

SOCIAL BASIS OF DEVIANT SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR- A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Sexual perversions are often a product of civilized life. Most societies permit some degree of deviant sexual behaviour as a relief from stress of routine life. Criteria for labelling such behaviour have changed over a period of time. There have been instances of normalizing deviant sexual behaviour by formation of pressure groups by the deviants e.g. homosexual clubs, particularly in Western countries. Attitude of church on masturbation & homosexuality has fluctuated from forbidding these activities to accepting these as harmless acts. Extra marital sex, premarital sex, homosexuality, fellatio, masturbation have been reported from almost all societies. Swinging and mate-swapping is more prevalent in West. Social factors associated with deviant sexual behaviour are discussed. Incest lobbies have come up in U.S. Prostitution has also been there in all societies since antiquity. Earlier, prostitutes enjoyed a relatively higher social status. Their degradation started with the dawn of Christianity. In 1960s there was sexual revolution in U.S. with emphasis on free sex. There is evidence of slowing down of sexual revolution with advent of AIDS. Safe-sex and fidelity are now being emphasized.

Human sexuality is a matter of much debate. Satisfaction of sexual urge is a basic need of human beings. As different societies developed, man, under influence of different evolving cultures, has developed a semblance of what is normal and what is not in matters of sex. Every society had evolved its own norms on regulations pertaining to place, context, partners for sexual gratification. Accordingly, various definitions for labelling deviant sexual behaviour have emerged. More or less in every society sex and deviant sexual behaviour are a sensitive matter. Though routinely frowned upon, many sexual perversions have been occasionally permitted by most of the societies probably to provide momentary relief from drudgery of routine life.

Most sexual perversions are a product of civilized life (Ellis, 1936) Cultures that fail to provide acceptable outlet for sexual deviate & at the same time emphasize stereotype personalities along sex lines pay a heavy price in homosexuality. Ceremonial deviations are allowed in many primitive societies (homosexuality, transvestism) (Seward, 1954). Cultural and economic stress promote impotence, masturbation in adults, sexual incontinence & transvestism (Barnes & Barnes, 1948).

Kinsey et al (1953) also viewed that restriction on premarital heterosexual contact helped in development of premarital petting & homosexuality. Restriction on satisfaction of insatiable newly found sexuality in adolescents also lead to resorting to alternative

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also lead to resorting to alternative methods - homosexuality, sadomasochism, masturbation etc. (Walker & Fletcher, 1955). Criteria for defining deviant sexual behaviour may also be considerably influenced by social norms, laws, mores, and prevalent pattern of behaviour (Bancroft, 1974).

Normal Deviance :

Premarital Sex (PMS) and orogenital sex violate laws & mores but are relatively common & usual. Masturbation violates mores but not laws or norms. Other deviations violate all 3 - law, mores & norms. Homosexuals by weight of their number and nature of deviance have organised themselves into a group to protect its members. Identification with such a subculture means one is not deviant within this group, not stigmatised and is accepted. Transvestites, transsexuals & fetishists are also beginning to organise themselves (Bancroft, 1974). This reflects more openness in the society in the form of providing opportunities to people to assert their sexuality.

Masturbation :

There is a strong social taboo against masturbation in India; propagating a belief among youth that it leads to sickness and inability to perform. But they do indulge in it; 96% Indian urban educated adults agreed that they masturbated (63% starting before 16 years of age). Almost 80% masturbated at least once a week. Indulgence by youth in masturbation opposing societal taboo leads to a sense of guilt among them and resorting to use of variety of medicine of dubious quality (Savara and Sridhar, 1992). Current view of the Church on masturbation is of

accepting it as a harmless act or even beneficial for society, while earlier it was viewed as an evil, wicked, guiltful & anguish causing act which has dire effects on health, sapped manhood, affected sanity and led to pimples (Johnson, 1969).

Masturbation as an autoeroticism is also viewed as a social phenomena occurring almost universally under conditions that prevent normal sex, e.g. prolonged education, delayed economic independence & delayed marriage being more common in unmarried (Seward, 1954).

Fellatio :

It has been said to be almost universal in India. It is considered as a duty by females because of unquestioning submissive nature of women in India (Ellis, 1936). It was also reported by 60% of urban, educated, males responding to a magazine questionnaire in India (Savara & Sridhar, 1992).

