

REGULATION OF HUMAN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR, SEX REVOLUTION AND EMERGENCE OF AIDS - A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

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ABSTRACT

No Society in the World permits fully free sexual behaviour. All societies utilize a variety of ways for regulation of sexual behaviour. This has been happening since antiquity. Culture also affects sexual behaviour. In western civilization there was a healthy outlook towards sexuality during Greco-Roman era. In Indian civilization also human sexuality was considered an inseparable part of life and was given a higher place in human life. Many treatises on human sexuality were written. Sex was considered as an art and was given an exalted status through the medium of sculpture work in temples of Konark & Khajuraho. But in Christian civilization sexual acts and related areas were considered immoral, debasing, dirty and abhorring. Sex-related ideas/thoughts were considered immoral in Churches and were given low status in society.

Rapidly occurring social changes in 20th century- World wars I & II, urbanization, modernization, industrialization, women emancipation and a strong reaction to unprecedented suppression of 19th century suppression of sexuality led to advent of sexual revolution in America & other western countries. Liberal-sex spread throughout the society. Sexual promiscuity, prostitution, homosexuality, group-sex were socially accepted on a wide scale. Presumably as a result of these tendencies a disease like AIDS has now spread from America to the whole world.

Present article is an effort of analysis of historical perspective of this problem.

No society of the world allows sexual behaviour to go unregulated. Society has a strong influence on sexual behaviour of its members through various mechanisms. From time immemorial humans have attempted to regulate sex-life of others through societal norms which vary tremendously from culture to culture - with whom to meet, to marry, with whom to have sexual intercourse, socially constructed norms about private or public display of portions of

body, age at which children are supposed to show sexual interest and age at which adults are to stop. Sexual constraints are placed on behaviour as a result of socialization within a subculture because of ethnic, historical, racial, economic, geographical educational and other factors (Wiseman, 1976).

Culture is important in regulation of sexual behaviour. All cultures impose restrictions on Sexual behaviour becomes subject to increasing social regu-

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lation as we ascend the evolutionary scale in animal kingdom from animals to man. (Seward, 1954). All cultures prescribe sex within marriage. In Western & particularly American society sex has been proscribed without (Smith and Hindus, 1980). Sexuality in traditional society may be thought of as a great iceberg frozen by command of custom, by the need of stability by the community, by the dismal grind of daily life, at the cost of individuality. Such regulation of sexual behaviour was considered necessary to ensure peace and to provide for stable domestic relationship in order to raise children.

Western societies have mainly relied on Judeo-Christian ethic to regulate sexual behaviour. In ancient Greece & Rome, nudity was widely practised by aristocracy. Even Plato approved customs involving nudity to blunt the over keen edge of sexual appetite. In medieval times nudity was common in daily life e.g.. public bath. Women of feminist 16th Century France admitted their adorers in toilet/bath. However, Christianity disliked it. They had deeply ingrained hatred for savages of Tropics in opposition of pagan world which worshipped naked gods. Christianity developed the idea that nakedness was merely sexual & therefore immoral. On the other hand Germans advocated nudity as a method of cure and regeneration. They said that familiarity with nudity directly and through art/literature abolished prurience. It was said to be good for sexual training for the sense of beauty and for the soul. When we turn from Christianity to other religions we do not usually meet with so ambiguous an attitude towards sex e.g. Muslims asserted sanctity of sex and were prepared to carry the sex into future life. In India the sexual love has been sancti-

fied and divinized to a greater extent than any other part of the world (Ellis, 1936).

Even regarding chastity, varying attitudes are reflected among different cultures. During 18th-19th century, ideals of chastity were condemned. In higher religions, asceticism and mortification are necessary door for most exalted religious state. From savages to civilized generation there is a tendency for chastity to be less regarded or to be retained only as a traditional convention no longer strictly observed. It usually becomes confined to a special philosophic or religious sects which cultivate it to an extreme degree in more or less a professional way. Christianity itself was one of these sects enamoured of the ideal chastity.

