' families do not get involved in pre-marital sexual activities. Girls in time pass relationships are seen as 'of bad character'. Once the female sexuality norm is violated through premarital sex or any such kind of activities, the girl is seen as 'sexually available' to any man. Girls in time-pass relationships are called Maal, Chalu, Samaan, item (Culture, Society and Sexuality, A reader, Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton).

With the advancement of society and liberation of ideology regarding sexual intimacy, today for women, particularly college students, "dating" and mating have become a common feature. Women have plenty of time to "play the field" before settling down with a lifelong mate. This creates a situation where it is possible to spend one's college years in more casual relationships than may have been the case earlier in the twentieth century. College has become an important setting for early sexual experiences. Recently, a national study on college women's sexual attitudes showed that instead of dating, many students were "hooking up." The study defined a hookup as "when a girl and a boy get together for a physical encounter and they rarely expect anything further." A Hook-up means to meet people for the purpose of having physical or sexual relationships, usually not having any kind of relationship afterwards. It means a meet-up with new people or someone you already know and having sex without any commitment. Hook ups include one-time sex (a "random"); multiple encounters, generally on the weekends, often without any contact during the week (a "regular"); infrequent sexual encounters with an acquaintance or friend late at night, generally after an "unsuccessful" night of hooking up (a "booty call"); and repeat hook ups with a friend that do not involve a dating relationship ("friends with benefits" or "fuck buddies") (Bogle 2008) ^[5]; The results of this study indicate the idea that hooking up had replaced dating on college campuses. College women have become more liberal nowadays in their attitudes on sex and their sexual behavior.

Many women College students rather than pair dating are "partying" with large numbers of friends and classmates. Parties became the environment setting for potential sexual encounters. At parties, young women college students generally consumed alcohol while trying to meet new people with whom they could potentially become sexually intimate or to initiate encounters with classmates they already knew. The increased availability of the birth control pill together with a liberalization of attitudes toward sexuality led to changes in what was socially acceptable to do sexually. In fact, sexual intercourse became a sign of physical pleasure rather than merely a means of reproduction. With these attitudinal changes, a change came in sexual behavior. Sexual intercourse prior to marriage was no longer taboo but was becoming the norm for both women and men.

Certain Hollywood actresses of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Sandra Dee and Doris Day, show the idea of a "good girl." And virgin like image that was pictured both on and off screen. An erotic image, on the other hand, can also be seen in the careers of actresses like Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe. Interestingly, both Taylor and Monroe became the infamous "other women" in the marriages of "respectable" wives.

Prior to the sexual revolution era, women were expected to have sex, particularly intercourse, only with their husbands. This helps to explain how virginity for women has been shifted from a "treasure to be safeguarded" (in the dating era) to a "problem to be solved" (in the post-sexual-revolution hooking-up era).

In the hookup culture, college women's reputations can be influenced by their own behavior and also even by whom they associate with on campus. Women tend to show regret after hook ups or casual sex because they have been

socialized that having sex outside of a relationship is morally wrong for women.

We live in a society that is diverse. In certain parts of north India small girls are being forced into sexual relationships while their bodies are not ready for it. On reverse, if a girl becomes a widow in the prime of her youth, she is forced to abstain from sex, though her body is ready for it and she needs it. Sex is a very private and personal thing. It must remain a personal choice," says Ananya Chatterjee-Chakraborty, filmmaker, lecturer and activist based in Kolkata.

"There has been a transition in the marriageable age for men and women in cities and metros. Earlier, most people would get married by their early or mid-20s. This age has changed. We now see women in their 30s, happily single. Often, this is out of choice.

In the Mahabharata, Kunti, the mother of the Pandava brothers, begot a son before marriage, born out of her union with Surya, the Sun God. This example from the Mahabharata shows that both premarital sex and sex after marriage with another man was a fact. The sculptures on the temples of Khajuraho and Konark clearly show how the sex life was shown in poetry and literature. (Spectrum, Sunday tribune, June 20, 2010).

Review of literature

In a study Hendrick and Hendrick (1995) remarked that sexual attitudes of females are becoming more permissive over time. Studies from the late 1960s to early 1980s indicate a growing permissiveness in premarital sexual attitudes and behavior among women (Roche & Ramsbey, 1993). In San Francisco, in the mid-1960s, a new culture of "free love" emerged.