Premarital Sex (PMS) :

In nearly every culture there is some acceptance of PMS (Kinsey et al, 1953). It is universal by teens in societies which do not impose any barrier on sex (Seward, 1954). It is common in India as well as in the West. The difference is in its acceptance as a way of life in the latter (Gupta, 1982). Half of US girls have PMS, starting as early as 11 years. Bearing a baby without marriage is considered as a sign of maturity and a status symbol (Hoshii, 1986b). In India, 47% rural girls and 65% educated, urban, males were reported to have had PMS in studies done by Bang et al (1989) and Savara & Sridhar (1992) respectively. In some tribes of Africa & elsewhere, PMS was common earlier as a

custom where marriage followed pregnancy i.e., after testing fertility (Ellis, 1936).

In Sweden, PMS is socially accepted and 90% people indulge in it. There are late marriages, long courtship, no ostracism for unwed mothers and no birth is termed illegitimate. Abortion is legal and contraceptives are encouraged. The overall attitude is permissive. Increased affluence has also been cited as one reason for such a picture. In Australia, on the other hand, P.M.S. was stated to be very low. Sex was de-emphasised & not publicised. There was no coeducation with heavy study burden & less socialization for students, with no emphasis on extracurricular activities (Johnson, 1969).

Other factors related with PMS are feminist movement, which changed society's views on unwed mothers. In Japan, PMS was found more in lower social strata girls & mainly in waitresses, hostesses, Turkish bath attendants & models (Hoshii, 1986b). Economic depression of 1930s also was said to encourage PMS (poverty, broken homes, disorganised neighbourhood). In 1940s, it was taken as a way of life while in 1970s alienation in fast moving society led to PMS.

Bachelor's Huts :

A unique institution for imparting training on sex prior to marriage exist in some tribes of India in the form of bachelors' huts where boys & girls are permitted to have sex; e.g. 'ghotuls' of Murias in state of M.P., 'gitiors' of Mundas, 'Dhunkurunge' of Oraons, 'Dhanga-basson' of Bhuiyas, 'Morung' of Yo of Konayak Nagas. Usually, there is a

hut in the middle of village, with even drawings on sex on walls. There is no sense of guilt or corruption associated with it. Its affairs are managed by adolescents themselves without any interference by adults/parents. There are strict rules & punishment for infringement. No boy can have exclusive claim on one girl and not more than 3 nights are permitted with one girl. On an average, there are 20 members per group. Head boy/girls selected the mates (Ruhela, 1969; Sur, 1973). Pregnancy is infrequent inspite of regular sex. Reason for insistence on frequent change of partners is the belief that such changes prevent pregnancy and also that too much indulgence in the same girl is not good for marriage with another one later. One reason given for existence of such practice is that parents can have privacy in the home without being watched by grown up kids - who spend nights at the hut (Sur, 1973).

Sex in Marriage :

Marital sex provides a regular, socially approved sexual outlet for adults and acts as a means to control promiscuity. Various religions had in earlier times recommended a judicious marital sex by prescribing optimum frequency of coitus. But marriage is not the major regulator of sexual behaviour in most societies of world. Most of them tolerate sex outside marriage. This is truer for PMS than EMS (Shulz, 1976).

Marriage has often been projected as a goal to be reached - as an end & not a beginning in Indian media (fiction/cinema). After marriage the husband & wife settle down, neither feels any obligation to charm each other. Sex becomes less and less frequent as it loses charm, excitement and

novelty. Alternative avenues of sexual gratifications are sought. Dead monotony of regimented life lead people to find solace in vicarious violence and eroticism in cinema, striptease etc. (Barnes and Barnes, 1948). Sexless marriages are far too many. These endure because of socio-economic reasons, viz. cost of divorce, rebuke of friends, relatives and disappointment of in-laws/children (Wiseman, 1976). Now the concept of marital rape has emerged in West as a legal entity where husband can be convicted of raping an unwilling wife (Dickinson & Leming, 1990).

Extramarital Sex (EMS) :

Though decreed by most societies, the rules on extramarital sex are more honoured in breach than in observance. It is allowed ceremonially in Eskimo even currently, as was done on festival of fools in Europe earlier (Shulz, 1976). In Eskimos and Siberian Karyaks even a kind of sexual hospitality is prevalent where wife entertains the guests sexually. Such a custom was prevalent in ancient times in other countries also, including India. This practice works within the framework of social customs and is a manifestation of wider concept of hospitality (Sur, 1973). Such sexual hospitality has also been reported in Khasas of Jounsar Bawar of India and in some tribes of N.America, (Kakar, 1980).

Christians & Orthodox Jews consider EMS as a taboo and morally wrong. But, most societies permit EMS as an outlet for male to ensure marital stability. Such a permission is given to female less often- only 10% societies freely permit it. In 40% societies EMS is permitted in certain orgiastic festivals. Sometimes new bride

is also permitted to have sex with others. Sometimes EMS is allowed in barren marriages. Sometimes it is permitted with specific persons or with siblings-in-law (Kinsey et al, 1953).

