

Sexual Satisfaction Among Women: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Indian sexual health is given less concern considering the existing pieces of literature. Sexual satisfaction or sex-related activities are largely disdained when women are involved. India is one of the developing countries, and young women continue to marry or get involved in relationships at younger ages for love or with the help of their community. This research aims to gain a deep understanding of how women perceive, understand, and engage in sexual behavior and intercourse which marks the difference between married and unmarried women. In today's era, where women understand their rights and practice them radically, this research envisions bringing light to a highly criticized and conservative idea of women engaging in sexual behavior. With sexual behavior, sexual preference, and sexual satisfaction this study also intends to shed light on sexual safety, STIs, HPV and other vaccinations, HIV and AIDS, and many precautionary principles and the attitude of women towards them.

Keywords: Sexual satisfaction, women, marriage, commitment, relationships, satisfaction, unmarried women.

1. INTRODUCTION:

India is one of several developing countries where girls continue to commit young. More than half of this category are Indian women between the ages of 20 and 49, and the majority begin having sexual relationships after marriage. Having sex while in a relationship is not always voluntary, safe, or talked about for a young Indian lady.

Young women have little control over decisions regarding their sexuality and fertility. A fundamental aspect of a woman's responsibility as a partner is to have sex whenever requested. This is also a key value that is emphasized to young women before the marriage.

A "good" partner is meant to avoid sexual communication, expression, and control while also being obedient, polite, and virginal. Even though some studies have noted that Indian women are not always passive and submissive in sexual matters, on the whole, ingrained norms of male authority in marriage limit women's negotiation options. The sexual behaviour of Indian women is not sufficiently studied. There are minimal studies on this subject, therefore things like how content people are with their sexuality are unknown. Being such a unique and private experience of oneself, sexual satisfaction is challenging to examine (Simpson & Ganges 1991). A definition of the concept is also lacking in the majority of the existent literature on sexual satisfaction.

In India, women often keep their sexual desires private due to societal emphasis on male satisfaction and dominance. Existing studies cover various factors influencing female sexual satisfaction, including orgasms and coitus frequency. This study focuses on communication, compatibility, contentment, awareness, willingness, and respect. Cultural norms prioritize a woman's role in satisfying her husband's needs, neglecting her sex education. Influenced by media, sexual intercourse becomes popularized. Some men assert dominance, wanting sex "on demand," leaving women with limited control, as indicated by research (Elias and Heise, 1993). This highlights the challenges women face in sexual autonomy and the need for a more equitable approach.

Sexual satisfaction is a highly subjective term as it differs from person to person. The most accurate definition was given by Lawrance and Byers (1995) they define sexual satisfaction as "an affective response arising from one's subjective evaluation of the positive and negative dimensions associated with one's sexual relationship" This definition distinguishes satisfaction from simply affective categories like happiness as well as from purely evaluative constructs like success since it includes both emotional and evaluative components. For most couples, sexual satisfaction is vital. As well as their personal sense of sexual satisfaction and that of their partner, people are concerned about the quality of their sexual relationships. Although considerable attention has been paid to the treatment of sexual dysfunction, sexual problems, and sexual dissatisfaction, the enhancement of sexual satisfaction has received little attention (Cooper & Stoltenburg, 1987). Sexual satisfaction is termed as the absence of dysfunction, in fact, many authors use the term sexual satisfaction without defining it at all or use a tautological definition such as "Satisfaction is conceptualized as the degree to which [one] is satisfied with [one's] sex life" (Pinney, Gerrard, & Denney, 1987, p. 234.).

Current studies and definitions on sexual satisfaction primarily focus on foreign populations, leaving a notable gap in understanding the perspectives of Indian women. Despite the centrality of sexual satisfaction in studies on sexual health and couples' well-being, there is a lack of qualitative research exploring the nuanced meanings of sexual satisfaction among Indian women. The existing empirical and clinical literature offers limited insights into strategies for enhancing overall sexual satisfaction or addressing specific concerns, as highlighted by Byers in 1999.

