

RESEARCH ARTICLE

INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY CONSUMPTION IN THE LOCKDOWN SCENARIO OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A SURVEY OF THE EMERGING ADULTS IN NORTHERN INDIA

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Abstract

Background: In the present scenario, India is considered one of the most growing countries globally that constitutes approximately 67% population as youth adults. Youthhood is stated to be the most vulnerable age group to indulge in sexual activities. However, sex and conversation related to sexuality are still taboo in India. People generally do not converse about sex and sexuality in the public domain and do not discuss it within the family. In such a situation, friends, literature, and the internet are amongst the best source of sexual information. The consumption of pornography increased squarely, particularly in the phase of lockdown in the times of the Pandemic. According to Dutta & Manjula (2017), the internet is the principal and most reliable source of gathering information in the Indian context. **Aim:** The present study aimed to investigate the purpose of usage of internet pornography consumption amongst emerging adults in Northern India during the lockdown scenario of the COVID-19 Pandemic. **Methodology:** Data was collected from the various cities of north India. A socio-demographic characteristics sheet (e.g., age, gender, education, domicile, duration, and medium of internet use, etc.) along with Pornography Consumption Inventory was utilized. In addition, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations were computed. Data analysis was performed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21.0 software (IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, United States). **Results:** The present study revealed that males in the age range of 20-24, especially PG students, are using more internet pornography than female and other age group students during the lockdown scenario of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The study also depicted that different individuals are using IP for different purposes. For example, males use internet pornography for Sexual curiosity and Excitement seeking while females use internet pornography for emotional avoidance and sexual pleasure. **Conclusion:** Present study concluded that most emerging adults are using IP purposefully for sexual curiosity, Excitement seeking, and emotional avoidance. That is an alarming situation, and there is a need for sex education for emerging adults, especially in the northern region of India, to extinct the pornography conditioned in the times of Pandemic when the globe imprisoned into the four walls. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 22 (S1), October-November 2021: 1-8.*

Keywords: Emerging Adult, Internet Pornography, Pornography Consumption Inventory (PCI)

Introduction

Internet usage is one of the newest areas of interest and need of our society. The use of the internet in

school campuses and society has increased dramatically in recent years. Whereas the educational use of the internet is primarily

intended for learning and research, the internet has also become an essential part of student life. However, from time to time, cases of over-involvement with the internet have been observed. A study suggested that students' excessive use of information & communication technology negatively affected their numerical, verbal, and writing abilities. The internet, which was developed to increase communication and facilitate information exchange, has grown beyond expectations, making some users unable to control their internet use and thus experience problems in their work, social, and private spheres. The reasons for the internet becoming so widespread in such a short time have been the subject of many studies. To explain the increase in internet use for sexual pursuits, Cooper has defined a 'Triple A Engine' (Access, Affordability, and Anonymity). Access is the ease of accessing the internet anywhere and anytime and finding whatever is sought on the internet where there is no refusal. Affordability is the ease of accessing the internet's rich content, especially in online sexuality, in return for an affordable price. Anonymity is the secrecy of an individual's both real and perceived identity [1-2]. These are popularizing and facilitating factors may enable us to understand the increase in Internet use in all other areas.

In addition to examining the internet itself and its contents, it is also essential to examine what user's needs are and how the internet meets those needs. Suler argues that understanding such needs can illuminate how and why people become pathologically involved with the internet [3]. The six needs he identifies include the need for (1) sex, (2) an altered state of consciousness, (3) achievement and mastery, (4) belonging, (5) relationships, and (6) self-actualization and transcendence of self.

Sex is always a popular topic in mass media; sex "cybersex" or "netsex" is no exception on the internet. Suler claims that people become preoccupied with online sexual activities for the same two primary reasons people exhibit obsessive behavior regarding sex in any context: satisfaction

of biological needs and satisfaction of a variety of purely psychological and social needs. Sexual pursuits on the internet can be both social and non-social. Social cybersex can become addictive because it is easily accessed, anonymous, and medically and socially safe to satisfy biological drive and psychological needs. In a non-social sexual situation, Internet users can quickly and anonymously obtain pornographic images, animations, and video clips; the internet offers an almost infinite supply of such materials.

The COVID-19 Pandemic continues to cause an immense psychosocial strain worldwide. Excessive use of the internet during these psychologically trying times, fueled by physical isolation resulting from lockdowns, has translated into dysfunctional behaviors. A growing body of evidence suggests an unprecedented increase in internet use and consumption of online pornography during the Pandemic, and possibly even directly caused by it.

