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# From Hazardous Practices to Hot Experiences of Young Adult's Exposure Towards Sexually Explicit materials: Analysis of Case Studies

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** As the world is zooming towards modernisation, the topic of sexually Explicit materials is no more a taboo in other countries. However, India is still limiting itself in exploring it out. The literature reviews have shown that the consumption of sexually explicit materials is causing a problematic issue in an individual's life such as dissatisfied relationships, sexual crimes etc. It is therefore important to understand the reasons for the desire to watch these contents.

**AIM:** The present study attempts to understand the experiences and the factors leading to the desire to watch sexually explicit material of young adults.

**Case Report:** Using the qualitative technique of thematic analysis, the emphasis was on developing an image of the sexual existence of the young people who are accessing erotic content. A total of 6 participants were interviewed personally for the study: three men and three women respectively residing in Delhi NCR currently but belong to a different part of our country, India.

**Discussion:** It became evident through an analysis that men and women both have equal exposure to such content because of the availability and accessibility of the resources. They had no hesitation in admitting the same. The following themes were extracted from the interviews taken: Stressful life events, relationships, sexual pleasure, knowledge-seeking behaviours and Mood Modification.

**Conclusion:** The most important and common facet among young men and women is the hazardous practices at the safe place which is the role of parenting and the relationship matters which has influenced the exposure of youth towards sexually explicit materials. The study has implications to understand the effect of the consumption of pornographic materials on the diverse areas of human beings.

**Key Words:** Sexually explicit material, Hazardous practices, Experiences, Exposure, Young adults, Case studies

## INTRODUCTION

Pornography is an English term, has origin from Greek history which was referred to as 'the writings of prostitution'. In today's era, neither it is limited to text nor it is just meant for prostitutes. Pornography is also termed as 'X-rated content', 'Online Sexual Activity, and 'Sexually Explicit Materials'. Cooper et al (2004) defined 'Online Sexual Activity as the utilization of the web for any activity through the mediums such as texts, videos, graphics that involves sexuality for entertainment, exploration, education, recreation etc.<sup>1</sup> Peter and Valkenburg (2009) defined it as the content or medium which is the representation of the sexual activity in the patterns that involve nudity, pictures of vaginal or sexual intercourse.<sup>2</sup>

Women are judged harshly as compared to men in terms of sexual experience. If men had multiple sexual partners, he is known as a "stud" (a male who satisfies the other partners sexually) and if a woman had an equal number of sexual partners, she is called a "slut": A woman who is in multiple sexual relationships (Crawford & Popp, 2003).<sup>3</sup>

Mc Cormack, Wignall (2016) examined the effect of consumption of pornography on young men with diverse sexual orientations- mostly gay and mostly straight, ageing 18-32 years old. For this study, 35 interviews were taken and explored the experiences young men of the US had, since the time of their first watch. The results of the study suggest that participants reported the early or first-time watch was

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between the age of 8 to 14 years old. They reported that the watch to such content is providing them immediate reward as well as it is short-lived. Whereas other participants reported they are more focusing on the quality of the content. They have shared their experiences that pornography helps to provide them relief from boredom and it is one of the safest places to prospect their sexual desires and their sexual identity. Most important which participants have narrated that pornography is an educational system as it has helped them to explore the various techniques and activities.<sup>4</sup>

Pornography is the central theme of debate when it comes to the discussion of the topic such as sexuality. In India, many attempts were even made by the government or by ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to ban the X-rated movies or contents but the media or porn developers have made mirror-imaging to these websites. The concern is still the same- whether these contents have any psychological impact or not. There have been numerous studies that have explored or investigated the connection between pornography and other facets of human beings such as relationships, loneliness or depression etc. But there exists a dearth of psychological studies in Indian culture. The key component of this increased usage of pornographic content is the Internet as this medium has made pornography readily available to all people across the world irrespective of age, gender, culture and so on.

