

Brahmbhatt, Raj : History of Sexual Medicine. Therapy of Common Sexual Problems: A Handbook. 1998. p.1-11.

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## History of Sexual Medicine

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### Introduction

The study of human sexuality is not a recent interest. The history of sexual medicine is the history of human existence; the thread of sexuality is woven deeply in its fabric.

Sex is a mystery. It is a fascinating subject to study when you think of the fact that life would come to a halt without this most natural of instincts. The prime purpose of sex is survival.

Over the years, therapeutic approaches to help people with sexual problems have changed, indicating new findings and therefore, progress in the study of human sexuality. The emphasis of psychoanalysis or physical treatment is based on modern psychological principles and has improved our understanding of sexuality. Various investigative modalities and intracavernous vasoactive drugs, implants and recent oral pills have changed the scenario of human sexuality. This is an attempt to tell in brief the history of sexual medicine and its pioneering practitioners.

### INDIAN CONTRIBUTION

India is known as a holy-land and Indians, as having deep interest in spiritual knowledge. But that is an incomplete picture. In truth, since ancient times, Indians have considered both sensual pleasure and spiritual awareness as essential for human beings.

Hindus recognize four goals for the complete, development of any man or woman:

**Dharma** Concerning moral and ideal needs

**Artha** Concerning material needs

**Kama** Concerning physical needs

**Moksha** Eternal salvation

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are together considered the very foundation of life.

The Sanskrit term '**kama**' in a wide sense refers to all the desires of a human being. It denotes love as well as lust. Kama refers to sex, the means to get physical and mental pleasure, the basis for mating, marriage and progeny. In ancient India, many treatise were written on kama, describing the ways and means of deriving maximum enjoyment from sex. The authors of these works were munis and rishis, that is revered sages. They knew that kama was an instinct and it was not possible to suppress it. They accepted that the correct practice of kama made both men and women happy.

VATSYAYANA (A.D. 300 TO A.D. 400)

Vatsyayana was the author of Kama Sutra, the earliest available text on erotics. In this treatise, he dealt boldly and scientifically with matters related to sex. He defined kama as the enjoyment of appropriate objects by the five senses - hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling - assisted by the mind together with the soul. The Kama Sutra describes in detail the act of kissing and embracing, love bites, nail marks, postures, etc. It also contains information about special appliances and methods and uses of aphrodisiacs', to increase sexual enjoyment, which was based on pure medical science. The spirit and method in which, Vatsyayana approached the subject of sex is astonishingly modern. Havelock Ellis, on studying the contents of Kama Sutra, said, "Vatsyayana is one of the greatest authorities on sexology. He has discussed sex not only as a human instinct but also as an art'.

KOKKOKA (A.D. 1000 TO A.D. 1200)

Kokkoka composed the, 'Ratirahasya' describing, a four fold classification of women, erogenous zones and days when women are more easily aroused. He wrote about the three divisions of males and females and nine types of coitus based on the size of the sex organ.

PADMASHRI (A.D. 1000)

Padmashri was a Buddhist monk. His work 'Nagara-Sarvasvam' dealt with 'sanket', meaning gestures, which play an important role in expressing love, as well as other topics.

JYOTIRISA OR KAVISEKHARA (A.D. 1300)

Jyotirisa is the author of "Panchsayaka". This work mentions ingredients for cosmetic aphrodisiacs, helpful for increased sexual pleasure. It names some medicines for specific cosmetic treatment such as lifting of sagging breasts. It also deals with topics such as menstruation, impregnation and sterility.

PRAUDHA DEVARAJA (A.D. 1400)

In the thirteenth century, Praudha Devaraja wrote "Ratiratna Pradipika". This treatise describes the characteristics of women from different provinces. It also describes different postures - twenty-one supine, three sideways, two seated, two seated, five standing, eleven bending and two female above positions.

JAYDEVA (A.D. 1500)

"Ratimanjari" 'the garland of love' is the work of poet Jaydeva. This treatise is very short, written in an elegant style.

KALYANAMALLA (A.D. 1600)

The "Ananga Ranga" was composed by Kalyanamalla to please his king. In his writing, Kalyanamalla has given explicit recommendations for enhancing marriage as well as advice on how to seduce a new partner.

NARSING SHASTRI (A.D. 1800)

"Sutra Vritti?" was written about AD. 1800 by Narsing Shastri. This commentary, is most useful in explaining, the true meaning of Vatsyayana.

YASODHARA (A.D. 1000 TO A.D. 1300)

Yasodhara wrote a commentary "Jayamangala" on the Kama Sutra. This is considered no less than an independent piece of work. Jayamangala contains consistent interpretations of terms used by Vatsyayana and others. Thus, in ancient India, kama was depicted as a science (shastra) and was studied in a systematic, objective and scientific manner. But according to the authors of the erotic texts that contributed so much rich material to the heritage of Indian erotic science, kama, was also an art, and though a natural instinct, needed instructions to be practised properly.