Based on reviewing the literature and observing society, emerging adults are highly engaged in pornography consumption in the phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Most of the studies suggested that people are using pornography for sexual pleasure and sexual Excitement seeking, while some of the other studies suggested different purposes to use of internet pornography in male and female [3,4]. According to the male are using pornography for sexual arousal and masturbation and women are frequently using for romantic partner's engaging in interactive sexual activity. Therefore, the researchers planned to explore the purpose of pornography use in emerging adults.

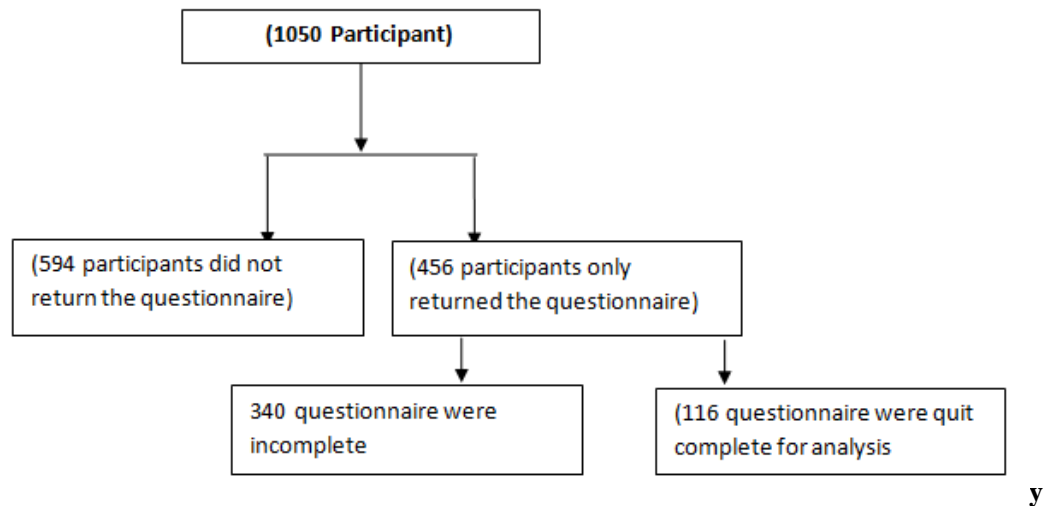
Sample

A total number of 1050 undergraduate and postgraduate students from different colleges of various cities of north India were approached [5]. Out of 450 students (male & female) were returned the questionnaire, while the rest of the 594 participants did not return the questionnaire after multiple reminders in three months. During scrutiny of data, it was found that out of 456

participants, 116 participants only had fully completed their questionnaires [6]. Therefore, they were concluded as an actual participant in the study, and that data was only analyzed for the study purpose. Inclusion criteria for the participants are participants between 15 to 29 years

only, regular internet users, and willing to participate and cooperate during the study. In addition, participants diagnosed with any severe physical or mental illness were excluded. Accidental sampling was followed based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study.

Figure 1: Accidental Sampling was Followed based on the Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of the Stud



Tools

Personal Data Sheet

Self-made semi-structured was used to get socio-demographic details and personal information relevant to the present study, including name, age, gender, education, occupation, marital status, religion, domicile, living arrangement, and duration and place of internet use, etc.

Pornography Consumption Inventory

This is a 15-items questionnaire in which participants are asked to rate aspects of themselves on a 5-point Likert scale. It yields four subscales: Sexual Curiosity, Emotional Avoidance, Excitement Seeking, and Sexual Pleasure [7]. Reliability analysis of the scale, found high internal reliability for the overall scale ($\alpha=0.83$)

and for the sub-scales: Emotional Avoidance, $\alpha=0.85$; Sexual Curiosity, $\alpha=0.87$; Excitement Seeking, $\alpha=0.73$; and Sexual Pleasure, $\alpha=0.71$; suggesting the PCI is an internally consistent measure.