Preoccupation of much early Christian literature with sexual matter was vastly greater than the pagan society they had left... Paganism accepted sexual indulgence and was able to dismiss it. Christians could not escape from obsession of sex... it was ever with them. During Middle Ages, the primitive freshness of Christian chastity began to lose its charm. Spread of Christianity to N. Europe found it difficult to acclimatize its ideals among wild Germans. Hereafter, celibacy was imposed on regular clergy and voluntary celibacy was kept alive by religious enthusiasts.

In 16th century, convents were liable to become almost brothels. It remained so in 18th century. In Protestant countries the chastity was further discredited by 'Reformation Movement' - a revolt against compulsory celibacy. It was felt that chastity is an unhappy and injurious mistake to maintain lofty ideals which encouraged hypocrisy. Conception of physical virtue of virgin-

ity had degraded the conception of spiritual virtue of virginity. Christianity depreciated dignity of sexual relationship. Sixteenth century outbreak of Protestantism - Luther's revolt against Catholicism was in part a protest against abstinence teaching.

The Church considered all sexual activity outside matrimony as wrong. All sexual activity within marriage was to be for procreation and no pleasure seeking through sex was envisaged. Any attempt at contraception was prohibited. The Church made marriage very difficult by laying down various conditions while condemning all extra or pre-marital sex. It was a heavy burden in the form of suppression of a natural urge. Sexual morality at that period was very low. Thus, sexual repression was a reaction by Church to sexual permissiveness as we in 20th century are reacting to puritanism of an early age.

Changes Over Times-Social Scripting And Sex Revolution :

The dominant forces in society are set against the development of a healthy sex-outlook and the dominant voice of the society (the middle class) is every ready to pit themselves against these forces.

Sexual permissiveness has fluctuated continually between extremes through centuries (Johnson, 1969). Generally speaking, human erotic potential has been gradually but clearly constricted by social condition and scripting from prehistoric times down to its narrowest dimension after 1200 AD. Historians have documented a gradual shift in social scripting from a very open, multidimensional eroticism in ancient Greece & Rome through a growing disapproval of anything beyond heterosexual, reproductive, non-

erotic sex. Burst of homosexual culture in 11-12th centuries followed by condemnation of all non-marital, non-heterosexual sex - came with collapse of Europe's social structure in 14th century.

The era of 1300-1950 AD saw greatly restricted socially acceptable sexual orientation. This narrowness began to disintegrate in early 1960s with the revolution of civil and women's rights movement, 'pills' and free economy. Since 1960s more tolerance and even acceptance of deviant or unconventional behaviour, e.g. the prevalent obsession of Victorians with the debilitating evil of self pollution, has changed to a general acceptance of masturbation as a common and normal sexual outlet for adolescents, for single persons of all ages and even within marriage.

Three major economic depression in 1819, 1837, 1873-78 greatly influenced the development of dominantly sex-negative values of the last century.. "economic depression and sexual repression went hand in hand." Exceedingly rapid and evolutionary changes in sex attitudes and practices in 20th century U.S. have been observed. Puritanic attitudes of 19th century have given way to a flux in mores and practices. End of Victorian era came in 20th century with Freud's emphasis on sexuality of women and children, Ellis' studies on sex, family planning work by Margret Sanger in New York. Exposure of youth to alien culture during world War I and II also changed sex roles. Emergence of short skirt, sanitary pads, cheek to cheek dancing, vamps of silent movies also reinforced the new attitude towards sex. The new independence gained by women who had replaced men in the

factories during the war was undoubtedly the crucial social factor in the shift towards more liberal and relaxed behaviour patterns (Murstein, 1974; Smith 1978; Bullough, 1981).

Although puritanical condemnation of sex has not disappeared, pleasure for pleasure's sake in the uninhibited enjoyment of sex is by far the prevailing attitude in many societies. The intellectuals emancipation of our age has destabilized the traditional value system and sexual morality is one of the persuasion most aggressively challenged and often peremptorily contradicted. Removal of traditional taboos is the main thrust of scientific understanding of today.

