

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXSUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Sexual behavior is the core of sexuality matters in adolescents and youths. In adolescents and young people risky sexual behavior has been recognized as an important health, social and demographic concern in the developing world. It is a priority public health concern because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among this age group. The main objectives were to assess the knowledge and attitudes towards sexuality and sexual behaviours among the University students and to understand the socio economic and demographic differentials on sexual behaviours. The data for the present study is a primary data collected from International Male students of Annamalai University of Tamil Nadu. A simple random sample has adopted to select the sample population from the 720 male students who were studied in 2015-2016. The total sample size was 235. Statistical tools like cross tabulation and Chi-square have been applied. The result shows that all the respondents were ever heard about STIs knowledge. But regarding particular symptoms, they had poor knowledge among the respondents. Little more than one-third of the respondents (37.0 %) were known about burning sensation followed by ulcer (27.7 %) and itching as symptoms. Overwhelming majority (81.1 %) of the respondents have knowledge through internet and more than half (55.3 %) have learnt from friends. Nearly eighty percent of respondents belong to age ≤ 20 have reported of have sexual relationship (intercourse) before marriage but in the case of age 26+ respondents, it was ninety two percent. Here more than half of the respondents (57.0 percent) have reported of practice of masturbation among the study respondents. Among the various independents variables age, religion, family types and monthly family income were significantly associated with dependent variable of sexual practice before marriage than the rest of variables and variables, like birth order, father's occupation was significantly associated with the practice of masturbation among the respondents. Mother 'education is more important to teach their children about sex education during adolescent,

Keywords: Sexual behavior, Masturbation, Sexual relationship (Practice).

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual behavior is the core of sexuality matters in adolescents and youths. In adolescents and young people risky sexual behavior has been recognized as an important health, social and demographic concern in the developing world. It is a priority public health concern because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among this age group.¹ Risky sexual behavior is defined as an individual's conduct that increase the susceptibility of the person to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, unwanted pregnancy and psychological distress. According to published research, risky sexual behaviors may present as having unprotected sex (without or inconsistently using a condom), having multiple sexual partners, having sex under the influence of stimulant substances, or having sex immediately after watching pornographic or early sexual debut before 18 years.² The attitude toward a behavior is the extent to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable appraisal of that behavior.³ Attitudes are formed through life

experiences and are learned behaviors from others. In contemporary language, attitudes are defined as complex, multidimensional constructs comprising cognitive, affective, and behavior components. The three components reinforce each other to form a joint structure that tends to remain stable.⁴ The relationship between knowledge, attitudes and behavior is complex. However, several studies suggested that information and positive attitudes towards condom use and other forms of contraception has a strong association with consistent condom use.^{5,6} Globally, young people aged 15-24 years are at the forefront of the epidemic and among the most vulnerable groups for risky sexual behavior that account for an estimated 45% of new HIV infection.¹ Report from USA showed that 46% of in school youths had ever had sexual intercourse and 34% had sexual intercourse during the previous three months. From this, 39% did not use condom last time they had sex and 77% did not use any birth control to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex with their opposite sex. About 14% had sex with four or more people during their life time. Understanding the factors (e.g., knowledge, attitudes and behavioral skills) that influence the SRH behaviors of college students is important because they have a significant impact on sexual decision making, and behavior and educational programs can significantly improve these factors.^{7, 8} Knowledge provides a foundation for human action; this is a central concept in many psychological theories and is commonly used as the theoretical basis for effective sex and STD/HIV education programs. Knowledge may also transform behavior indirectly by affecting values, attitudes, perceptions of norms and even perceptions of self-efficacy. However, even though knowledge may provide a foundation, greater knowledge may not necessarily assure responsible behavior, because knowledge alone is not sufficient.⁸

2. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the knowledge and attitudes towards sexuality and sexual behaviours among the University students and
- To understand the socio economic and demographic differentials on sexual behaviours.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data for the present study is a primary data collected from International Male students of Annamalai University of Tamil Nadu. A simple random sample has adopted to select the sample population from the 720 male students who were studied in 2015-2016. The total sample size was 235. The dependent variable of sexual behaviour regarding the knowledge includes symptoms of STIs, source of knowledge related to sexual relationship and various method of family planning. The dependent variable of sexual behaviour regarding to practices includes Ever had of Masturbation practice, Watched blue Movie and Ever had of Sexual Relationship (intercourse). Statistical tools like cross tabulation, and Chi-square have been applied to meet the objectives.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table: 1 knowledge on STI s Symptoms and Source of knowledge about sexual relationship