According to the IEMSS model which is based on the social exchange theory (Thibault & Kelley 1952), Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction by Lawrance and Byers in 1995, Sexual satisfaction is influenced by (a) the ratio of sexual benefits to sexual costs in the relationship, (b) how these benefits and costs compare to the expected levels of benefits and costs, (c) how equally partners are perceived to be sharing benefits and costs, and (d) the nonsexual aspects of the relationship. The IEMSS model suggests higher relationship happiness leads to increased sexual satisfaction. Additionally, satisfaction is expected when gains in a sexual connection outweigh expenditures, and when experienced benefits align favorably with anticipated levels. Perceived equality in sexual rewards and costs predicts higher satisfaction. The model emphasizes the historical impact of relationship factors on sexual satisfaction. The study, guided by this model, recognizes sexual enjoyment as an emotional act, not solely driven by physical pleasure or patriarchal norms. Given this model, the interview guide for the study acknowledges potential differences in sexual satisfaction between men and women. Scientific information on these distinctions is limited. Bancroft (1989) argues for distinct conceptualizations of sexual problems for men and women, while counterarguments, such as McConaghy (2004), assert minimal differences in conceptualization.

The joy of an orgasm should not be confused with sexual fulfilment. For the majority of people, having satisfying daily experiences is crucial to living a happy and healthy life. Although sexual difficulties are widespread worldwide, they vary by location depending on their nature and context. Many sexual problems are caused by repression, a lack of education, and religious dominance. (Elshikh, 2015).

One important aspect of quality of life and health is having a fulfilling sexual life, and variables that have a poor impact on an individual's health also have an adverse effect on women's sexual lives. It includes the biological, psychological, and social factors that influence human behavior and sexuality. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), women's sexual function and health are fundamental human rights.

It's common for people to develop romantic relationships with one another that they hope will last forever (McNulty & Karney, 2004). However, people and circumstances shift. In fact, a lot of couples struggle to stay happy for a variety of reasons, such as poor communication, a lack of understanding, and incompatibility between the partners, failing to pay attention to their partner's desires and understand their needs.

Sexual health, an integral aspect of overall women's health, requires prioritization. A recent HealthyWomen.org survey found 62% of women dissatisfied with their sex lives, with 80% prioritizing health after family and pets. Contrary to belief, sexual satisfaction significantly impacts overall health, positively affecting the immune system, mood, and stress levels. Sex, particularly with orgasm, releases oxytocin and endorphins, further enhancing its benefits in reducing stress, fostering intimacy, and combating sadness.

While 41% of women always experience orgasms, they attribute satisfaction more to themselves than their partners. Emphasizing that satisfaction extends beyond orgasms, communication emerges as a crucial element. In long-term relationships, discussing sexual concerns is essential, dispelling the common fear of partner anger. Misguided assumptions about a partner's preferences, often based on stereotypes, hinder understanding unique desires, making open communication crucial.

A woman's ability to speak openly about sexuality may differ from her ability to speak openly about other matters, such as parenthood or sexual education, depending on the culture. Different agency domains and factors connected to particular domains are frequently treated interchangeably in empirical studies of agency. While factors that increase agency in one domain might not necessarily increase agency in other domains, women's agency is likely to be multi-dimensional, extending to areas like fertility and finances.

For instance, job and education, which are thought to boost women's authority, may improve women's capacity for making domestic decisions but may not necessarily increase their sexual agency. One of the most important, but enigmatic, aspects of human behaviour is sexual behaviour. In traditional Indian settings, where attitudes are still mostly conservative, it is practically forbidden for many people to bring up such topics (Bang and others, 1989). This is not just limited to traditional settings; some urban areas play a part in this too. While education and sexual education maybe correlated in the books, in people it is rarely seen. It is such instances that create a stereotypical society and make sure certain topic remain taboo and at the end of the sea.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are numerous ways to define sexual satisfaction. Lawrance and Byers (1995) provided one of the most widely used definitions, which is as follows: "an affective response arising from one's subjective evaluation of the positive and negative dimensions associated with one's sexual relationship" (p. 268). A crucial aspect of human sexuality, sexual fulfillment is regarded as both a sexual right (World Health Organization, 2010) and the final phase of the sexual response cycle given by Basson, 2001; Sierra & Buena-Casal, in 2004. Additionally, it plays a significant role in a person's general quality of life. For instance, higher levels of sexual satisfaction have been linked to better physical and mental health, general wellbeing and life quality say Davison, Bell, LaChina, Holden, & Davis in 2009 in their paper The relationship between self-reported sexual satisfaction and general well-being in women.