Sathiyas of Madhya Pradesh mortgage their wives to moneylenders. In *Tantrik* culture, sex is emphasized for mother-worshipper (Sur, 1973). In a study, Savara & Sridhar (1992) reported EMS in 56% of urban educated Indian men. In 53% cases it was with a friend, in 26% with relatives, in 18% with colleagues and in 26% it was casual sex. More than 10 partners were reported by 29% men.

Factors responsible for EMS in current U.S. society include longevity which has increased the duration of married life, exposure of women to other than husband males in work places, effective contraception, legalised abortion, curable venereal diseases, transience (mobility), cultural acceptance of non-procreative sex and nuclear family. Although 70% American disapprove EMS, one third to half indulge in it. most such affairs are short-term and secretive. Swinging is getting the most attention as a way of EMS in U.S. (2% practice it) (Dickinson & Leming, 1990).

Homosexuality :

It has been prevalent in every society and all strata since antiquity (Devi, 1977). Ford and Beach (1951) reported that two third of 190 societies studied by them sanctioned some form of homosexual activity. Kinsey scale of human sexuality viewed homosexuality as a component of a continuum (Kinsey et al, 1953).

Various reasons have been cited for occurrence of homosexuality. Lack of

opportunity of heterosexual contact through segregation taboos (Plummer, 1975; Seward, 1954), idealization of heterosexual marital coitus etc. have led to development of homosexuality (Kinsey et al, 1953). Prolonged schooling, delayed marriage & moral restraint on PMS also favour homosexuality. It has been found to be more common in women employed in occupations like army, waitress, artists or sports (Kinsey et al, 1953).

It is more or less an urban, metropolitan phenomena because of more opportunities of contact, anonymity and large drifting population. It is also more common in occupations of stage, cinema, catering, modelling, hairdressing, teachers, police, driver, factory, engineer, lawyers and in schools, hostels, prisons (as an accepted way of life). In India, it is more common in North-West region. Most homosexuals in India lead isolated lives (Devi, 1977). Now 'Bombay Dost' has emerged as the first openly gay organization of India (Kavi, 1991).

In West, there is an organised way of life for gays. There are exclusive bars, parks, beaches, streets, papers, magazines meant for homosexuals only. For females, only big cities have such exclusive places. so, lesbians depend on a closed group of friends, club, party & dances. In India, where talking about sex or homosexuality is a taboo, there are no such organized groups. So it is done at each others home in parties of cafe (Devi, 1977). Savara & Sridhar (1992) reported a prevalence of 36% of homosexuality in urban educated adults of India. One of the latest novel of Shobha De - a women novelist of India. 'The strange obsession' revolves round the

life a lesbian heroine. Some of the Indian films have also taken up this theme in mid 1990s. This reflects more openness in Indian urban circles towards homosexuality.

Though, the incidence may not have changed in last 25 years, the trend is towards greater tolerance of homosexuality if not outright permissiveness (Grinder, 1973). Its growing tolerance & gay movement led American Psychiatric Association to delete homosexuality from the list of mental disorders (Francoeur, 1987). Even, the Church has now called for greater understanding and tolerance of homosexuality and few even favour it for population control (Johnson, 1969). Gay Churches have emerged in U.S. and gay marriages have been reported. Films on gays and gay movement has encouraged them to come out in the open. Homosexuality has been particularly publicised in media as prevalent in female tennis players who fear that heterosexuality will affect their performance. Homosexuality flourishes in one sex community - boarding school, army, monasteries, sports club, prison & boardships (Hoshii, 1987b).

Birth order has also shown to affect prevalence to homosexuality, it being more common in only sons or in the youngest of the several brothers (Benjamin of the family). In Germany, Hitler's regime favoured it. Regimented uniformed life with loss of identity forced men to resort to deviations to distinguish oneself from the group (Barnes and Barnes, 1948). It is disapproved in army especially in high ranks. (Hoshii, 1987b). Mr. Clinton, the President of USA in early 1990s did, in fact,

debated on a motion that gays may be allowed in U.S. army. (It was later allowed). Even a lesbian was appointed as an advisor in U.S. in 1993. Homosexuality was legalised in '70s in U.S. Canada, Germany, U.K. & an international organisation of gays was formed. Sexual permissiveness has encouraged homosexuality & sadomasochism in U.S. where bondage boutiques offer whips, handcuffs & whipping posts. Sadomasochistic organisation & periodicals have also come up. Ten percent Americans are said to have sadomasochistic inclinations (Hoshii, 1987b).