VAJIKARAN

**Charaka** in the Charaka Samhita, covered the subject of "Vajikarana" in depth. Vajikarana is one of the eight major specialities of Ayurveda (it is the ancient science dealing with medicine). Vajikaran is a process or a drug, which make a man sexually as strong as a horse and is able to copulate for long and frequently with many wives and partners. There are various means by which, Vajikaran could be achieved.

**Ahaara** Diet

**Aushadha** Drugs

**Vihar** Environment and activities.

It involves all the measures, drugs and non-drugs, taken to ensure a healthy sex life. It takes into consideration life styles and behaviour patterns, which are conducive to such a life. Certain novel pharmaco-dynamic concepts have been elaborated in this 'Work. For example, olfactory inputs, which stimulate or depress sexual desire have been described. Certain neurotransmitter precursors e.g. L-dopa-containing M. Pruriens, have been described as enhancing sexual arousal. The modes of action of certain plants, minerals and animal products have been specified as working at different levels of the sexual response - enhancing the strength of erection, delaying ejaculation, inducing vaginal contraction etc. These concepts and even current practices need to be scientifically evaluated, myth and reality identified by a multi-disciplinary team.

## WESTERN CONTRIBUTION

Here is a comprehensive history of more than a century of sex researchers and scholars who were deeply involved in the field. According to Plato, 'man' was created a hermaphrodite, a male-female unit, whose perfection was symbolized by a spherical shape. "Man" was then endowed with four arms, four legs as well as two faces. But this very power led him to rebel against Zeus, his creator who then decided that man must be taught a lesson. 'Zeus punished 'man' by cutting him in half, each of the two parts receiving only two legs, two arms and one face. That, according to Plato is how man and woman came into existence as separate beings. But ever since, they, have passionately longed to be reunited and become complete.

Plato's views were not really based on science and could never be proved. But that did not make his ideas any less interesting. Indeed, his unique perception makes his writings worth study and research.

MARQUIS DE SADE (DONATIN ALPHONSE FRANCIS DE SADE A.D. 1740 TO A.D.1814)

The Marquis de Sade was the writer of 'The 120 days of Sodom'. Born to a wealthy aristocratic family in Paris in 1740, de Sade's novels carried with them a peculiar attitude. Seventy years after his death, his name was used by the Viennese sexologist Kraft-Ebbing to coin a new term to describe a particular sexual impulse. 'Sadism' is a term used to describe an act of sexual arousal produced by inflicting pain and degradation on a human 'Sex Object'.

## SACHER - MASOCH (A.D. 1836 TO A.D. 1895)

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch was born at Lemberg, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1886, his most famous and autobiographical novel 'Venus in Furs' was published. According to his second wife, he had a fetish for furs and his love of punishment had root in childhood. His adult sex life consisted of a series of liaisons with women who were willing to enact private dramas by keeping him in bondage and physically abusing him. Whipping was crucial to his sexual arousal. Kraft-Ebbing, the Viennese sexologist, coined the term 'masochism', after reading Sacher-Masoch's work. Masochism can be defined as the desire to suffer pain and be subjected to force.

## FREUD (A.D. 1856 TO A.D. 1939)

Freud was born in 1856, in Freiberg (Czechoslovakia), and later moved to Vienna. Initially, he developed curiosity about human nature and focused on the medical condition of hysteria. He was inept as a hypnotist and developed the 'talking technique' as a substitute. The famous couch, talking technique and the use of free association were all part of what he described by the term 'psychoanalysis'.

In 1923, he fully set out his well known triad of id, ego and superego. He postulated that disturbances in maturation through the various phases of childhood sexuality interfered with the normal development of child-parent relationships and were the root cause of sexual problems. His work showed that children too were sexual beings. On the basis of this theory, he regarded sexual dysfunctions as relatively resistant to therapy. If available, treatment usually consisted of lengthy psychoanalysis or insight-oriented psychotherapy, which was always provided on an individual basis. According to Freud, all pleasure seeking activity was in a wide sense erotic. He called this sexual energy the 'libido' and argued that if it was prevented, it must find some alternative means of expression. The alternative channel could be a kind of creative activity (sublimation). But, sexual energy with no other outlet would express itself in disturbance of the mind, body or both.

## HAVELOCK ELLIS (A.D. 1859 TO A.D. 1939)

Havelock Ellis was born in Croydone, England in 1859. He is remembered for the seven volumes of his "Studies in the Psychology of Sex" (published between 1896-1928).

In 1890, he published "The Criminal" and "The New Spirit", the first of his efforts to introduce criminology and sexology as sciences.

He wrote 'Man and Woman' in 1894. The book makes an attempt to present a balanced view of homosexuality and bisexuality.