High relationship satisfaction, communication with one's partner and sexual aggressiveness have been reported with other relational characteristics. High levels of sexual satisfaction are correlated with optimal sexual functioning, according to several studies. High levels of sexual satisfaction have also been linked to other factors like social support, strong

relationships with the kids and family, and greater socioeconomic position say Henderson, A. W., Lehavot, K., & Simoni, J. M. in their paper Ecological models of sexual satisfaction among lesbian/bisexual and heterosexual women 2009. Only recently has research begun to focus on sexual consent. Consent was described as the "freely given verbal or nonverbal communication of a feeling of willingness to engage in sexual activity" by Hickman and Muehlenhard (1999) (p. 259).

Premarital sexual encounters between men and women are traditionally strongly frowned upon by India's main value system. According to George and Jaswal, women's sexuality is considered as a strong, erratic, and hazardous trait that should be controlled by marriage at a young age. Many people, including some policymakers, believe that premarital chastity, marital faithfulness, and homosexuality are all universally practiced in India. Whether or not this description was ever accurate, social taboos and punishments for extramarital sex have reduced as a result of increasing mobility, the media, and later marriage ages states 1996 paper by Nag; Khan and Patel, Savara and Shridhar in Sexual behaviour and AIDS in India.

Sexual communication is crucial to both sexual well-being and sexual fulfillment, according to research say Cupach & Comstock, 1990; MacNeil & Byers, 1997, 2005, 2009. In other words, people who self-disclose to their spouse more about their sexual preferences and dislikes do so because they feel more sexually satisfied. According to experts, the secret to strong intimate cohabitation between couples is talking about sexual problems and finding rational, reasonable solutions to them. It has been shown that sexual issues between spouses have been ranked highly in terms of divorce, despite the fact that many experts contend that the majority of divorces are brought on by financial conditions. Due to different social, cultural, and demographic variables, many women experience sex-related issues at some point in their lives, particularly unmarried women or newlyweds who were less than a year into their union and had a worse attitude toward the sex.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study focusing on social aspects, interviewing 60 women using a non-probability convenience sampling method. Participants were recruited through various modes. Recordings were made with consent, ensuring anonymity and participant freedom to withdraw or skip questions. Rapport-building preceded interviews to minimize discomfort.

Data collection involved telephonic interviews, mainly through video or audio calls, using a semi-structured approach. Thematic Analysis (TA) under the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach framework was used for data interpretation. TA is known for its flexibility without strict theoretical commitments. Repeated readings unveiled primary themes and codes, forming the first and second levels of analysis. Initial codes were identified across the dataset, and themes emerged by combining codes with universal meanings. The study's results were effectively examined and concluded within the research context, offering a nuanced understanding of the chosen social aspect in psychology.

4. RESULTS

In the initial analysis of the data, it was discovered that there were two unique types of responses: the concise, basic definition and the more intricate ones, which combined several concepts and enriched the definition with adjectives and representations. This chapter consists of the results that were derived by the study.

4.1 Communication

Sexual communication is one of the main aspects when it comes to intercourse between the partners. It allows freedom to talk and listen in order to grow in the relationship. In the study it was found that women are highly communicative about their desires and fantasies. Not only those but they also like to be assertive and vocalise if something was not right for them. Out of 60 only 18 women reported having difficulties communicating to their partner due to various reasons like age differences, shyness etc.

The theme that is allocated under this objective is the theme of creative sexuality.