Knowledge on STI Symptoms	Source of Knowledge on Sexual Relationship	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Ulcer	65 (27.7)	170 (72.3)
Genital discharge	45 (19.1)	190 (80.9)
Itching	60 (25.5)	175 (74.5)
Burning sensation	87 (37.0)	148 (63.0)
Warts and growth	61 (25.9)	174 (74.1)

(Figures within brackets denote percentages)

Table no 1 represents the distribution of respondent's knowledge and also the sources of knowledge about sexual relationship. In the present study all the respondents were ever heard about STIs knowledge. But regarding particular symptoms, they had poor knowledge among the respondents. Little more than one-third of the respondents (37.0 %) were known about burning sensation followed by ulcer (27.7 %) and itching as symptoms. Cent percent of the respondents had idea related to sexual relationship. Overwhelming majority (81.1 %) of the respondents have knowledge through internet and more than half (55.3 %) have learnt from friends.

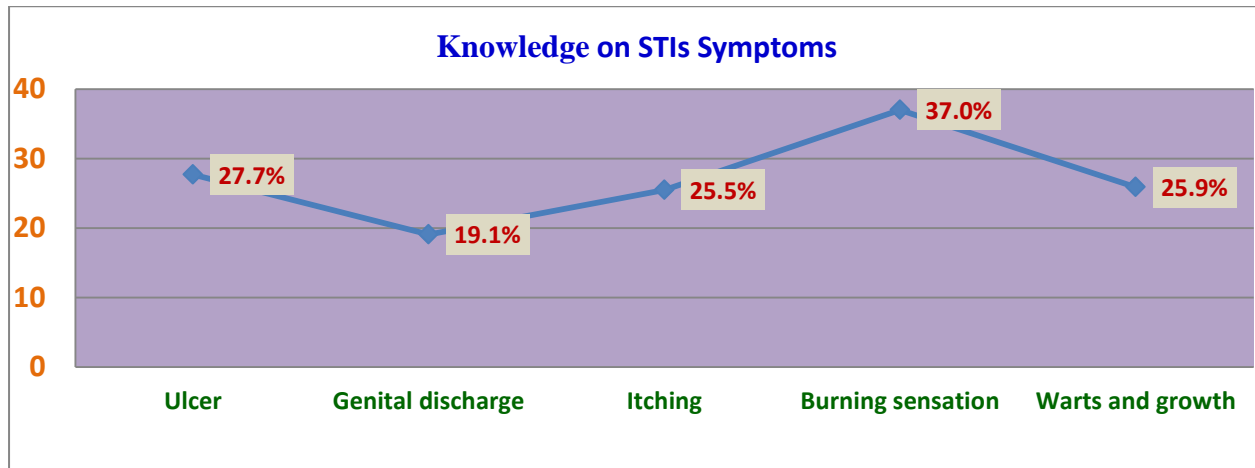


Fig.1 Knowledge about STIS symptoms

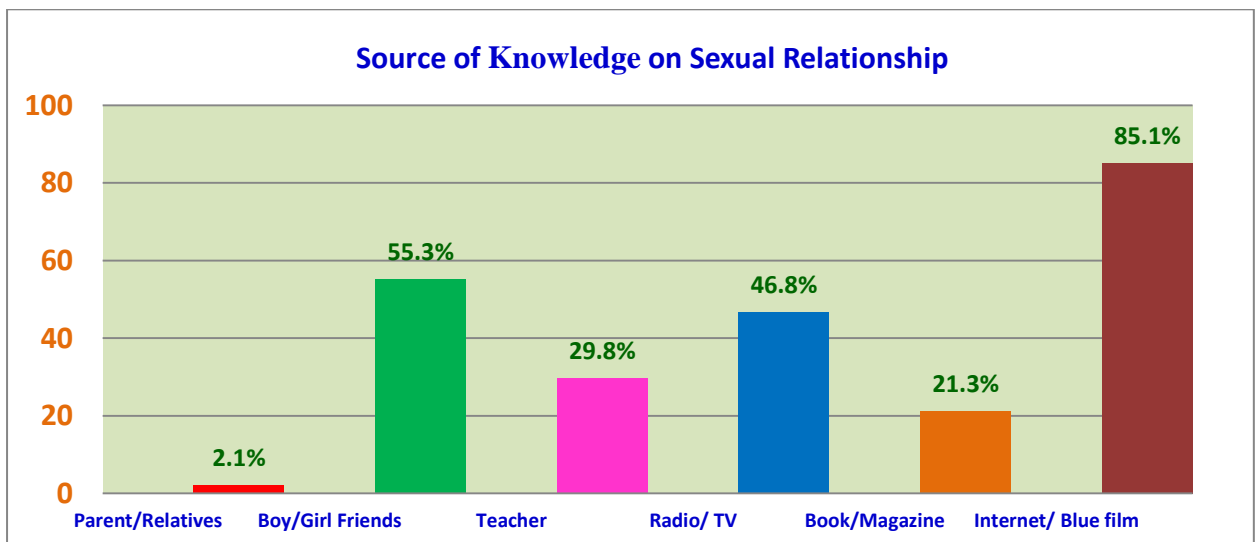


Fig.2 Source of knowledge about Sexual relationship

Table: 2 Respondents ever had of Masturbation practice, Watch blue movie & Sexual Relationship

Practices	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total (%)
Ever had of Masturbation practice	101 (43.0)	134 (57.0)	235 (100.0)
Watching blue Movie	100 (42.6)	135 (57.4)	235 (100.0)
Ever had of Sexual Relationship	21 (8.9)	214 (91.1)	235 (100.0)

(Figures within brackets denote percentages)

Related to practice of behaviour, fifty seven percent of respondents have reported of ever had of masturbation practice. More than half of the respondents have watched blue movie. Ever had sexual relationship is concerned, overwhelming majority (91.1%) of respondents ever had practice sexual relationship.

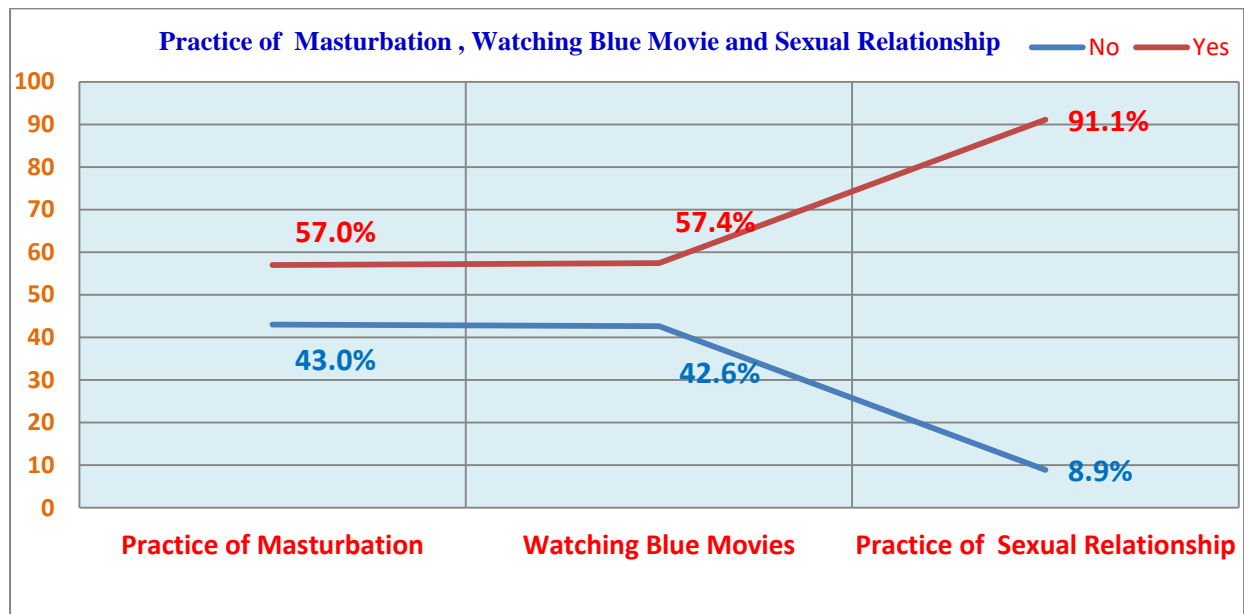


Fig.3 Practice of Masturbation, Watching Blue movies and Sexual relationship before marriage