Malini Shah, a youth counselor, says, "Premarital sex among college women is on the rise across all classes, especially in the metropolitan areas. The upper middle classes accepted it as a lifestyle trend.

According to a study conducted in a university in Delhi revealed that 20 percent of young women had engaged in pre-marital sex (Sachdev, 1998). According to recent studies, sexuality in India show that premarital sexual behaviour among college women is not as rare as generally believed to be (Family Planning Association of India, n.d.; Rakesh, 1992; Goparaju, 1993; Bhende, 1994; Rangaiyan, 1995; Sachdev, 1997).

In a study on Premarital Sexual Behaviour among Unmarried College Students of Gujarat, India in 2009 by Rachna Sujay suggests that about one-third of female students reported that they had a boyfriend. 5 percent of female students had sexual relations. 7 percent of sexually experienced female students reported that they have multiple partner relations.

According to Cochran and Mays (1990), 23% of college women were sexually involved with more than one person when dating. A study led by a team of psychologists at the College of New Jersey, stating that 78 percent of undergraduate female at a large college in the northeastern United States had engaged in a hookup. Ultimately, the researchers concluded, "Some women students were hooking up on a weekly basis."

Other study findings in an institute in America included that 91 percent of college women believed hookups occurred "very often" or "fairly often" on their campus. Hooking up,

a distinctive sex- without commitment takes place between college men and women is widespread on campuses.

According to a study in England, women who hook up with 'too many' people, or have casual sex, are called 'sluts' by both men and women. A journalist Rajesh Ahuja reported that most college women feel that one night stand (ONS) is the most practical relationship one can have as there are no strings attached.

Another study in the United States reported that those who engaged in drinking alcohol reported higher incidences of unplanned and unprotected intercourse in college.

According to a study, Changes in College Women's Attitudes toward Sexual Intimacy by Shannon K. Gilmartin in California Institute of Technology stated that some of the women were more sexually active and rest were active in the context of a serious romantic relationship.

Shaughnessy and Shakesby (1992) argue that college women are being influenced with media messages which shows complicated and emotional act of sex with adventure, glamour and excitement.

Today, over 90% of college women have access to Internet pornography (Schmitt and Wadsworth 2002), and it has influenced on young women attitudes towards sex.

Another study reported that college girls with access to Internet pornography have been found to engage in sexual intercourse at a younger age than those who do not (Kraus and Russell 2008).

Peer pressure also influences college women attitudes toward sex. For college women, Sex is a hot topic for discussion and something that almost every college women is curious about. .

The Latina women in the current study remarked that peer pressure (from males and friends) encourages sexual activity. Another study stated that peer pressure act as a motivation for college students to become sexually active. Beside peer pressure, mental stress and abuse from boyfriends and parents is another factor that encourages Latina women teenagers to have sex.

A study states that a Latina girl who remains a virgin until she is married represents dignity and pride for herself and the family, but a female who engages in sexual behaviour before marriage may be labeled negatively.

Nature and Scope of research

The core of the present research explores the following objectives:

1. The study first explores the socio-demographic profile of female university students.
2. The study will then highlight how these college women define sex, rules of sex & notion of good girl.
3. This study explores attitudes of university students toward casual sex, pre-marital, extra-marital relationships, one-night stand, physical intimacy & sexual intercourse etc.
4. This study will focus on university setting accounts for this attitude of sexual intimacy among young women.
5. The study will also explore those female students who are single, or who are casually dating (hook ups), who is dating in a committed relationship & nature of the couple's physical/sexual intimacy.
6. The study will show why some women are casually dating or those who are married why some of the women have extra-marital or pre-marital relations.

7. This study will lastly explore whether media and Pornography influences the attitudes & perceptions pertaining to sexual intimacy of college women in Kolkata and if yes then in what extent.

Nature of methodology used

The present study has been conducted by using mixed methodology from thirty female college students aged within 18-22 years pursuing graduation from Jadavpur University of Kolkata. Since in my study there is more emphasis on quantitative data, so I have used questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The data for this study were obtained from a questionnaire completed by 30 consenting women college students in Jadavpur University. Out of 30 students, 18 students are from Master of Arts 2nd year, 5 students are from M.A. 1st year & remaining is doing graduation.