Creative sexuality

The codes that fell under this theme are exploration, use of external media, mutual understanding, and reciprocity of desires. Women were more interested in introducing and exploring such measures in intercourse and stated that it enhanced their experience and helped them reach satisfaction. Being creative not only includes measures but also consists of using external media such as watching porn together, reading articles to increase awareness of one's likes and dislikes, and trying new things together all of this increases their desire for their partner and enhances emotional as well as physical connection. Amongst these many participants correlated sexual satisfaction with exploration. They believed that after a period of time there's a threat for things to turn monotonous, exploration helps in keeping the spark alive.

Women mostly reported that they feel better when there is mutual understanding meaning, they feel closer to their partner if non-judgment is expressed and consider them as an equal part of the activity. For most women, sex should be a conjoined act. When there is mutual understanding between the counterparts it is easier to get aroused.

When talking about sexual satisfaction it was also seen that 58 out of 60 women expect reciprocity of desires, by explaining and understanding desires to explore new ways to achieve pleasure by either using measures to enhance their sexual experience or are interested in using them. This includes sexting, using toys like vibrators for females, gifting sex toys to their partner, trying role plays and different dresses that are gifted or bought for seduction and arousal purposes, trying

different positions for sex, engaging in oral sex or anal sex, using sex dices or handcuffs, trying sexual games and being open to more new ideas.

4.2 Contentment

Contentment as the word suggests means satisfaction. Women view satisfaction very differently. But in this modernised era contentment can mean a mixture of many things. The charts of satisfaction go high and low. To maintain sexual satisfaction in a relationship certain things need to be taken into consideration.

The theme associated with this objective is sexual well-being.

Sexual well-being

In all women's definitions, various factors affected their satisfaction levels. Under this theme lie five codes which include sexual release, pleasure, frequency, trust & safety, and orgasms. As there can be very many different factors that are associated with sexual satisfaction here is what 60 out of 60 women have to say about it, a lack of sexual frustration is sexual satisfaction. Women reported that they have to feel the sexual release for them to feel satisfied sexually. There can be a build-up of sexual frustration if there is a lack of action but timely releases like these keep things better and running. The feeling of release was linked to orgasms. All the women stated that they wanted to feel orgasms. "It is not necessary to feel them after every intercourse but their presence should be there" is what they collectively reported. Orgasmic intercourse does not necessarily have to be induced by sex, it can also be induced by toys, clitoral stimulation, or masturbation.

They also stated that feeling pleasure in bed, while making love increased their emotional and physical connection with their partner. Pleasure to most of them meant feeling happy and loved by their partner. Women in their ways describes pleasure symbolical to feeling loved. Pleasure did not necessarily mean in bed, for some women it was about making them feel special and unique. When the partner also shared a pleasurable experience with them is when they felt satisfaction, "it is a two-way thing, it's not during the sex it's a after sex feeling where we both feel content with each other either by talking or cuddling after sex".

Another thing that really concerned the women was the frequency of sex. Recent marriages, meaning those who are married for less than a year reported an increased frequency of sex or sexual behaviour. An average number of times was nearly 7 to 8 times a week. Later, when the marriage ages the frequency of sex or sexual behaviour decreases to an average of 1 to 2 times a week. Contrary to that, unmarried women have the opposite opinion, frequency increases as the relationship ages. This is where the code of trust & safety is found. The better the trust the better the activity. Surprisingly, women stated that although the frequency has decreased sexual satisfaction has increased over the years. They state that "an emotional bond that has been created, leads to quality sex". These young women's experiences led them to the conclusion that while having sex before marriage might have been enjoyable, it also came with numerous locational constraints, dangers of becoming pregnant, and social stigma. Marriage-related sexual activity is significantly better because there are fewer limitations.

4.3 Compatibility

Compatibility in any sense is important in a relationship, be it mental or emotional compatibility. However, sexual compatibility can be viewed as a mix of all since it takes effort from both partners to comprehend and build sexual compatibility. While asking about this, all the participants agreed to feeling compatible with their partner sexually. They confessed feeling safe and understood by their partner. Nearly 57 out of 60 women viewed compatibility as a must in their relationship.