In the "Studies in Psychology of Sex", he described the physical aspects of sexual function, discussing less-appreciated elements like significance of touch, smell, sight and hearing in sexual courtship and mating. He wrote about sadism and masochism as well as fetishism and exhibitionalism. He campaigned all his life for early sex education for children, for birth control and for the repeal of criminal laws against homosexual acts between consenting adults. "Autoeroticism" and "Narcissism" were terms coined by him.

He believed that love is an art and that feminine 'frigidity' could arise from a failure in the art of love by the male partner.

## KRAFT EBBING (A.D.1840 TO A.D.1905)

Kraft Ebbing, published the first edition of 'Psychopathia Sexualis, a study of sexual aberrations, in 1886. In this book, he first defined 'sadism' and 'masochism' as two poles of the same phenomenon. He coined the term 'sadism' after the Marquis de Sade, to describe sexual pleasure derived from inflicting pain on others. He also coined the term 'masochism' after the stories by Sacher Masoch in 'which inflicting pain on oneself was a form of sexual relief

## MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD (A.D. 1868 TO A.D. 1935)

Magnus Hirschfeld was a German psychiatrist who specialised in the study of homosexuality. He founded the first scientific journal on sexual pathology in

1899. He was the first person to make a proper distinction between homosexuality and transvestism.

PAVLOV (A.D. 1849 TO A.D. 1936)

The Russian experimental psychologist Ivan Pavlov's "Conditioned Reflexes" experiments brought him a Nobel prize. One application of Pavlov's work has been in attempts to recondition sexual tastes through aversion therapy. His findings have been applied in various kinds of sex therapy, notably by Masters and Johnson.

MARGARET SANGER (A.D. 1883 TO A.D. 1966)

Margaret Sanger was the founder of the American birth control movement. She founded her magazine 'The Women Rebel' (later called 'Birth Control Review') and began publicising contraception through it and through her pamphlet 'Family Limitation'. She was elected first President of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in 1953.

MARIE STOPES (A.D. 1880 TO A.D. 1958)

Marie Stopes proclaimed every woman's right to freedom from unwanted pregnancy. She was the first English woman in the field of sexuality. She opened first British Birth Control Clinic in North London in 1921.

ALFRED KINSEY (A.D. 1894 TO A.D. 1956)

In 1948 and 1953 he published "Sexual Behaviour in Human Male" and "Sexual Behaviour in Human Female". The reports stated many myths. He reported for instance that 96% of men masturbate, as did 85% of all women. Only 4% of American males were exclusively homosexual but 37% had at least one homosexual experience to the point of orgasm. Among women, 28% had some lesbian experience by age 45.

## MASTERS & JOHNSON

Masters & Johnson are often and unjustly criticised for their lack of conventional scientific method. Their first book was published in 1966. It not only confirmed objectively some of the controversial findings of the Kinsey reports, it exploded three more myths. It proved that a man's sexual performance is in no way related to the size of his penis. It proved that there is no such thing as a vaginal orgasm and also that, women are capable of multiple orgasms. In 1970, 'Human Sexual Inadequacy' by Masters & Johnson described a very different approach based partly on studies of sexual response. It is unique combination of behavioural, psychotherapeutic and educational elements that provide the approach to the sexual problems of couples. The focus of therapy was on the couple and the relationship between the partners. It was called 'Sex Therapy'.

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Several other individuals have contributed to the study of sexology.

In 1958, Wolpe suggested the method of systemic desensitization as therapeutic approach. There was an isolated report of a novel approach described by Semans called the "stop-start-technique" for the treatment of premature ejaculation.

The introduction of these more directive approaches represented a vast conceptual shift from the psychoanalytical stance mentioned earlier. The focus of treatment was now on current behaviour and its maintenance rather than distant and hypothetical causes for sexual problems.

In the United Kingdom, development of brief psychotherapeutic approach based on the teaching of Michael Balian (1957) for the management of the sexual Problems of women was developed. The names of various scientists who have contributed during the last quarter century, like Helen Kaplan, John Money, Annon, Albert Ellis, Virag and Brindley and many others, are recent and known to most of us and therefore their details have been omitted.

## INDIAN SCENARIO - LAST CENTURY

Here is an account of how discipline of sexual medicine was established in last century. Many organizations and individuals have contributed to the establishment of sexology as a super speciality.

DR A P PILLAY (A.D. 1889 TO A.D. 1956)

In 1943, the book "Disorders of Sex and Reproduction" was published by H K Lewis & Company Limited, London. The author of this book was Dr A P Pillay, pioneering sexologist from Bombay. The Irish Journal of Medical Science wrote, much of the material in this book has appeared in a treatise by Dr Pillay published in 1943 under the title 'Disorders of Sex in the Male'. But Dr Pillay, an Indian from Bombay is unlikely to achieve the success of Dr Alfred Kinsey, an American from Indiana. They may have been true but then, the sale of Dr Pillay's book was restricted to doctors and social workers, while Kinsey report was available to every housewife in America.