Questionnaire

It is a measurement instrument that provides written instructions and questions, which respondents self-administer in order to provide data for analysis. All participants received verbal and written information, were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. All responses remain anonymous. I have distributed the questionnaires among the students in person.

Mixed methodology

According to our definition, mixed methods research involves both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative data includes closed-ended information. In contrast, qualitative data consists of open-ended information that the researcher gathers through interviews with participants. The general, open-ended questions asked during these interviews allow the participants to supply answers in their own words. Also we can collect qualitative data by observing participants or sites of research, gathering documents from a private (e.g., diary) or public (e.g., minutes of meetings) source, or can collect audiovisual materials such as videotapes or artifacts.

The definition also suggests that mixed methods studies may involve collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data within a single study or within multiple studies in a program of inquiry. Further, quantitative researchers are in the background, and their own personal biases and interpretations are seldom discussed. Qualitative research makes up for these weaknesses. Mixed methods research helps answer questions that cannot be answered by qualitative or quantitative approaches alone.

Category	Dating	Hada relationship, now single	Single ever	Total
Frequency	22	3	5	N = 30
Percentage	73%	10%	17%	100

Everybody said that they have heterosexual orientation. 73% of them said that they are committed. 10% of them had a relation but now they are single.

The present research has been conducted by using Non-Probability Purposive and Snow-Ball sampling techniques as Purposive sampling is based on researcher's judgement while Snow-ball sampling is used as it is chain based sampling where sampling begins with few respondents who suggests new names and it continues until the sample size and sampling criteria is fulfilled.

Sampling technique

Sampling technique is the process of studying the population by gathering information and analyzing that data. There are two basic types of sampling, that is, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Performing non-probability sampling is considerably less expensive than doing probability sampling, but the results are of limited value. There are four types of non-probability samplings: purposive, quota, reliance on available subjects and snowball. I have used judgmental sampling here.

Judgmental sampling or Purposive sampling

The researcher chooses the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study. Judgmental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selects units to be sampled based on their knowledge and professional judgment.

Collection and analysis of data Socio-demographic dimensions

I have found that 77% of the respondents (female university students) are doing masters and remaining is doing graduation. Most of them i.e. 70% women are from nuclear families and remaining 30% are from joint families. 63% of women's place of residence is in city & remaining is from rural areas. Majority i.e. 73% of female students resided with parents or other relatives, and 27% percent of them resided in hostels, paying guest accommodations, none of them resides independently. The majority i.e. 97% reported that they were financially supported entirely by their parents, although 3% percent of students supported themselves through their own earnings, combining college with work. 53% students do tuitions for extra pocket money and very few does per time jobs. The parents of most of the students have graduate degree; some parents have master degree also. 20% student's mothers have not graduate degree. The fathers of most of the students employed in public sectors, very few are in private sector, some are doing business and some are retired. There are few students whose mothers are working. The percentage is 27%. Most of them are homemakers. 67% of the student's family income is above rupees 30000 per month.

Remaining said that they are never in a committed relationship.

Sexual Activity

Category	Ever experienced physical intimacy		Total
	Yes	No	
Frequency	25	5	N = 30
Percentage	83%	17%	100

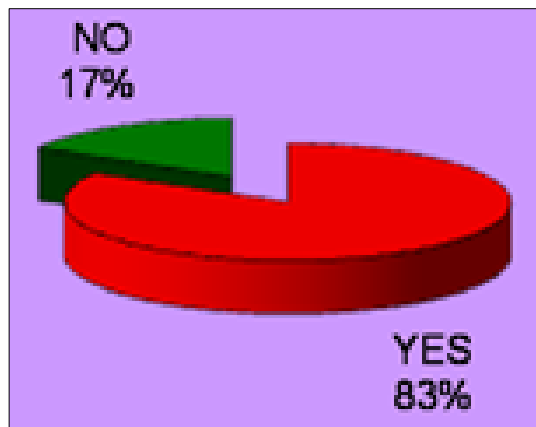


Fig 1: Ever experienced physical intimacy

83% of respondents said that they have experienced physical intimacy. All of them have experienced with their committed dating partner, 10% of them both with their

committed dating partners & casual dating partners. Five of them have never experienced any physical intimacy like touching, kissing, hugging etc.