The theme that falls under this objective is intimacy.

Intimacy

The codes belonging to this theme are comfort, foreplay, affection and romance. All women stated that comfort was a highly preferred phenomenon. To be comfortable with your partner to perform sexual activities was crucial, no matter how many months or years they were together. Most women also reported that when the comfort is high, they "feel sexy in their bodies and can express better". Speaking of which, women also stated that the initial months of a relationship when the sex is extremely frequent are the months where this comfort develops. The code of foreplay was also found in most of the women's definitions. Engaging in foreplay has increased their satisfaction by 60% as it simulates the clitoris pleasuring the female body. Women also mention that their significant others were aware and educated about a woman's body and vice versa. Their definition of foreplay included massages, talking, oral sex, vaginal or clitoral simulation using fingers or kissing. Many other sources of literature also state that foreplay increases satisfaction for males and females both. To induce foreplay there has to be enough patience within a couple because it can sometimes be a long process trying to get your partner into the mood. Further, foreplay also helps with arousal. Without a proper arousal sex can be painful and unsatisfactory, engaging in foreplay eliminates those welcoming a satisfactory intercourse. Affection was a very interesting code that I found in almost all the responses of the women. Which means expressing your emotional connection with the partner to express feelings of love. It is easy to get lost in the responsibilities and forget to appreciate your partner's body. Women likely believed when there was appreciation and acknowledgment for them, they felt more

compatible with their partner and were pleased to make love. "Having a flow of emotions and affection makes him and me more sexually compatible for each other" is what one participant reported.

Another code that this theme covers is romance. Romance here was defined as acts of service. 59 out of 60 women reported that when men made an extra effort in the relationship it was pleasing. Helping them with housework like cleaning the dishes, doing the laundry, cooking, taking care of the kids and sharing other basic duties with them made their role as a wife easier. They also state that when men treat them as a counterpart and take interest in their lives it induces kinship and the sex is far more satisfying when these factors come together.

4.4 Willingness

Willingness as we know it is a crucial concept when it comes to intercourse. In India it is believed that women have to "go with the flow" and not have a say in it. Women now prioritize and vocalise. Men on the other hand do have a higher libido than women but as reported by the females they have learned to ask and contain themselves when they deny. The theme that falls under this objective is regard

Regard

Under this theme of regard, there are codes of boundaries and desire. Although, these are just two codes they are highly demanded by women. 55 out of 60 women believe that there should be a healthy boundary between partners when it comes to making love. Sex can get wild; some women may prefer it but there are other sides to it as well which are not likely preferred by most of the women.

Women stated that it was merrier if her consent was asked before engaging in intercourse. A sexual boundary has to be maintained. It was not always the use of verbal communication that conveyed their consent but the nonverbal cues as well. Women mentioned even if their partners' libido was high the women weren't high on sex drive. This also involves men not abusing or miswording during sex. Women reported that they like when respect is maintained during the sexual intercourse, using disrespectful speech or disrespectful actions was despised by all women unless it's a kink. 12 out of 60 women reported coercive sex, when they were tired but still gave into the needs of the husband. They stated that their partner would either demand or request it despite their will to do so and eventually due to consistent poking they would give in. Other women stated that when they are not in the mood, the partner puts in effort to make their mood or they referred to other forms of sexual behaviour like giving them massages or cuddling.

The next code that this theme contains is of desire. Desire here means the will to have sex. Not only men pursue women for sex, but women do too. 58 out of 60 women initiate sexual engagement when they are in the mood. They have their ways of asking or engaging their partner in sexual activity.

4.5 Awareness

Awareness refers to how a partner educates themselves or is educated sexually. In India, sex education is not taught freely. In this section, women were asked if their partners were aware of the female body and universal pleasure points. The theme that this objective contains is interest.