Sexual Revolution :

The sexual revolution which shook US in 1960s and 1970s had repercussions almost everywhere (Hoshii, 1987). The most important element in sexual revolution, which emphasised pleasure aspect of sex, its technique and organs was removal of taboos surrounding sex and disregard of traditional norms/ restraints. It asserted sexual freedom of individual and questioned the legitimacy and foundation of limiting sexual relations to institutionalised form of marriage (Hoshii, 1986). It also softened law relating to sexually stimulating material - porn - films, topless dances, spectator sex and sports (Hoshii, 1987). Many of the rules and conventions regulating sexual behaviour of individuals and society in the beginning of 20th century faded into oblivion.

China, however, in 1981 declared that sex revolution had no place there. In Russia sex revolution following Russian Revolution soon gave way to counter - revolution (Hoshii, 1987).

The US Sex Revolution Of 1960s:

The social turmoils of 1960s with its emphasis on civil rights, women's movement, individualism, self-fulfillment, sexually explicit print media-play Boy magazine and U.S. Supreme Court decision on 'obscenity criteria' brought a gradual shift in values of Americans towards sex.

In 1970s, Vietnam War - challenge to government's action - promotion of alternate life style promoted by media - legalization of abortion in 1973 by Supreme Court - nudity on stage - 'X-rated' films - Gay rights movement - reproductive technology advances - Masters & Johnson's first hand observations of human sexual response and orgasm, birth of sex-therapy affected the life styles (Murstein, 1974; Smith, 1978; Francouer, 1987).

The Indian Scene :

Traditional Indian attitude towards sex reflect a striking absence of guilt in contrast to Judeo-Christian ideals (Gupta, 1982). However, Indian attitude towards sex, particularly of high caste Hindus, is more ambivalent and paradoxical (Bhattacharya, 1975). On one hand, there is high value of chastity, virginity, rigid separation of sex, prudishness, praise of spiritual /physical value of continence and thrifty hoarding of precious fluid (semen); on the other hand, there is cult of *LINGAM*, *KHAJURAHU*' copulative acrobacy, sex charged mythology, *KAMASUTRA*, sex pharmacy and aphrodisiacs and indulgence in sex is manifest. There is simultaneous shameful denial and triumphant affirmation of sex (Gupta, 1982, Khosla, 1976). As opposed to sexual frankness in Indian art, sexual suppression is at the root of Indian society. By contrast, there is no frankness in religious literature in West but

there is freedom in personal life (Gupta, 1982).

This ambivalence is in part a result of unnatural crude and violent form of patriarchy (prevalent even today) in constant struggle with matriarchal learnings of lower class. Chronic insistence on class divided patriarchal society and authoritarian social structure by the writers of Smiritis and their violent enforcement by the ruling class in public life, severely acted upon the natural development of sexual life in India. Two main streams, two different sets of ideals are said to have existed in India earlier (and even now). For simpler and poor people - sex had a social significance in accordance with their beliefs, ideals and requirements as reflected in religious texts. For dominant class, sex was for the sake of sex only - a source of physical pleasure. It gave rise to polygamy, patriarchy, concubinage and harlotry as reflected in sophisticated, erotic and other literature. Ritual drawings with pronounced erotic motives, quite common in different parts of India, e.g., Khajuraho, Konark etc. are reflections of abnormal sexual desire of the dominant class (Bhattacharya, 1975). Ruling class often made a distinction between aristocratic and artistic sex of upper strata and rustic sex of lower class (Chaudhary, 1965).

Kautilya described three objectives of life - spiritual (dharma) economic (artha) and sensual (kama). He promoted the idea of marriage before menarche emphasizing that the menstrual period should not go waste. If a girl could not be married by puberty she was forced to have sex with others.

He condemned adultery, rape, abduction, incest, masochism, exhibitionism, nudity and homosexuality. Po-

lygamy and divorce were permitted. Prostitution was state controlled. He also advocated petting for arousal (Bhattacharya, 1975). *Kamasutra* of *Vatsyayana* borrowed heavily on *Kautilya* and other earlier texts.