Prostitution :

Prostitution has been said to be a tonic for husbands bored from dreary marital sex and to be a saviour of marriages. It existed in systematic form in every civilization. Islam, Jews and Christians have condemned it. Missionaries - unintentionally but inevitably, have favoured the growth of prostitution by condemning free union (Ellis, 1936). It has been widespread in Asia and is legal in Peru (Hoshii, 1987b). It has existed in India since antiquity and was highly regarded and glorified. It has continued through Muslim and British India (Sur, 1973). Religious prostitution (dedication of women to gods) had been prevalent in South India (where *Devadasis* still exist despite a Devadasi Protection Act, 1934), West Asia, North Africa and Greece. It slowly abolished with growth of civilization and consequently led to establishment of public brothels (Ellis, 1936). In Japan also, it was not so disregarded. Prostitutes there had refined culture, organised services and respected

place in society. This started declining when Japanese started imitating European cultures and *Geishas* appeared about 2 centuries back. These *Geishas* were equivalent to Indian *Ganikas* & Greek *Hetairas*. These were not actually prostitutes. They were highly intelligent and were known for witty repartees, and were much sought after by gentry. In Mongolia & China also prostitution was accepted (Ellis, 1936). In Thailand, it operates through massage clubs, go-go bars & transvestite clubs (Hoshii, 1987b). Degradation of prostitution started with the dawn of Christianity (Bhattacharya, 1975).

Difficult early marriage, social disapproval of EMS under influence of civilization & restriction of social interaction with grills of respectable families has favoured prostitution. Economic reasons have also been cited as favouring prostitution (Hoshii, 1987b). At one time, economic gains of prostitution in China led to abandonment of practice of female infanticide (Ellis, 1936). Difficulty of marriage due to market values of virginity & other reasons resulted in pooling of a large number of young eligible unmarried men & women leading to prostitution. Even some moralists favoured prostitution as the sewers which keep the palaces clean (Ellis, 1936).

Presence of solidery in a city favours prostitution. Sailors reaching shore after a long dreary routine and emotional abstinence also visit prostitutes (Ellis, 1936), Hoshii, 1987; Gill, 1977). Polygamy in Indonesia is said to have favoured prostitution. Migrants freed from normal constraints of the family in relation to sexual behaviour and relative anonymity

indulge in sexual adventures of commercial nature especially in industries where, initially, male workers go without their families. Brothels are even run under the garbs of "religious services" of "sex therapy" clinics (where customers even get the bills paid by medical insurance). U.S. army men have been reported to indulge in sham marriages abroad, mainly Asia, to bring bride to U.S. and then subject them to prostitution (Hoshii, 1987b).

Rise of prostitution throughout the world is due to structural contradiction of patriarchal societies - absolute sexual freedom to men & no outlet for women with insistence on chastity (bhattacharya, 1975; Sur, 1973). In U.S. now the prostitution has been made a rights/labour issue with labelling of prostitutes as sex workers (Hoshii, 1987b).

Bestiality :

It has been found to be more common in primitive people, peasants, shepherds, goatherds & rarely in towns. Certain beliefs that it is a cure for venereal diseases may also favour bestiality. It is further promoted by mythology e.g. man may become animal & vice versa, animal ancestry of man, sculptures depicting bestiality in temples (Khazuraho). Extreme familiarity between peasants and animals coupled with separation from women & regular watching of animal sex life may also favour bestiality in rural areas (Ellis, 1936).

Incest :

There is almost a universal taboo against incest (Walker & Fletcher, 1955; Dickinson & Leming, 1990). But, currently there is an incest lobby in U.S. which discredits taboo on incest and wants it to be allowed in willing relatives. In Japan,

brother-sister and mother-son incest are the common form, wherever it is practiced. Mothers have been reported to have sex with their young sons who are preparing for exams. to relieve them of the tension (Hoshii, 1987b). In West, father-daughter incest is the common form (Hoshii 1987a). Between 12-15 million US women have been reported to be victim of incest (Dickinson and Leming, 1990).

Exhibitionism :

Phallic worship is ancient and has been world wide.