Interest

In this theme there is a single code of openness. Openness refers to the partner being keen to know more about the female body and wanting to learn about it. During the responses, many women themselves did not know their bodies which demanded a need for sexual education. Bodies are complex and female bodies are more complicated than male bodies. 58 out of 60 women state "knowing conventional and unconventional pleasure points of each other is a part of sex".

Women stated that exploring more about their counterparts' pleasure points was a part of awareness. Many women guided their partners to the location of clitoris or the G spot. Whereas some women stated that their partners were already aware of the basic pleasure points in a female body.

4.6 Respect

Respect in any relationship is essential. Respect for the partner should not just be practiced by males, but by females as well. Like other aspects, respect is also mutual. This objective deviates from sexual intercourse and focuses on aspects that are non-sexual but impact sexual satisfaction in women.

The theme that this objective portrays is care.

Care

Under this theme there are three codes: Decency, hygiene, and other responsibilities. Sexual satisfaction extends beyond physical intimacy, as highlighted by the IEMSS model. Participants emphasized the significance of non-sexual factors in their responses. For women, decency in a partner's behavior, encompassing respect beyond sexual interactions, is crucial. This involves respecting the partner as a human being, contributing to household chores, acknowledging equality in responsibilities, and exhibiting considerate behavior before and after sexual activity. Even with a satisfying sexual experience, women stress the importance of decency in overall partner behavior.

Hygiene was a crucial factor when it came to women, especially unmarried women. The fear of STDs, bacteria, and infections may cause a lot of anxiety. Women in this sample were unaware of such diseases and infections. This emphasizes the need for more education on the topic. The women who knew about it demanded hygiene like the use of protection, cleaning, and keeping track of their menstrual cycle.

Couples face various challenges, including handling long-distance relationships, in-laws, and parenting responsibilities. Some maintain intimacy through sexting or video calls, requiring loyalty and patience. Among interviewed women, 24 out of 60 had children, impacting their sex lives due to increased responsibilities and less private time. Parenthood, especially with younger children, led to fatigue and altered the timing and frequency of sex. Despite challenges, having kids sometimes enhanced the marriage. Women desired men to share parenting responsibilities. Performing sexual activities in the presence of family members was considered risky, causing both increased desire and sexual frustration. Despite difficulties, women stood up for themselves, expecting their partners to contribute to the overall well-being of the marriage, both sexually and non-sexually.

This was the most prominent finding of this study was that it was expected as the relationship ages sexual satisfaction decreases and being unmarried or married would lay a significant impact on the results. But collectively it was found that unmarried women were more unsatisfied than married women. In this study, it was found that not sexual satisfaction but the frequency of sexual behaviour and activity decreases. Sexual satisfaction increases as time progresses despite the frequency.

Look over at Table 1 for a simpler and better learning of the codes, themes, and codes. This table also includes a description of the codes for a more straightforward comprehension.

Table 1. Organization of Themes

Codes	Themes	Description	Objective
Mutual understanding	CREATIVE SEXUALITY	To act out and understand desires without judgement	COMMUNICATION
Use of external media		To use videos, erotica, articles for arousal	
Exploration		To practice exploring with toys, dresses, people, oral sex, various positions and role plays	
Reciprocity of desires		To explain and understand desires to explore new ways to achieve pleasure	
Sexual release	SEXUAL WELL-BEING	To experience a sense of relief and satisfaction	CONTENTMENT
Pleasure		To feel and share pleasure in bed	
Frequency		The number of times a woman engages in sex	
Orgasms		To keep female orgasms primary and experience them almost every time	
Trust & Safety		To assure for dependency in the future while taking necessary precautionary measures	
Comfort	INTIMACY	To feel a sense of peace and openness in bed	COMPATIBILITY
Foreplay		Initiation of certain activities to gain arousal	
Romance		To practice acts of service and seduction	
Affection		To feel an emotional connection with the partner by expressing feelings of love.	
Boundaries		To ask for consent and maintain respect during and after sex	

Desire	REGARD	To have the will to have sex	WILLINGNESS
Openness	INTEREST	To be open to learning new things about the female body	AWARENESS
Decency	CARE	To maintain respect after and before the intercourse	RESPECT
Hygiene		To maintain precautionary care and avoid STDs	
Other responsibilities		To manage time due to kids, in-laws and joint families.	