Category	Experienced physical intimacy			Total
	Committed dating partner	Casual dating partner	Both	
Frequency	22	3	3	N = 30
Percentage	83%	10%	10%	100

All of them have experienced with their committed dating partner, 10% of them both with their committed dating partners & casual dating partners.

Category	Experienced sexual intercourse			Total
	Committed dating partner	Casual dating partner	Both	
Frequency	16	3	3	N=30
Percentage	53%	10%	10%	100

Category	Frequency intercourse of sexual		Total
	Frequent	Infrequent	
	(Once in a week/two weeks)	(Occasional)	
Frequency	3	13	N=30
Percentage	10%	43%	100

Category	Age at first sexual intercourse		Total
	Before 18	After 18	
Frequency	0	16	N=30
Percentage	0%	53%	100

Category	Probability of marrying present committed sexual partners		Total
	Yes	No	
Frequency	29	1	N=30
Percentage	97%	3%	100

53% of them had sexual intercourse with their lovers & 10% of them had both with their boyfriends & more than one casual dating partner. Those who have experienced sexual intercourse, everybody said that their first sex was very much planned, 10% of them said that they regularly do sex at least once or twice a week & remaining 43% said that their sexual intercourse is not frequent. Three women said that they had and also have more than one sexual partner beside their committed dating partners.

Majority of them have done first physical intimacy before becoming an adult with their partners but did sexual intercourse after completing the age of 19 or 20. Majority said that anyone be it a boy or a girl, who is comfortable can initiate sexual intercourse in a relationship. Those who are committed in a committed relationship excluding three women, they have 97% probability of marrying their present committed/sex partners.

Category	More satisfying Intercourse with		Felt guilty of having sex		Total
	Committed dating partner	Casual dating partner	Committed dating partner	Casual dating partner	
Frequency	13	3	0	1	N=30
Percentage	43%	10%	0%	3%	100

43% said that intercourse with the committed dating partner is more satisfying but 10% women said that sex with casual partner is more satisfying, 3% said that they at times feel guilty of having sex with casual partners but they can't control their attraction towards their partners but those 43% of women who have done intercourse with their committed partners are not at all guilty of doing it before marriage. None of my respondents are married so there is no question of extra-marital affair. 47% respondents said that the present relation with their committed partners is their first serious relation in life. 36% said that this is not their first relation. In past they had one or more than one serious break up. Majority of them contends that they had broken up mainly due to family problems & few said that due to incompatibility with the partners. 40% of women said that they are in a relationship for more than three years.

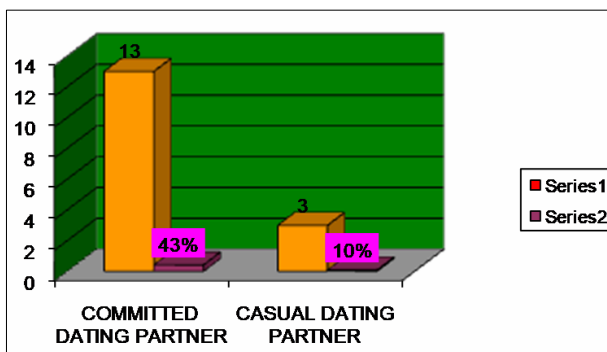


Fig 2: More satisfying intercourse with partner

43% said that intercourse with the committed dating partner is more satisfying but 10% women said that sex with casual partner is more satisfying.

Category	Any physical intimacy with past partner		Total
	Yes	No	
Frequency	11	17	N=30
Percentage	37%	57%	100

Those 37% women said that they had some kind of physical intimacy with their past partners but not sexual intimacy. Three of them are interested in making new partners be it only physical intimacy or sexual intimacy. They are like that because one of them are not sexually satisfies with her boyfriend but mentally she loves her a lot but cannot able to leave her committed dating partner

& two of them said that making new partners is their habit or nature. They love to experience sex with multiple partners. 6% of women who are presently single said that they are single because they have not found their perfect match till now & remaining 4% said that they do not feel lonely at all, they are not at all presently interested in making relationship because they think that it is wastage of time & hampers studies too.

Category	Watch Porn regularly		Total
	Yes	No	
Frequency	23	7	N=30
Percentage	77%	23%	100

77% of women said that they regularly watch porn clippings & remaining of them had watched once in a time but not watch now. They do not like it. Some of them said that they

get access to these porn clippings from net, Cd from friends etc.