Even temple architecture in India (and in other countries) are analogous to female sex organs. The porch denoted lower end of vagina, hall - the vagina and inner sanctum - the uterus (*garbha griha*). This along with the customs of *Devdasis*, erotic passages in *Vedas* and Epic literature denote that sex had a religious significance and acceptance in India and that sex was not inconsistent with holiness. In ancient India, thus sex, was not a taboo. Love making was promoted as an art, which was learnt by upper class men through *ganikas*. *Grihastha ashram*, one of the four phases in Hindu life, was meant for enjoyment of sex. Sexual fulfilment was considered one's *dharma* towards self, family and society. Scriptures considered sexual pleasure as the supreme pleasure. Adultery and sex with daughters/wife of others have been reported to be indulged in by *rishis* and gods (*Indra*) (Chaudhary 1965).

In India, every activity is considered as part of one's *dharma* (duty). Bathing, eating and even sex were specified and regulated by sacred texts. Vedic literature also have mentions of rape, prostitution and incest. Women have been shown as fickle and prone to sexual arousal on seeing a man, in *Mahabharata*. Need to keep them in a control was emphasised. Early marriage was one measure to ensure chastity.

Gradually, patriarchy, joint family, double standard (promoted by ruling class), prostitution and low education

of females degraded their status in society. Simultaneously, sex morality of middle class survived, exhorted by moral prescription of premarital chastity, monogamy and moderate marital sex. These factors in the course of several centuries were successful in pulling down sex from its erstwhile place of honour to a position of dirty, nasty and secret thing with hardening of various unhealthy, improper attitude towards sex. This acted, as a powerful barrier in sex socialisation of youth in India (Ruhela, 1969).

Varied experiences of Indians as a result of diverse, historical, cultural and social currents and counter currents throughout last 2500 years or so have developed some socio-psychological notions in the community. Traditional stereotype of a powerful patriarch father developed a fear complex in family. This role is played by teachers in schools. So, healthy relations do not develop in boys and girls. Various sex inhibitions in boys/girls are due to discouraging behaviour of adults, particularly in upper class. There is no such stifling attitude in lower class where free mixing before marriage is allowed (Ruhela, 1969).

Now even in India, a marked change in sexual mores is being observed mainly in the cities. There is a trend towards more open society (Hoshii, 1987). Progressively declining appeal of religion and lesser adherence to tradition, westernisation through education, tourism, media (print/TV/Video), availability of reliable contraceptives, urbanisation and industrialisation is leading to development of nuclear families and transformation of sex patterns in Indian society. New generation is getting acquainted with liberalised sex-mores of the west leading to sexual

permissiveness (Gupta, 1982). Explicit sex is appearing in print media and movies. On-screen kissing is allowed in films, even nudity is creeping in. Women's rights, intercaste marriages, homosexuality are being publicised through TV. Premarital sex is becoming more common, more unmarried abortions and more divorces are occurring (Hoshii, 1987).

English medium in schools with liberal sex mores of the west in books prescribed in syllabus (courtship, free marriage, illegitimacy and divorce), going abroad for training, foreigners' visit to India, western novels/paper backs with 'hot sex' (and now even by Indian female authors) have resulted in preference by youth of liberalised sex mores of the west. Upper middle class - boys and girls have started mixing freely. Love making in colleges, courtship, going steady, and love marriages are popular (Ruhela, 1969).

Social changes are affecting Indian youth regardless of their class, caste, religion. Mixing and coming together of various cultures, subcultures due to increased urbanisation, transport and media have helped in youngsters' questioning of traditional social control resulting in significant social disorganisation in the form of growing trend of extra and pre-marital sex, crime, delinquency, homosexuality, and exhibitionism. Films, radio, advertisements, dresses, newspapers, pornography etc. have also helped in promoting such behaviour (Ruhela, 1969).

With the dawn of 20th century and involvement of women in freedom struggle, enforcement of provisions in the Constitution of India for upgrading the status of women, their being elected as MLA, MP and even Prime Minister

has helped female emancipation in India, further loosening the medieval male control over females and breaking down the joint family system (Gupta, 1982). This has also led to development of female frigidity, male importance and perversion. Family planning movement with its advertisement at primetime on TV is also affecting youth. 'Jingles' being popular with kids naturally elicit many queries from them on family planning, when they see contraceptives being advertised on TV, which are not answered properly by their parents due to their close-lipped attitude on such matters. This leads the youth to resort to pornography and peer-group for enlightenment (Ruhela, 1969).