5. DISCUSSION

In recent years, there has been an increase in research on sexual satisfaction. I discovered a variety of meanings associated with the concept of sexual satisfaction, similar to prior study on textual definitions of sexual conceptions (Shaughnessy, Byers, & Thornton, 2011).

This study presents a variety of data regarding women's sexuality, in contrast to the majority of prior reports, which provide a universally unfavorable picture of Indian women's sexual relationships with their partners. These ladies seem to be more expressive and talkative when it comes to sex. Many of these women claimed that their current sexual relationships with their partners were fulfilling. The reliability of these findings is increased by the fact that several of the women discussed methods for initiating sexual activity. According to the experience, Indian women are supposed to have a negative or indifferent attitude toward sex, which fits into the stereotypical "expected norm" or ideal cultural pattern of female sexual experience. As a result, they are unlikely to disclose that they occasionally initiate sex with their husband. About the research question, the findings support that contrary to belief, yes women in India are aware of their sexual satisfaction but are not equally sexually educated. The theme of creative sexuality further emphasizes on this as it involves women willing to try out new ways of experiencing orgasms or sexual satisfaction. The participants emphasized the impact of a positive environment on sexual satisfaction. In heated arguments or during times when the situations are not friendly it was observed that the sex was not satisfactory or in their terms "pleasurable" at all. And in our code pleasure we also found that women associate pleasure to sexual satisfaction. Mostly all the women who were interviewed stated that pleasure is a feeling that lasts. It starts with the foreplay and lingers on after sex too. Pleasure is a sexual motive that has not been adequately described or clarified in earlier models of sexual satisfaction (such as Basson, 2000) (Meston & Buss, 2007). In line with previous researchers, we think that more explanation of the idea of pleasure is necessary (Rye & Meaney, 2007), and that its significance for sexual satisfaction should be investigated. Sexual satisfaction has an impact on sexual health. Sexual health is emphasized as a state of wellbeing by the World Health Organization (2010). The results further contradict the idea that sexual satisfaction is just the absence of dysfunction or unpleasant feelings. It is more than that, in my opinion it is important to understand what women want and gradually move into working on it together. Sexual satisfaction is not just a female aspect but the purpose of studying this is because there isn't much focus on the female aspect.

One of the study's noteworthy findings contends that the size and kind of a woman's family may influence her sexual encounters. This connection may be a result of the fact that older generations are stifled from communicating with one another by the customary huge extended families. Any intimacy between partners in a traditional family must be hidden, and the partner is typically expected to act aloof and distant when the older generation is around. This was very well reported by a few participants that living in a joint family or living with their in-laws had a huge impact on their emotional connection and sexual encounters. That included being loud, restriction to put on music, not having privacy, hiding dresses, sex toys or lingerie, and difficulty in time management. Compared to nuclear family arrangements, extended and joint families have different dynamics that should be taken into consideration by families. Whereas participants who belonged to nuclear families had a different and more open approach and were able to easily become comfortable with each other. In joint families or there is a lot to be taken care of, the rules of the house and the pressure to bear children is also a lot more than neutral families. So sexual behaviour is expected but not wanted to be seen. For young couples hiding their sexual encounters from family is also crucial considering the societal expectations.

The most gathered code from this study was the code of exploration. The mention of it was observed by all the participants in the study. They all agreed that introducing something new to the sexual intercourse has increased their satisfaction and has more evidently brought the couple closer. Exploratory sex not only involved things but it also involved people. As far as studies are concerned, they say that Indian women are not very open and informed about sex or sexuality but in this study quite the opposite of it was seen. Women were willing and available to talk about sex and open up about their sexual

lives. Women also believed that studies like this is what make topic like sex and sexuality progressive. In this study the notion that sexual satisfaction is the absence of sexual dysfunction was truly busted. Women can be dissatisfied for many other reasons like stress or arguments. One striking observation that was seen in the findings was that women and men have started to view sex as a measure of enjoyment and bonding rather than just for procreation. Later in the years, Indian traditions focused on the fact that sex should only be practiced to procreate. Especially women were seen to be nothing but child-bearers, the results of this study show that the times have changed now and women are seen as more than just a pregnancy.