Category	Started watching porn		Total
	Before age 18	After age 18	
Frequency	21	2	N=30
Percentage	70%	7%	100

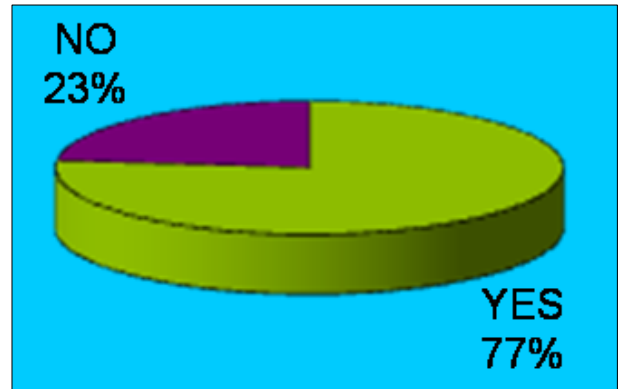


Fig 3: Watch porn regularly

77% of women said that they regularly watch porn clippings & remaining of them had watched once in a time but not watch now. They do not like it. Some of them said that they get access to these porn clippings from net, Cd from friends etc.

Majority of them started watching these porn movies from an early age say 15/16. They are very much interested in watching these. Very few of them fantasize while watching these but majority of them does not do so. All of them agree to this fact that media to some extent influences their attitude towards sexual intimacy. Today everything is so open even a 10-year-old kid does understand what sex is. Nowadays these things are over exposed. It has become very public; people don't feel the need to censor it, which shouldn't be over exposed. Some said that it is so because probably, by broadcasting various sexually intimate scenes on the television through TV Soaps and movies. Media exposure affects the mindset of people, which are influencing women to be more lust centered.

Conclusion

Summary of findings

The study concludes that the most of the college women are from urban areas, so it is quite understood that their sexual attitudes will be to some extent liberal. It has been found that majority of today's women have a positive attitudes toward sexual intimacy between partners before marriage. According to the female students surveyed, majority contends that sexual intimacy was "any kind of sexual activity with one person with whom there is mutual emotional involvement." Nowadays most of the women participants are more sexually active; there are few virgins before marriage. It is found that majority of women consider a number of factors in making a decision to have intercourse including affection ("Does he love me?"), commitment ("Is he interested in a continued relationship with me?") Etc. Premarital sex is now a reality in India. In olden times, it was not easy for a woman to participate in sex in India. Nowadays, young college women spend more time together. Modernization seems to play an important and sometimes-

negative role in the determination of attitudes among today's college women towards pre-marital sexuality. Pre-marital sex standards tend to become more liberal. There is development of pre-marital romantic & sexual relationships, which are fairly widespread among college women. A growing openness toward premarital sex among college women was found. Two-third of female students reported that they had boyfriend & many reported that they have physical intimacy & Sexual relations with their partners. Some have multiple sexual partners also. Many women were firm that sexual intimacy was best experienced alongside love. Age, exposure to pornographic films, was significantly correlated with physical intimacy and sexual experience among female students nowadays. Sexually explicit materials on porn clippings may be acceptable alternatives to sexual intercourse for a woman when a partner is absent. Today's women became more sexually active outside of committed romantic relationships also; Women no longer described physical intimacy as a means to emotional closeness. Physical intimacy could sustain a relationship in its own right. Women's sexual lives were unfolding in the context of hook-ups. Hooking up' is seen as an empowerment for some women. Women described casual sex as acceptable and as mentioned, some participants engaged in several casual affairs. It has been found that College romance was unstable for few women. Sometimes peer pressure encourages sexual activity among these teenagers. On balance, women were more sexually active when doing masters than as bachelors.' It is noted from some women that lust is important part of romantic relationship but lust should come into a relationship only after marriage. Some of them stated that marriage was a necessary condition for them to engage in sexual activity. Some women cited a belief that sex before marriage is wrong but they are less in number. It suggests here that an Indian girl who remains a virgin until she is married represents dignity and pride for herself and the family but a female who engages in sexual behaviour before her marriage may be judged negatively. Thus, it follows that the college women in this study perceived that the rules regarding sex are stricter for them. Results suggest the coexistence of traditional values and a growing permissiveness among college women toward premarital sex in Kolkata. There are some factors of a gradual rise of pre-marital sex & hook ups among college women in contemporary era. The age at which women get married has been slowly on the rise. Early 30's are a common age until which women remain un-married due to prevalent socio-economic situation. Some women may not want to marry at all. For these women pre-marital sex is an important experience. In the past, young women were scared of being caught because of unwanted pregnancy. This fear partly disappeared with the use of contraceptive methods. Today television, movies, music, magazines are full of sexual exposure. The Internet has also opened the door to pornographic material to virtually everyone. In India, public discussion of sex and sexuality of unmarried women has long been taboo. One-night stands and other such aspects are up to personal choice. Social acceptance in India about pre-marital sex is growing. The concept of "pure" or "virgin" woman is fading away day by day. Live-in relationships are no longer uncommon in the cities today. Pre-marital sex is over hyped in India. According to many respondents, if you love a certain person, it's fine to have