Researches have shown that both men (84%) and women (69%) have reported their exposure to pornography (picture or text) before the age of 21 years (Wilson & Abelson, 1973).<sup>5</sup> There are three categories of pornography- Mild, erotica and violent pornography. Mild pornography refers to (soft porn) sensual portraying of sex, nudity without sexual intercourse; erotica involves sexual intercourse and violence consists of violent sexual acts such as rape, aggressive behaviour, BDSM (Bondage, Discipline, Dominance and submission and Sado-masochism, it is the sexual practice in which one partner is dominative and other is submissive; and dominating partner restrict the movements of the other partner by tying them with a rope or other objects) etc (Oddone-Paolucci, Genuis & Violato, 2000).<sup>6</sup>

Studies have suggested that the association between pornography and relationship satisfaction are negatively correlated.<sup>7</sup> Grov C et al. reported in the study that men and women have different attitudes to online sexual activity. Males have a very positive approach and are less expressive whereas females are highly expressive in terms of sex but in association to online sexual activity, females are less expressive and males are less aroused or are sexually dissatisfied in their real sex with their partner. Data also suggests that people who are frequently engaging themselves in online sexual activity, their relationships are getting affected.<sup>8</sup> They are dissatisfied in their relationship and com-

munication patterns are also seen to be negative.<sup>9</sup> Jain & Pandey in their study revealed that the people who are frequently engaging themselves can adjust emotionally really well, are open-minded and extrovert and are experiencing high negative emotions such as aggression, anxiety. This frequent consumption of pornographic content leads to low conscientiousness.<sup>10</sup>

## METHODS

Experiences of heterosexual males (3) and females (3) were examined to understand the desire to watch sexually explicit materials. The participants were born and brought up in Delhi, India, ageing 18 to 25 years old. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit the participants.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current study was aiming to explore the following phenomenon:

- a. What is the importance of sexuality for human behaviour?
- b. What do young adults reflect in their personal to professional life during the watch of sexually explicit materials?
- c. What are the factors that led young adults to have a desire to watch such content?

In-depth interviews were used to develop and enrich data or experiences of participants related to the 'Desire to watch Sexually Explicit Materials'. Interviews averaged 45 minutes and longer excluding the minutes of the rapport formation session. Participants were asked several questions which are as follows about their sexual feelings and behaviour and the need to watch it:

- a. First encounter and how it all started?
- b. Parameter of a perfect video.
- c. Feelings involved in the arousal after the engagement in actions
- d. Real engagement of sexual activities witnessed in pornography
- e. Need to watch Sexually explicit materials.

Interviews were taken and were recorded; field notes were maintained. Interviews were transcribed and coded into themes and sub-themes.

## Inclusion Criteria:

- a. The participants had to be in a relationship
- b. The participants viewing pornographic content for at least 6 months
- c. The participants must be students.

### Exclusion Criteria:

- a. The participant who are taking counselling or any psychotherapeutic interventions
- b. The participants with any psychological disorders.

## DISCUSSION

India is listed on the third rank based on the consumption of sexually explicit materials.<sup>11</sup> The participants were interviewed taken into consideration the fact that India is the top three leading countries and what made an adult view these contents. The participants have shared the following experiences:

- a. **First Encounter:** Early experiences of males and females differs in terms of sexual experiences and pornographic content at the age of 13-18 years old in females and 13-16 years in males. Participant shared her experiences stating that she has received the information about the sexual practices before the information about the pornographic content. Ms SJ reported 'I was 5 years old when I had my first sexual experience with my cousin brother and was repeatedly done. My brother witnessed it and forced me to do with him.' However, the first attempt or encounter she had with pornographic content was when she was 18 years old by her friends. Ms NK reported she had early experience with pornographic content at the age of 14 years. She reported, 'I was exploring every part of my body. Eventually, I came to know about porn. I am much inclined towards BDSM than actual real sex.' Ms N reported that her first encounter was when she was 13, her friends had discussed her sister's sexual experiences and mentioned 'This made me more curious to know how it looks and the way it is done. Male responses are also similar. The participant responded that they got to know about such contents through friends at the age of 13-16 years as sex education were not given by parents or at school.
- b. **PARAMETER:** All the participants whether males or females have shared that they are more inclined towards the real content. Female participants have reported that 'I look for the video which has storyline and realistic', 'Romantic ones seems to be real', 'I appreciate the art where people post their pictures and videos that is authentic. Male participant (Mr SS) mentioned 'I look for the quality (HD), should have a storyline and must be realistic'. Mr RJ reported that 'I prefer video with the content of defloration and real hidden stories.' Mr ML mentioned that his mood correlates with his viewing of the content- 'When I am frustrated, I would prefer to watch rough sex'.
- c. **NEED:** When asked about 'What made them watch sexually explicit materials?' Participants needs were so differently reported. Ms SJ reported 'I feel so lone-