In India, desexualised marital relationship of joint family is giving way to a dynamic state of reciprocity especially in middle class (Gupta, 1982), Couples who could meet in the night only because of lack of privacy and restrictive norms of joint family in India, now have plenty of time and privacy because of emergence of nuclear families, less parental interference and small families because of urbanisation, mobility and contraceptives. The concept of 'bed rooms' has further provided the privacy to the couples.

Premarital and extra marital sex and girlfriends are now considered status symbol in India, particularly in urban areas. There is greater inclination towards free sex under influence of west. There has been a tremendous change in attitude towards sex and man-women relation in cities. But still, double standard prevails - male can visit prostitutes, have extra marital sex - but he would kill his wife or daughter

if they took such liberties (Tuli, 1976).

Still, in large section of Indian society, there is a sense of duty dominating all consideration of personal rights and a deep feeling of respect for tradition pertaining to family and marriage. For majority, virtues attributed to *Sita - Savitri* (the role models) inspire reverential awe from women - a sense of moral instructions exhorting them to be faithful, submissive and unquestioning (Gupta, 1982).

Advent Of AIDS :

It has been hypothesized that AIDS appeared in early 1980s after its incubation period (10 years) following the sexual perversion, promiscuity, swinging, mate-swapping and homosexuality in U.S. and 'sex revolution' of 1960s. The temporal sequence is striking ... sexual repression of 19th century and earlier era-advent of 20th century . World war and other changes - Sex - revolution of 1960s AIDS in 1980s - reduction in promiscuity and insistence on safe sex in 1990s and revival of family as an institution. Thus, indulgence in excessive perverted sexual behaviour in 1960s has been said to be the triggering mechanism for development of AIDS. This free sex itself here been said to be a reaction of undue repression of sexual behaviour in last century. And now in the wake of emergence of AIDS with its inevitable mortality, and absence of any curative drug or prophylactic vaccine, people have again seem to have rediscovered the virtues of 'safe sex', 'single partner', 'faithfulness to one's partner', and of the family as an institution. Many people believe that AIDS will not be a major

public health problem in India since promiscuity and perversions here are not as prevalent as in the west. However, it should be remembered that once the locus of infection is there in the community, other routes of transmission may help establishment and spread of AIDS e.g.. blood transfusion, shared razor and infection equipments. Extent of promiscuity will not matter much then.

Modern Advanced Society :

Enormous changes occurring simultaneously in different fields at an ever increasing pace transform the traditional sexual attitude (Toeffler, 1971). Intellectual emancipation of our age has destabilised traditional value system. Sexual morality is challenged and contradicted. Rules and conventions regulating sexual behaviour have faded into oblivion. Atomisation of society had made social coercion ineffectual. Revolution resulting from secularization of society has completely changed the views on sex (Hoshii, 1987).

Today's society is hardly conducive to sexual restraint. Social surroundings and conditions abet irresponsible sexual behaviour. Moral stimulation of sexually knowledgeable entertainment and advertising, increasingly available and respectable contraceptives, potentially curable and controllable venereal diseases, leisure, affluence and feeling of urgency to live today because of chronic threat of global war has also affected the sexual behaviour (Johnson, 1969). Pleasure for pleasure's sake in the uninhibited enjoyment of sex is by far the prevailing attitude in many societies. Today's

preoccupation with sex is partly a sort of release phenomena after puritanical repression of sex in western society in 19th century (Walker & Fletcher, 1955; Hoshii, 1987).

Greater alienation and individualism in modern mass society leads to loss of values and direction and disintegration of binding social norms. There is difficulty in attaining a sense of fulfilment or adequacy leading to a need for affection and clutching type relationship rather than genuine sexual desire (Hoshii, 1986). This was evidenced in depressions of 1930s when sex afforded one possible form of security available (Seward, 1954).

Trends And Projection :

With above description one can attempt a prediction of future trends in sexual behaviour. Cyclic pattern of a conservative-permissive phase alternating with a exploratory-permissive phase may continue, however, some major perturbations of 20th century may break this cycle and throw the evolution of human sexuality into a quite new orbit (Francouer, 1987).

