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A psychological study on interrelationship between financial status of the family and the sexual behaviors of adolescent college girl students

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Abstract-Attitudes, an aspect of personality, are formed and changed in accordance with the characteristics of the societies, groups and cultures. Social attitudes are characterized by consistency in response to social objects. It determines the response of the individuals towards different social, national and international problems. The emerging sexuality that accompanies adolescence poses fundamental challenges for young people. These include adjusting to the altered appearance and functioning of a sexually maturing body, learning to deal with sexual desires, confronting sexual attitudes and values, experimenting with sexual behaviors, and integrating these feelings, attitudes, and experiences into a developing sense of self. Adolescents' responses to these challenges are profoundly influenced by the social and cultural context in which they live. Modern youngsters live in an era of sex revolution. Since last three decades there has been a paradigm shift in the sexual behavior and responses of the college girls. They have acquired more open attitudes towards the sex related issues. In the present study, the restrictive and permissive attitudes of college girls towards sexual behaviour have been envisaged in five different Girls colleges in Patna. The residential area, size of the family and income level and peers have been formed as independent variables. With the objective of investigating into the effects of family income level on attitudes towards permissive and restrictive sexual behavior the standardized Sex behavior Attitude inventory (Yashwir, 1977) and one self-made questionnaire seeking personal information were applied to a sample of 200 subjects of proposed five different Girls colleges of Patna. Following this rationale, the scores in different criteria were calculated separately. Means and S.Ds of the attitude area were calculated for both groups and their sub groups. After this, t-test was applied to know the significance of the difference between mean scores of the group and sub-groups. The value at $P < 0.01$ were considered significant. It was observed that attitudes towards permissive sexual behaviour were higher in the subjects of married higher income group than in contrast to married middle and lower income group. The findings of the present study highlight a significant correlation amongst the attitudes of sexual behavior of adolescent girls and the family income level.

Keywords : College girls, Attitudes, Permissive, Restrictive, Sexual behavior, Family income level,

INTRODUCTION

Research in female sexuality is fractionated. Significant contributions in specific areas, such as

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assessment, treatment, or understanding sexual phenomena have not necessarily led to offshoot contributions in related areas. Mirroring the field of human sexuality, the study of women's sexuality has lacked an overarching conceptual basis with which to compare, evaluate, and guide ongoing research, hence, to significantly advance sexual science,

it has been suggested that we must develop comprehensive theories and constructs that describe, explain and predict sexual phenomena¹.

Sex differences in psychology are differences in the mental functions and behaviors of the sexes, and are due to a complex interplay of biological, developmental, and cultural factors. Differences have been found in a variety of fields such as mental health, cognitive abilities, personality, emotion, sexuality²⁻³ and tendency towards aggression. Such variation may be innate or learned and is often very difficult to distinguish. Since behavior is a result of interactions between nature and nurture, researchers are interested in investigating how biology and environment interact to produce such differences⁴⁻⁶, although this is often not possible⁵. A number of factors combine to influence the development of sex differences, including genetics and epigenetics⁷ differences in brain structure and function⁸ hormones⁹ and socialization³⁻⁵.

Social psychologists reserve the term 'Attitude' to refer to our relatively enduring evaluation of something, where the something is called the attitude object. The attitude object might be a person, a product, or a social group¹⁰⁻¹¹. Our attitudes are made up of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. The importance of an attitude is assessed by how quickly it comes to mind. It is known as attitude strength¹²⁻¹⁴. Some of our attitudes are strong attitudes, in the sense that we find them important, hold them with confidence, do not change them very much and use them frequently to guide our actions. These strong attitudes may guide our actions completely out of our awareness¹⁵. The term attitude refers to our relatively enduring evaluation of an attitude object. Our attitudes are inherited and also learned through direct and indirect experiences with the attitude objects. Some attitudes are more likely to be based on beliefs, some are more likely to be based on feelings, and some are more likely to be based on behaviors. Strong attitudes are important in the sense that we hold them with confidence, we do not change them very much, and we use them frequently to guide our actions. Although there is a general consistency between attitudes and behavior, the relationship is stronger in some situations than in others, for some measurements than for others, and for some people than for others. Attitudes are acquired components of the personality. They are formed and modified in response to different environmental

influences. Environment refers to everything external to the person, with which he is in some relation. In recent year psychologists, sociologists and home scientists are paying increased attention to the environment and its impact on behaviour. The family influences personality either directly or indirectly. Directly, the family influences personality development by moulding and communication. Indirectly the influence comes from identification, unconscious irritations of attitudes, behaviour patterns and the mirror image of self. The Socio-economic condition of the family, the personality characteristics of parents and family members, the number of family member and the nature of strangulation received by family members due to residential variation of the family determine to a great extent the nature of personality, attitude and adjustment of the child.