Dr A P Pillay's contribution to sexology is remarkable because it involved dealing with a lot of prejudice and traditional taboos. His efforts to establish 'sexology, as a branch of medical science and his struggle to make the word 'sex' respectable, must be appreciated.

Dr Pillay served in the army in World War I. After he retired from the IMS, he set up a lucrative general practice in Solapur. In 1925, he came to Bombay and started practising as a specialist in Family Planning and Sex Hygiene and devoted himself completely to the study of Sexology.

Dr Pillay, felt that problems related to sex contributed largely to human misery. He started the journal 'Marriage Hygiene', in 1934 and 'The Journal of Family Welfare' in 1954, with the aim of reaching and educating more people about sexology. For, the greater part of his life, he studied, the problems related to sex and the ways to bring relief to patients in this special field of medicine practice. He was one of the first specialists on sexology in India and was as highly respected by, pioneers abroad including Havelock Ellis, Norman Himes and others. He and Dr Albert Ellis jointly edited the book 'Sex, Society and the Individual'.

The Annual Conference of the Medical Association at Hyderabad, for the first time in its history, held a symposium on "sex and reproduction", in 1953 with Dr Pillay as the Chairman. The magazine 'Marriage and Hygiene', founded in 1934, was edited by Dr Pillay and had international readership, with publishing contributions from people living out the, magazine was a in, different countries. Havelock Ellis thought that the magazine was a valuable contribution to sexology and Dr Pillay's work ought not to be lost.

In 1946, Dr Pillay started "International Journal of Sexology", a journal which, has no precedence since the end of the war. Eminent sexologist from around the world contributed to make the journal a valuable international forum for the discussion of sex problems. That an international journal on sexology, with a title openly stating its contents, was established in India, is in itself a reflection of the relentless and undaunted work done by Dr Pillay. Considering the fact that prejudices in many countries prevented not only the publications of but also subscription to such journals, it is to his credit that this journal was set up. Dr Pillay contributed to the cause of sex education through his books, 'The Art of Love and Sane Sex Living', 'Ideal Sex Life', 'Birth Control Simplified', 'Sex Knowledge for boys and adolescents' and 'Sex Knowledge for girls and adolescents'. But his greatest contribution is the pioneering work he did to establish sexology as a special branch of medical science and therefore, a worthy subject of study by future generations of medical practitioners in India.

He never spoke about himself except in connection with his work and all that one knew of him was the heroic struggle he put up to make the word 'sex' respectable and to establish "sexology" as a branch of medical science.

PROFESSOR R G KARVE (A.D. 1882 TO A.D. 1953)

He was Professor of mathematics at Bombay. He had no children yet he underwent vasectomy to remove the myths related to vasectomy. He had worked in the field of family planning and sex education.

After the pioneering work of Dr A P Pillay and Dr R G Karve, a few clinics in Bombay geared up to help people who had venereal, diseases and sex problems.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

In 1974, 'Tomorrow's Parents Today', the first workshop on adolescents was organized by Family Planning Association of India (FPAI). In 1977 it led to a residential workshop on "Human Sexuality in Family Life". This was supported by International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and helped by the World Health Organization. In 1978, Sexuality Education Counselling Research Therapy/Training (SECR) was founded by FPAI under the guidance of Mrs Avabai Wadia.

In 1979, the first National Conference of sexology was organized by Dr C S Agrawal of Vatsyayan Institute of Sexology. After three workshops, the Indian Academy of Sexology was constituted.

The Indian Association of Sex Education, Counselling and Therapy (IASECT) was founded in 1979 under the leadership of Dr Prakash Kothari. In 1980, the first National Conference of IASECT was organized. In 1981, the first department of sexual medicine was established at Nair Hospital, Bombay.

In 1982, the International Council of Sex Education and Parenthood (ICSEP) was founded, which later became Council of Sex Education and Parenthood International (CSEPI).

The Seventh World Congress of Sexology at New Delhi in 1985 was a turning point as it influenced many doctors from various fields to work in the area of sexology. 'Exhibition Erotica', depicting art and science of sex in ancient India, was a milestone at this conference organized by the author. It was the first of its type in the world, entirely based on Indian erotics. The late Dr R H Dastur, author of 'Sex Power', one of the earliest authentic book on sexology, will be remembered for his contribution.

This is a fast paced readout of the progress of sexology at the century's end. Many contributors to this book are pioneers in the field of sexuality. Modern day texts on sexology are easily accessible. Hence, this article concentrates on the earliest treatises, which are largely unknown and difficult to update.

*TWO roads diverged in a wood, and  
I took the one less traveled by,*

*And that has made all the difference.*

*Robert Frost*