ly and I want my partner to be there with me. I miss his presence, so I watch it. These materials taught me the best ways to arouse my partner. It has made my bond stronger and healthier. But these activities are momentary, it satisfies my pleasure for a moment. It helps me to explore the world of sex in a better way. The researcher reported 'When I am in a bad mood and I watch it to get aroused. I feel my sexual needs are getting fulfilled. It provides a pleasurable environment for a little amount of time'. Ms. NK said 'I tend to browse these contents when my libido is active. I and my partner watch it for my partner's arousal before we do sex. The need for me is to recreate the memories that I had in my real sexual experiences.' Mr ML reported 'Porn is part of my life. Porn and masturbation together bring satisfaction and pleasure within me. It stimulates my mind because of the secretion of hormones. I am too bored and have nothing to do. So, it brings a little spark. I substitute my feeling of stress.' Mr RJ mentioned 'If I am free, I watch it for 2-3 hours. This is part of my life and motivates me to work well. It helps me in maintaining physical relationships with my partner'. Mr SS reported 'My watch depends on my mood, stressful events and loneliness. It relaxes me but it's temporary. It helps me to get motivated and work well in my daily routine'.

After exploring the hot experiences of the participants, 9 sub-themes were found (refer to Table -1) such that pornography has helped young adults to deal with the stressors of life in a better way. These stressors can be related to work, dealing with family conflicts or general life issues. Young adults have the desire to watch these contents as it has helped them to deal with the stressors more healthily. Further, they have reported these contents have helped them to create a stronger bond in a relationship. Partners were able to explore sexual intimacy through the usage of these platforms. Furthermore, they have reported that these pleasures are immediate but short-lived and fulfil sexual and bodily needs temporarily. Added to the above, they have mentioned that these contents have updated and upgraded sex information and participants were able to explore with their partners sexually. Last but not the least, the desire for sexually explicit materials have helped them to deal with boredom and loneliness.

Further, these sub-themes were clubbed into 5 major themes: Stressful life events, relationships, sexual pleasure, knowledge-seeking behaviours and mood modification.

## CONCLUSION

Our government of India have banned pornographic or sexually explicit content twice and even then, there have been various and numerous websites of the same. As an adoles-

cent, we viewed these contents because of lack of awareness or the curiosity but as we have grown up into adulthood, the reasons to watch these contents are no longer the same. After exploring the hot experiences of the participants, it has been concluded (refer to Table 1) that an individual has the craving or temptation to watch these contents as an adult varies and the following conclusions can be made:

- a. These hazardous practices, irrespective of gender, helps an individual, to deal with the daily hassles of life.
- b. The practices are continued because of peer pressure, but these practices of viewing the sexually explicit contents have improved the sexual intimacy between the partners.
- c. These practices provides detailed information about the sexual practices, positions and how to arouse a partner and
- d. The desire to watch this content is to feel alive, get rid of a monotonous and boring life.

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**Table 1: Themes and sub-themes extracted from transcripts**

Stressful life events	Relationship	Sexual pleasure	Knowledge seeking behaviours	Mood Modification
Medium to deal with stressors	Creates stronger bond in a relationship Peer Pressure	Immediate reward but short-lived Fulfil bodily and sexual needs of self/ partner	Get updated about the sex information Exploring the sexual activities in a relationship	Having a sense of loneliness Feeling bored