Sex before marriage is still a taboo in India. The majority of young individuals, especially young women, in India continue to move to sexual life within marriage due to the prevalence of early marriage and the continued social disapproval of pre-marital sexual behaviour. However, young individuals in India tend to have a wider window of opportunity for opposite-sex encounters, including the creation of pre-marital sexual partnerships, due to growing chances for education and work, urbanization, and globalization. In fact, evidence from a growing body of research suggests that less than one in ten young women and one in seven to one in three young men had ever engaged in pre-marital sex.

In relation to the variety of sexual satisfaction indicators currently available, the general conclusion is that these women respondents were quite open about their sexual engagement and communication with their spouses, disproving the notion that sex is essentially a taboo issue for research in Indian cultures. (Abraham and Kumar 1999; Alexander et al. 2007; Collumbien, Das and Bohidar 2001; International Institute for Population Sciences and Macro International 2007; Jaya, Hindin and Ahmed 2008; National Institute of Medical Statistics and National AIDS Control Organisation 2008; Santhya, Jejeebhoy and Ghosh 2008).

While in this era women are still finding their ways to deal with the stigmatization, this study indicated that women have found their way to sexual satisfaction, humans use tactics for male retention so women do too. Women use tactics of serving and males use tactics of providing. While we talk about such theories what really stands out in this research is the ability of women to retain their desires, vocalise them and prioritise them. In the end of the questionnaire a question was asked, if they wanted to change something about their sexual lives and most of the women pointed out that they would either want to try a new toy or increase the frequency of their sexual activity. Women who had children responded that they would want to experience new things and have less responsibilities. A few women responded that they would want to maintain the same consistency and not change anything.

To conclude, women of India are getting themselves educated, open, candid and communicative about sex and sex related activities. So, the notion that sex is a taboo and cannot be talked about is now being challenged and more and more women are seemingly approachable.

Young couples in relationships, situation ships, or any other type of relationship participate in sexual behaviour, therefore marriage is not the only legal authorization to engage in such behaviour. However, it is crucial to feel secure, content, and comfortable while doing so.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the sexual satisfaction of women in India, a topic often overlooked due to societal taboos surrounding women's sexuality. Contrary to stereotypes of female passivity, the research found that women are increasingly vocal about their sexual desires within their relationships, recognizing the importance of open communication in overcoming cultural constraints. Despite cultural diversity, women willingly shared their experiences, indicating a growing assertiveness and partner support in addressing their needs.

A significant finding was that sexual satisfaction for women evolves over time, with emotional connection and comfort playing crucial roles. While initial frequency of sexual activity may be high, satisfaction tends to increase as the relationship progresses, highlighting the importance of sustained emotional intimacy. The sample included 4 homosexual women and 56 heterosexual women, allowing for exploration of homosexual experiences. Homosexual women reported greater satisfaction and contentment in their relationships, indicating a deeper understanding of sexual activities.

Factors such as communication, contentment, willingness, respect, and compatibility were identified as key contributors to sexual satisfaction. Partners' prioritization of each other's satisfaction was noted, emphasizing mutual care and understanding in fostering a fulfilling sexual relationship. Future research could explore the relationship between marital, relationship and sexual satisfaction, recognizing the interconnectedness of these components within a marriage. Additionally, there is a need for more exploration into less studied areas such as exploratory sex, the use of sexual aids, sex education, and female masturbation to gain deeper insights into women's sexual satisfaction. Moreover, studying pleasure and satisfaction in greater depth could enrich existing literature on the subject.

While this study focused on women, future research could involve both partners to better understand the dynamics of sexual satisfaction within couples. Conducting couple interviews would offer insights into shared experiences and challenges, providing a more comprehensive understanding of sexual satisfaction in marital relationships.

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