Table: 3 Knowledge of contraceptive methods by their background characteristics

Background Characteristics		Knowledge of contraceptive methods					
		Yes (%)	Total	Background Characteristics		Yes (%)	Total
Age (**)	≤20	39(100.0)	39	Father Education (NS)	Primary	37(94.9)	39
	21 to 25	117(96.7)	121		Secondary	39(90.7)	43
	26+	68(90.7)	75		Degree +	148(96.7)	153
Religion (***)	Christian	167(97.1)	172	Father Occupation (**)	Unemployed	29(93.5)	31
	Muslim	57(90.5)	63		Business	114(92.7)	123
Marital Status (***)	Married	25(80.6)	31		Teacher	43(100.0)	43
	Unmarried	199(97.5)	204		Others	38(100.0)	38
Place of Residence (**)	Rural	64(91.4)	70	Mother Education (NS)	Primary	21(100.0)	21
	Urban	160(97.0)	165		Secondary	85(95.5)	89
Birth Order (NS)	1-2 Birth order	104(94.5)	110		Degree +	118(94.4)	125
	3-4 Birth order	87(97.8)	89	Family Monthly Income (NS)	₹ ≤50000	84(97.7)	86
	5 + Birth order	33(91.7)	36		₹ 50001-100000	79(95.2)	83
Family Type (NS)	Joint family	20(100.0)	20		₹ 100001+	61(92.4)	66
	Nuclear family	204(94.9)	215		Total	224(95.3)	235

(Figures within brackets denote percentages)

***p<0.001 level of significance, **p<0.005 level of significance, NS- not significance

It is observed from table 3 that younger ages have more knowledge about family planning methods than the respondents belonged to older ages. Respondents who belong to Christian religion (97.0%) have more aware of family planning than the counterparts of Muslim students (91.0%). Unmarried and residing in urban areas have vast knowledge as compare to who got married and living in rural area as related to various methods of family planning. Chi-square value shows there is highly associated marital status and family planning knowledge (p<0.001)

Table: 4 Practice of Sexual Relationship, Masturbation and Watching Blue Movie with background characteristics

Background Characteristics		Sexual Relationship before marriage	Masturbation	Watching Blue Movie	Total
		Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	
Age	≤ 20	79.5	51.3	66.7	39(100.0)
	21 to 25	94.2	60.3	55.4	121(100.0)
	26+	92.0	54.7	56.0	75(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	***	NS	NS	
Religion	Christian	89.0	55.8	63.4	172(100.0)
	Muslim	96.8	60.3	41.3	63(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	***	NS	***	
Place of Residence	Rural	90.0	54.3	55.7	70(100.0)
	Urban	91.5	58.2	58.2	165(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	NS	NS	NS	
Birth Order	1-2 Birth order	94.5	64.5	57.3	110(100.0)
	3-4 Birth order	87.6	52.8	58.4	89(100.0)
	5 + Birth order	88.9	44.4	55.6	36(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	NS	***	NS	
Family Type	Joint family	80.0	60.0	60.0	20(100.0)
	Nuclear family	92.1	56.7	57.2	215(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	**	NS	**	
Father Occupation	Unemployed	96.8	58.1	51.6	31(100.0)
	Business	91.1	63.4	58.5	123(100.0)
	Teacher	90.7	51.2	62.8	43(100.0)
	Others	86.8	42.1	52.6	38(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	NS	***	NS	
Mother Education	Primary	100.0	57.1	66.7	21(100.0)
	Secondary	91.0	58.4	49.4	89(100.0)
	Degree +	89.6	56.0	61.6	125(100.0)
	Chi-Squire	NS	NS	NS	
Family Monthly Income	₹ ≤50000	86.0	54.7	52.3	86(100.0)
	₹ 50001-100000	90.4	61.4	60.2	83(100.0)
	₹ 100001+	98.5	54.5	60.6	66(100.0)
	Total	91.1	57.0	57.4	235(100.0)
	Chi-Squire value	***	NS	NS	

***p<0.001 level of significance, **p<0.005 level of significance, NS- not significance

Practice of Sexual relationship before marriage:

Age is one of the demographic factors which influence the behavior of the individual. Respondents who belonged to younger age have less percent of sexual relationship before their marriage than the respondents who belong to twenty six and above ages. Nearly eighty percent of respondents belong to age ≤20 have reported of have sexual relationship (intercourse) but in the case of age 26+ respondents, it was ninety two percent. There is statistical association existed

between age and practice of sexual relationship before marriage ($p < 0.001$). Family type of the respondents has shown a differential role. Respondents who are living with nuclear family have more percentage (92.1 percent) sexual relationship than the respondents who belong to joint family (80.0 percent). There was a significantly associated with family type and practices sexual relationship ($P \leq 0.005$). Father occupation and mother occupation did not have any significant association with sexual relationship. Family monthly income shows there is significant association between various family monthly income groups and sexual practice of the respondents. 86.0 percent of respondents whose family monthly income below 50,000/- has reported of practice of sexual behavior. Chi-square value shows stistically association between family income and practice of ever heard sexual relationship ($P \leq 0.000$). Overall among the various independents variables age, religion, family types and monthly family income were significantly associated with dependent variable of sexual practice before marriage than the rest of variables.

Practice of Masturbation:

Masturbation is one of the important characteristics of individual and the sexual behaviors among adolescent. Here more than half of the respondents (57.0 percent) have reported of practice of masturbation among the study respondents. Respondents who belong to ≤ 20 ages have less practice of masturbation (51.3 percent) as compared to respondents belonging to ages 21-25 (60.0 percent). Regarding Muslim religion respondents have compared to more (60.3 percent) than the Christians (55.8 percent). Masturbation is concerned chi-square value that not any significant association between religion and masturbation. Based on the place of residence, rural respondents is less practices (54.3 percent) as compared to respondents who are residing in urban area (58.2 percent), nearly two third of the respondents who are in the rank of first and second birth order have reported practice of masturbation, But in the case of respondents third and forth have less practice (52.0 percent) and more less among the respondents 5th and above (44.4 percent) from this it's noticed that that the range birth order increases the percentage of reduced. Chi-square value shows there is living association birth order of the respondents, ever practice of masturbation. Then there is not much differentials family types of the masturbation.

As far as father education of the respondents whose father educated degree and above, has more than half of the respondents (58.2 percent) father education up to primary (53.8 percent). Nearly two third of the respondents (60.4 percent) whose occupation business have reported and half of the respondents who fathers are working in teaching as the reported practices of masturbation. Nearly (42.0 percent) of the respondents whose other categories have less practice of as compared to in the other category like , teacher and business. Chi-square results shown there is significant associated father's occupation and practice of masturbation ($P \leq 0.001$). Overall among the background variables, like birth order, father's occupation was significantly associated with the practice of masturbation.

Watching Blue movie:

Study result shows that respondent's age increases the percentage of watching movie has dramatically reduced. Respondents to belong to younger ≤ 20 have more practices (56.7 percent) as compared to respondents are belonging older ages. 21-25 ages (55.4 percent) and 26+ (56.0 percent) as watching blue movies is concerned. From the notices that age increases the percentage of watching movies reduces. Relating to religion respondents who belonging to Muslim has quit it less watching blue movies (41.3 percent) as for counterpart of Christian respondents is watching blue movie. Chi-square test suggested ($P \leq 0.000$). Nearly (60 percent) of the respondents who are residing urban area have watched blue move and (55.0 percent) among the rural respondents. Nearly 43 percent of the respondents, father education up to primary, have watched blue movie. But in the case of respondents whose fathers education, secondary and degree and above, the respective percentage are (58.1 percent) and (50.8 percent) family types of the respondents is concern. Respondents are living joint family those much and more watching blue movie than the respondents. Living in nuclear family, chi-square value has less association in watching blue movie. Father's occupation, mother education and family monthly income those not shows any association with watching blue movie.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the level of sexual knowledge and attitudes towards and sexual behaviours among the University male students. All the respondents were ever heard about STIs knowledge. But regarding particular symptoms, they had poor knowledge among the respondents. With respect to knowledge of sex, internet and friends was the main source. High prevalence of masturbation was observed among the respondents. Nearly cent percent of study respondents (International students i.e. Rwandese) were ever had practice of sexual relationship (sexual intercourse) before marriage Regarding to

knowledge of family planning, unmarried and residing in urban areas have vast knowledge as compare to who got married and living in rural area. Among the various independents variables age, religion, family types and monthly family income were significantly associated with dependent variable of sexual practice before marriage than the rest of variables and variables, like birth order, father's occupation was significantly associated with the practice of masturbation among the respondents

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Some policy implications can be framed based on the study results:-

- University should inform their students, especially international students, about the risky sexual behavior and its consequences.
- Parents education particularly mother's education at least degree level is quite essential. They can teach their children about sex education during adolescent. It can help to minimize the practice of sexual relationship before marriage.

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