School going adolescent girls live in a different social, psychological, economical and physical environment. This variation of environment is sufficient to induce in them variation in attitudes towards different social problems.

Because attitude strength is determined by cognitive accessibility, it is possible to make attitudes stronger by increasing the accessibility of the attitude. This can be done directly by having people think about, express, or discuss their attitudes with others. After people think about their attitudes, talk about them, or just say them out loud, the attitudes they have expressed become stronger¹⁶⁻¹⁷. Because attitudes are linked to the self-concept, they also become stronger when they are activated along with the self-concept. When we are looking into a mirror or sitting in front of a TV camera, our attitudes are activated and we are then more likely to act on them¹⁸.

Social psychologists (as well as advertisers, marketers, and politicians) are particularly interested in the behavioral aspect of attitudes. Because it is normal that the ABCs of our attitudes are at least somewhat consistent, our behavior tends to follow from our affect and cognition. The principle of attitude consistency (that for any given attitude object, the ABCs of affect, behavior, and cognition are normally in line with each other) thus predicts that our attitudes (for instance, as measured via a self-report measure) are likely to guide behavior. Supporting this idea, meta-analyses have found that there is a significant and substantial positive correlation among the different components of attitudes, and that attitudes

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expressed on self-report measures do predict behavior¹⁹. Behaviors are more likely to be consistent with attitudes when the social situation in which the behavior occurs is similar to the situation in which the attitude is expressed²⁰⁻²¹.

The aim of present study is to analyze the attitudes of different college girls towards sexual behavior. Besides, it is also aimed to test the impact of size of the family, residential areas, family income, education, family texture, religious, peers and socio-political impact on these attitudes.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

With the aim of studying the difference in attitudes of various college girls towards sex behavior differing in family income level, the following hypothesis was formulated.

Hypothesis

The married and unmarried groups from lower income level shall be significantly lower in permissive attitudes towards sex behaviour than the married and unmarried groups from higher income level.

Sampling:

Five Girls Colleges viz. Arvind Mahila College, Patna, Ganga Devi Mahila College, Patna, J. D. Women's College, Patna, Magadh Mahila College Patna and Patna Women's College, Patna were selected as test zones. Proper permission was procured from the competent authority of each of the target institutions for investigating the girl students based upon their personal statement in questionnaire inventory. The subjects fall in the age range of 18-26 years.

Data collection:

No of test college- 5

Target group - 9

Students of class- B.A./B.SC./B.Com/B.Ed. (Regular and self financing courses); M.A./M.Sc./M.Com./M.Ed. (Regular and self financing courses).

Total number of samples - 200

Instruments used for measuring attitudes towards Sexual behaviours:

For measuring attitudes towards sexual behavior a standard "Sex behavior Attitude Inventory" constructed by Singh²² and a self-made questionnaire seeking personal information, supplied to nearly 200 college girl students of proposed five different Girls' colleges of Patna. Out of

these approximately 100 were married and 100 girls were unmarried girls subjects from the different back ground viz. residential area, size of the family, income level and peers surrounding them.

The criteria for the inclusion of the female students in the samples were as follows:

1. Married and unmarried female subjects came in equal number from each college.

2. The sample covered subjects from different income levels-higher, middle and lower income level -both in married and unmarried groups.

3. The subjects came from degree classes of constituent colleges.

4. The subjects fell in the age range of 18-26 years.

First of all rapport was established with the subject. After this self made questionnaires and Inventory were distributed among subjects. On the basis of the personal information on the inventory subjects were easily detected as 'married' and 'unmarried' groups. After this equating number of married and unmarried students on random basis they were further asked to fill the inventory scale consisted of 40 statements. After completion of the session inventories were collected from the subjects and they were thanked for their co operation.

The inventory measured attitudes towards sex behavior in two dimensions-restrictive and permissive. Each dimension of attitudes consisted of 20 statements. It was a 'Yes-No type' standardized scale. Two (2) marks were awarded to 'yes' response and 1 was awarded to 'no' response. The highest score considered on restrictive and permissive dimension was 40 and the lowest score on permissive and restrictive dimensions was 20. A sum total of 'yes' or 'no' responses yielded weighted score. Based on higher weighted score on permissiveness than the restrictiveness, an individual was considered as 'permissive' and otherwise 'restrictive' in reversed case. The reliability coefficient of the inventory was established as 0.57 by split-half method and validity, as determined against 'Attitude inventory', was found 0.35.

Following this rationale, the scores in different criteria were calculated separately. Means and S.Ds of the attitude area was calculated. The t-test was applied to know the significance of the difference between mean scores of the group and sub-groups. The value at $p < 0.01$ were considered significant.