sex. In today's scenario, pre-marital sex is no problem for most of the women, if there is marriage afterwards. It should not be completely like western culture. It is nothing wrong in having intercourse before marriage for majority of women. It is easily acceptable under its theory of growth.

Limitations of the study

First, we acknowledge that because the study was classroom-based, I was only able to obtain the perspectives of those who had attended class on the day the survey was fielded. Limited time did not allow me to extend my study to larger groups. The sample was also small, a larger sample of college girls could be considered in the future. The study focused on college girls and not both genders. The study has boundary limitations due to time & cost constraint. I think it goes without saying that the women who participated in my research study are not representative of all college women. It was also limited to a particular university of a particular city, Kolkata. Furthermore, it focused only on the township and did not incorporate rural places. Hence, it did not investigate the attitudes of college girls in rural areas.

Second, young college women in my sample may have underreported their romantic, physical and sexual experiences - a limitation observed in most studies of this nature. As others have noted, powerful social norms prohibit premarital friendships with the opposite sex, whether they are platonic, romantic or sexual.

Further, many of the themes being explored in the study were of a personal and sensitive nature. Participants may have initially felt uncomfortable to disclose such information to the researcher, a stranger to the participant. However, it should be noted that sensitive material, such as sexual relationships were nevertheless willingly and openly discussed by many of the participants.

Further, it is assumed that the respondents answered the questions honestly. Conditions of confidentiality were clearly communicated to all subjects in hopes of promoting confidence and honesty in self-reporting behaviors and beliefs.

Also, given the lengthy questionnaire respondents may have been fatigued during the process, potentially resulting in misreporting and information error.

There are also several problems inherent in the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. Open-ended questions may prompt participants into providing ambiguous or vague answers. Participants may also not have always understood the questions in the same way.

Further, English was used as the medium of writing and some of the women might have experienced some difficulties understanding the meaning of some of the questions and expressing their thoughts and feelings in a second language.

However, every effort was taken to develop rapport with the participants and help them to feel as comfortable as possible. In addition, the idea that the participants remain anonymous, and their names were not used in the study, hoped to restrict such limitations.

Recommendations for further research

I worked on a particular group i.e. of female university female students say the age ranging between 19 and 25. Due to short time period, I was not able to work with the other age groups say adolescents & those who are above 25.

If I had done so, I would have been able to find more variations, which would have helped us to enrich our findings.

I have done my study only in one university and some departments of that university in Kolkata & the sample is also very small. It gave only the attitudes of some women i.e. only thirty of women, which are a very small representation of college women of a university. In future researcher should include some women from all departments and all years so that we can say that it is representing a large proportion of women's attitudes toward sex.

My field of work was confined to only urban area, mainly the capital city. Further research can be done on attitudes of college women toward sexual intimacy in rural areas & also in other states of India then the researcher can find out the differences & similarities of women's attitudes toward sex between urban & rural areas.

I have taken only female respondents attitudes & perceptions toward sexual intimacy. It creates a gender gap. In future, research can be done with males from all age groups, in rural & urban areas and also distinction can be done regarding attitudes of rural & urban women & also the perceptions between men & women.

I have taken English as the medium of my questionnaire. Some students who are not well in English might felt some difficulties regarding the meanings of some questions. So further if another similar type of research is done then the researcher should make the questions in Hindi, which is our national language of India & also in the local language of the concerned state besides English.

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