Six trends have been projected:

1. 'Decriminalization' of variant sexual behaviours/ relationship - as criminal law relinquishes efforts to regulate sexual behaviour.
2. 'Demaritalizing' - increasing breakdown of traditional legal and moral limitations of sexual behaviour to married couple.
3. 'Degenitalization' human reproduction, - pregnancy becoming a conscious, if less frequent, choice.
4. 'Degenderizing' sexual behaviour and values, increasing attention to the qual-

ity of intimacy shared by 2 or more sexual persons regardless of their sexual anatomy.

5. 'Desexing' or sexual behaviour - with less emphases on coital and performance pressures - a growing appreciation of the pan-erotic nurturing character of all our senses.

6. 'Relationalizing' our sexuality - as per Biblical concept - transcending individualism - relating intimately/ reverently to other and through them with cosmos.

Our persistent need for nurturance; the "pluralism" will cut through traditional boundaries of age differences, handicaps, marital status and gender.

However, this pluralism, will create problem of adaptation.

As of present, the whole world is grappling with the and scourge of AIDS. As a result of fear of inevitable death once AIDS is established there appears to be a swing towards reduction in promiscuity. Now the emphasis is on safe sex. Still, with the insatiable ubiquitous urge for attainment of momentary pleasure of sex... often sought surreptitiously... without the knowledge of one's partner the problem of promiscuity and perversion may continue for man will be man after all. This is likely to be accentuated when a cure of a vaccine for AIDS is developed. This evidenced by history where fear of general diseases was lessened by advent of more or less effective cure for these through penicillin and other antibiotics.

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सारांश

मानव यौनीय व्यवहार का नियमन, यौन क्रांति और एड्स रोगकी उत्पत्ति-एक ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण

- अमरजीत सिंघ

संसार की किसी भी सामाजिक इकाई में पूर्ण रूप से स्वच्छद मानव यौनीय व्यवहार की छूट नहीं है। हर समाज में यौन-व्यवहार के नियमन के लिए विभिन्न तरीके अपनाये जाते हैं। ऐसा आदि काल से होता चला आ रहा है। संस्कृति का भी यौन व्यवहार पर गहरा प्रभाव पड़ता है। पश्चिमी सभ्यता में मिस्र-रोम काल में यौन व्यवहार को स्वस्थ मानसिकता से देखा जाता था। हिन्दू/भारतीय सभ्यता में भी यौन-क्रिया और यौन व्यवहार को मानव जीवन का एक महत्वपूर्ण तथा अभिन्न अंग मानते हुए प्राकृतिक रूप से एक ऊँचा दर्जा दिया गया। इस सम्बन्ध में कई ग्रंथ भी लिखे गये। खजुराहो, कोनार्क आदि स्थानों पर मंदिरों में मूर्तिकला के माध्यम से इस कला को परिमार्जित रूप दिया गया। परन्तु ईसाई सभ्यता में यौन क्रियाओं तथा सम्बन्धित क्षेत्रों को वर्जित और निकृष्ट माना गया। गिरजाघरों में यौन सम्बन्धित विचारों को अनैतिक माना गया तथा समाज में नीचा स्थान दिया गया।

बीसवीं सदी में तेजी से होते हुए सामाजिक परिवर्तन, विश्वयुद्ध, शहरीकरण, आधुनिकीकरण, औद्योगिकीकरण, महिलाओं के उत्थान तथा यौन व्यवहार के 19 वीं सदी के अभूतपूर्व दमन के विरुद्ध प्रतिक्रिया के फलस्वरूप अमेरिका तथा अन्य पश्चिमी क्षेत्रों में 1960 के दशक में यौन-क्रांति का आविर्भाव हुआ। यौन-स्वच्छन्दता पूर्ण रूप से समाज में फैल गयी। व्यापक स्तर पर परस्त्रीगमन, वेश्यागमन, समलैंगिक सम्बन्ध "सामूहिक यौन आदि सार्वजनिक रूप से स्वीकार किये जाने लगे। कदाचित इस प्रवृत्ति के फलस्वरूप "एड्स" जैसी महामारी अमेरिका से अब समस्त विश्व में फैल गई है।

प्रस्तुत रचना इस बारे में विस्तार से ऐतिहासिक विश्लेषण का एक प्रयास है।