RESULTS

Out of 100 married college girl students (M), there were 20 subjects from higher income level (MHIG), 45 subjects from the Middle income level (MMIG) and 35 subjects were from lower income level (MLIG). Out of 100 unmarried college girl students (UM), there were 30 subjects from higher income level (UMHIG), 55 subjects from middle income level (UMMIG) and 15 subjects from lower income level (UMLIG). The distribution of attitudes towards permissive sexual behavior (APSB) scores of

MHIG, MMIG, MLIG, UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG groups have been presented in table-1 & 2, while distribution of attitudes towards restrictive sexual behavior (ARSB) scores of MHIG, MMIG, MLIG, UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG groups have been presented in table-3 & 4. The mean APSB scores of these groups and subgroups with S.Ds. and 't' ratios have been presented in table-5, while the mean ARSB scores of the same groups and subgroups with S. Ds. and 't' ratios have been presented in table-6.

Table-1 Showing distribution of attitudes towards Permissive Sexual Behaviour (APSB) scores in MHIG, MMIG and MLIG students.

Distribution of APSB scores of MHIG students		Distribution of APSB scores of MMIG students		Distribution of APSB scores of MLIG students	
Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'
37-38	01	35-36	01	37-38	01
35-36	02	33-34	02	35-36	01
33-34	02	31-32	05	33-34	04
31-32	04	29-30	06	31-32	05
29-30	03	27-28	17	29-30	07
27-28	05	25-26	08	27-28	08
25-26	02	23-24	06	25-26	07
23-24	01	-	-	23-24	02
N=	20	N=	45	N=	45
Mean=	30.1	Mean=	27.76	Mean=	29.042858
S.D=	3.638681	S.D=	2.8472208	S.D.=	3.3435658

Table-2 Showing distribution of Attitudes towards Permissive Sexual Behaviour (APSB) scores in UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG students.

Distribution of APSB scores of UMHIG students		Distribution of APSB scores of UMMIG students		Distribution of APSB scores of UMLIG students	
Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'
37-38	02	37-38	02	37-38	03
35-36	04	35-36	06	35-36	02
33-34	05	33-34	10	33-34	03
31-32	08	31-32	10	31-32	03
29-30	07	29-30	16	29-30	02
27-28	01	27-28	05	27-28	01
25-26	02	25-26	03	25-26	01
23-24	01	23-24	-03	-	-
N=	30	N=	55	N=	15
Mean=	31.5	Mean=	30.80909	Mean=	32.7
S.D=	3.34664	S.D=	3.373009	S.D.=	3.5627704

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Table-3 Showing distribution of Attitudes towards Restrictive Sexual Behaviour (ARSB) scores in MHIG, MMIG and MLIG students.

Distribution of ARSB scores of MHIG students		Distribution of ARSB scores of MMIG students		Distribution of ARSB scores of MLIG students	
Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'
37-38	02	37-38	04	35-36	02
35-36	02	35-36	07	33-34	05
33-34	03	33-34	14	31-32	15
31-32	04	31-32	10	29-30	10
29-30	05	29-30	07	27-28	01
27-28	02	27-28	02	25-26	01
25-26	01	25-26	01	23-24	01
23-24	01	-	-	-	-
N=	20	N=	45	N=	35
Mean=	31.2	Mean=	32.65	Mean=	30.928571
S.D=	3.6482872	S.D=	2.780532	S.D.=	2.369879

Table-4 Showing distribution of Attitudes towards restrictive Sexual Behaviour (ARSB) scores in UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG students.

Distribution of ARSB scores of UMHIG students		Distribution of ARSB scores of UMMIG students		Distribution of ARSB scores of UMLIG students	
Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'	Class interval	't'
35-36	01	37-38	02	35-36	01
33-34	03	35-36	02	33-34	02
31-32	05	33-34	09	31-32	03
29-30	07	31-32	11	29-30	03
27-28	08	29-30	11	27-28	02
25-26	04	27-28	14	25-26	01
23-24	02	25-26	05	23-24	03
-	-	23-24	01	-	-
N=	30	N=	55	N=	15
Mean=	28.96	Mean=	30.081818	Mean=	29.1
S.D=	2.9634814	S.D=	3.1374042	S.D.=	3.738092

Table-5 Showing Means, S.Ds. and 't' ratios of APSB scores of MHIG, MMIG, MLIG, UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG students

Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	dt	't' ratio	Level of significance
MHIG	30.1	3.638681	20	43	2.4916073	0.05
MMIG	27.76	2.8472208	45			
MHIG	30.1	3.638681	20	53	1.0480624	NS
MLIG	29.042858	3.3495658	35			
MMIG	27.76	2.8472208	45	78	1.8035321	NS
MLIG	29.042858	3.3495658	35			
UMHIG	31.5	3.34664	30	83	0.9070599	NS
UMMIG	30.80909	3.37009	55			
UMHIG	31.5	3.34664	30	43	1.0606603	NS
UMLIG	32.7	3.5627704	15			
UMMIG	30.80909	3.373009	55	68	1.7919298	NS
UMLIG	32.7	3.5627704	15			

Table-6 Showing Means, S.Ds. and ‘t’ ratios of ARSB scores of MHIG, MMIG, MLIG, UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG students

Groups	Means	S.Ds.	N	dt	‘t’ ratio	Level of significance
MHIG	31.2	3.642872	20	63	1.5584297	NS
MMIG	32.65	2.780532	45			
MHIG	31.2	3.6482872	20	53	0.29925206	NS
MLIG	30.928571	2.369879	35			
MMIG	32.65	2.780532	45	78	2.9959875	0.01
MLIG	30.928571	2.369879	35			
UMHIG	28.96	2.9634814	30	83	1.6236657	NS
UMMIG	30.081818	3.1374042	55			
UMHIG	28.96	2.9634814	30	43	0.117356	NS
UMLIG	29.1	3.738092	15			
UMMIG	30.081818	3.1374042	55	68	0.9049632	NS
UMLIG	29.1	3.738092	15			

The mean APSB score of MHIG, MMIG and MLIG subjects were 30.1, 27.76 and 29.042858 respectively, while those of UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG subjects were 31.5, 30.80909 and 32.7 respectively (table-5). The mean ASB score of MHIG, MMIG and MLIG subjects were 31.2, 32.65 and 30.928571 respectively, while those of UMHIG, UMMIG and UMLIG subjects were 28.96, 30.081818 and 29.1 respectively (table-6). The obtained ‘t’ ratios for APSB mean scores between MHIG x MMIG; MHIG x MLIG; MMIG x MLIG; UMHIG x UMMIG; UMHIG x UMLIG; and UMMIG x UMLIG subjects were 2.4916073; 1.0480624; 1.8035321; 0.9070599; 1.0606603 and 1.7919298 respectively. Out of these six ‘t’ ratios, only one ‘t’ ratio for MHIG x MMIG is significant at 0.05 levels. Rest five ‘t’ ratios are insignificant at 0.05 level.

The obtained ‘t’ ratios of ARSB mean score between MHIG x MMIG; MHIG x MLIG; MMIG x MLIG; UMHIG x UMMIG; UMHIG x UMLIG; UMMIG x UMLIG subjects were 1.5584297, 2.925206, 2.9959875, 1.6236657, 0.117356 and 0.9049632 respectively. Out of these six ‘t’ ratios only one ‘t’ ratio for MMIG x MLIG is significant at 0.01 level. Other five ‘t’ ratios are insignificant.

Lower attitudes towards permissive sexual behavior and higher attitude towards restrictive sexual behavior have been displayed by MIG subjects in both married and unmarried groups but MIG subjects have differed significantly from HIG subjects on permissive sex behavior only in married groups. MIG subjects have differed from

LIG subjects on restrictive sexual behavior only in married group.

LIG subjects have not obtained significantly lower attitude scores towards permissive sex behavior than MIG and HIG subjects in married and unmarried groups. Hence, the hypothesis stands rejected due to insignificant and reverse finding.

The present study highlights that in unmarried groups, no significant impact of income level was obtained for attitude towards sexual behavior. However, in married group, it has influence to some extent.

College girls from middle income level have obtained higher mean attitude score towards restrictive sex behavior and lower mean attitude score for permissive sexual behavior, than higher and lower income level college girls in both married and unmarried groups, but they differ significantly on permissive dimension of sex behavior from their higher income level counter parts and on restrictive dimension of sex behavior from their lower income level counterparts in married group only. So, income level cannot be deemed to be universal variable of attitude towards sex behavior. However, it is evident that after marriage attitudes towards sexual behavior of girls is influenced by their income level. Lower income level girls grow less restrictive in their attitude towards sexual behaviour and higher income level girls grow more permissive in their attitude towards sexual behavior. The finding of the present study related to married group supports the findings of several workers²³⁻²⁹.

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CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study summarizes the impact of financial status of the family and the attitudes towards sexual behavior in both married and unmarried college girl students, predominantly in married girl students of higher income level. It is further implicated by a large number of socio-biological factors and the peers.

Further study is needed to explore the attitudes towards sexual behavior of college going girls and better management of the allied abnormalities and related social problems.

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