Orgy :

Orgy has been a universal phenomena - an occasional outburst of license permitted in the face of severe abstinence rules. Often, it was practiced as a ritual, in festivals or for religious purposes, e.g., in Greece. It was allowed in France through festival of fools. Urban existence with high tensions, rigid routine and gray monotony of modern life favours recreation by orgy as a moment of organic relief. The precise form the relief would take, changes with other social changes. Dancing is most fundamental and primitive form of orgy. Under influence of culture it takes purely cerebral form and more muscular form is denied which tend to fall into discredit, thus encouraging prostitution (Ellis, 1936). An exchange of wives at orgiastic festivities has been reported in Araucanos, Bororo, Keres of S. America, Araphos. Gros Ventres and Lower Mississippi tribes of N. Amrica, Dayaks and Jakun of Indonesia, Bhuiyas, Hos and Kotas of India, Ashanti, Ekoi and Bantu tribes of Africa. On such occasions sexual restrictions are removed and the sexual appetite stimulated, discipline is relaxed, social barriers are overridden.

Sexual license in such orgies fulfill the function of a safety vent relieving normal repression and safeguard of ordinary institutions (Malinowski, 1967).

Swinging/Mate Swapping :

Generally swingers are under 40 years, from middle class, well educated (even intellectuals) less religious and predominantly White (Wisemen, 1976). some 2% of American population has been estimated to participate in swinging. Usually husbands initiate swinging. Wives initially respond negatively. It has been seen to be more common in divorced people and those marrying early (Dickinson & Leming, 1990). Extensive premarital sex in some Scandinavian countries led to boredom in married couples who then tried for novelty by wife swapping (Gupta, 1982)

Transvestism :

It was common in earlier times also, particularly in ceremonial cross dressing - in Africa, Rome and also in Christmas dances of Europe which was accepted by Church (Ellis, 1936).

Child Sexual Abuse :

It is usually committed by males and is usually heterosexual, hence girls are more likely to be victims of such acts. Majority of such cases go unreported. Sexual exploitation of boys is also common now in U.S. (in 5% of all families). Majority of child molesters are family members or persons known to the victims (75%). Most parents believe that their children face little danger of sexual abuse and do not discuss sex with their kids. As many as one in four girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused once or more by 18 years age. Children's lack of knowledge and uncertainty about sexual behaviour often lead to their victimization (Dickinson

and Leming, 1990).

AIDS :

Scare of herpes and AIDS and increasing emphasis on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) through media in '80s has radically changed American sex scene from torried sex revolution of '60s and 70's to reidentification of fidelity and marriage. Casual sex and one night stands are out (Hoshii, 1986a). People now think twice before engaging in sexual relation with unknown or several partners. Even in gay community of San Fransisco, per capita number of sexual partners has been significantly reduced (Dickinson and Leming, 1990). Unmarried in particular have changed their behaviour and avoid casual sex. In Thailand, fear of AIDS has led sex workers to insist of condom - use by customers. This is further hepled by threat of a penalty or closure of the establishment by authorities in case of noncompliance of such statutory insistence by owners (WHO, 1992).

Even in Africa, in view of the threat of AIDS an emphasis on the need to maintain stable faithful sexual relationship is now re-emerging (Banda, 1991). Such change in human sexual behaviour is on two counts. First is the fear of inevitable death if one contracts AIDS. Second is the strong linkage established, through print & audiovisual media, between promiscuity and transmission of AIDS. Singh (1997) also opined that the temporal relationship between 'sexual revolution' in US in 1960s (sexual perversion, extra - and pre-marital sex, swinging, mate swapping & homosexuality) and advent of AIDS in 1980s indicated the possibility of causal relationship between the two.

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सारांश

विकृत पथभृष्ट यौन-व्यवहार के सामाजिक कारण-एक ऐतिहासिक दृष्टिकोण

-अमरजीत सिंघ

यौन-व्यभिचार आज कल के सभ्य सामाजिक जीवन शैली की देन है। हर समाज में आम जिंदगी के तनावों से मुक्ति के लिए कुछ हद तक विकृत पथभृष्ट व्यवहार सहन किया जाता है। समय के साथ इस प्रकार के व्यवहार की परिभाषाएं और माप दंड बदल रहे हैं। विकृत पथभृष्ट यौन व्यवहार में लिप्त लोगों की गुटबंदी और दबाव के कारण से इतिहास में कई बार विकृत पथभृष्ट यौनव्यवहार को सामान्य उचित यौनव्यवहार माना गया है। वेश्यावृत्ति भी सभी सभ्यताओं में पाई गई है। एड्स जैसी बीमारी शुरू होने के बाद इस स्वच्छन्द यौन-क्रांति में कुछ ठहराव और धीमापन आया है। आजकल सुरक्षित यौन तथ अपने साथी से वफादारी पर ज्यादा जोर दिय जाने लगा है।