Statistical Analysis

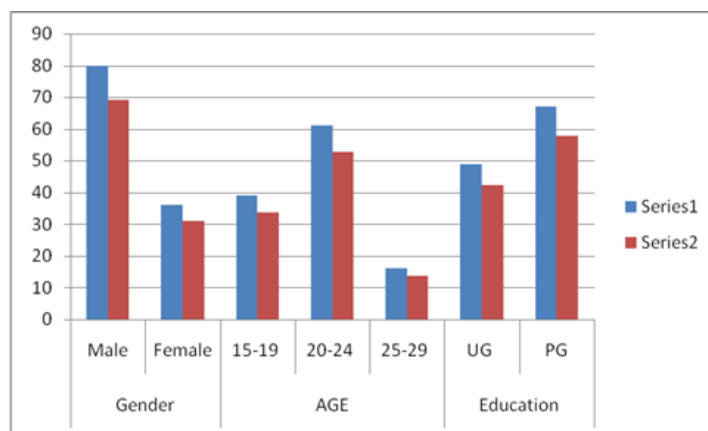
Descriptive Statistics were used for statistical analysis using Statistical Package of social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0.

Results

Mean age of total college students was 21.21 (SD=2.77). The minimum was 15 and the maximum 29 years.

Table 1. Demographic Details of Students

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	69
	Female	36	31
Total		116	100
Age	15-19	39	33.6
	20-24	61	52.6
	25-29	16	13.8
Total		116	100
Education	UG	49	42.2
	PG	67	57.8
Total		116	100



Graph 1: Various Socio-Demographic Variables such as Age, Gender and Education

The above table shows the various socio-demographic variables such as age, gender & education. The table shows that (80, 69%) male and (36, 31%) female students participated in the present study. It also indicates that most of the students were from age group (20-24), (61, 52.6%)

as compared to age group (15-19), (39, 33.6) & age group (25-29), (16, 13.8) students [8]. Result also indicates that the percentage of postgraduate students was higher (67, 57.8%) than undergraduate students (49, 42.2%).

Table 2. Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female

Gender	N		Emotional Avoidance	Sexual Curiosity	Excitement Seeking	Sexual Pleasure
Male	80	Mean	11.4	10.3	7.6	7.6
		Std. Deviation	5	4.3	3.2	3.3
Female	36	Mean	11.6	9.9	6.7	8
		Std. Deviation	5.5	5.3	4.2	4.3
Total	116	Mean	11.5	10.2	7.4	7.8
		Std. Deviation	5.1	4.6	3.5	3.7



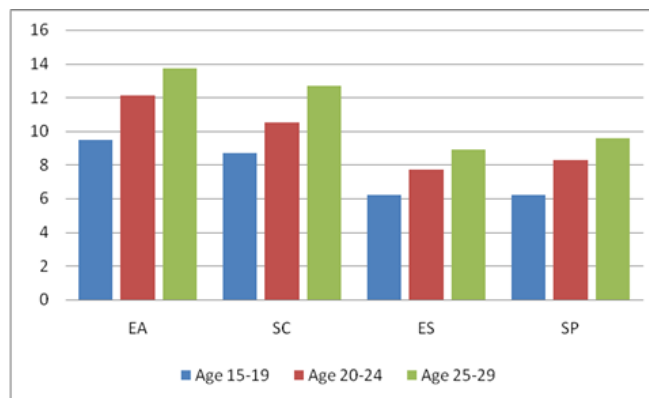
Graph 2: Various Factors of Pornography Consumption Scale such as Emotional Avoidance, Sexual Curiosity, Excitement Seeking, and Sexual Pleasure in Male and Female Students

The above table shows the Mean and SD of various factors of pornography consumption scale such as (Emotional Avoidance, Sexual Curiosity, Excitement Seeking, and Sexual Pleasure) in male and female students. The table shows that EA (11.5 ± 5.1) was high, followed by SC (10.2 ± 4.6), SP (7.8 ± 3.7), and ES (7.4 ± 3.5). The table is also

indicating that the mean score of female students was higher on EA (11.6) and SP (8.0) in comparison of male students, respectively (11.4) and (7.4). In contrast, male students scored higher than female students on SC (10.3) & ES (7.6) respectively (9.9) & (6.7).

Table 3. Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Age Group

AGE	N		Emotional Avoidance	Sexual Curiosity	Excitement Seeking	Sexual Pleasure
15-19	39	Mean	9.5	8.7	6.2	6.2
		Std. Deviation	4.4	4	3.2	3.4
20-24	61	Mean	12.1	10.5	7.7	8.3
		Std. Deviation	4.9	4.7	3.4	3.5
25-29	16	Mean	13.7	12.7	8.9	9.6
		Std. Deviation	6.2	4.8	3.9	3.8
Total	116	Mean	11.5	10.2	7.4	7.8
		Std. Deviation	5.1	4.6	3.5	3.7



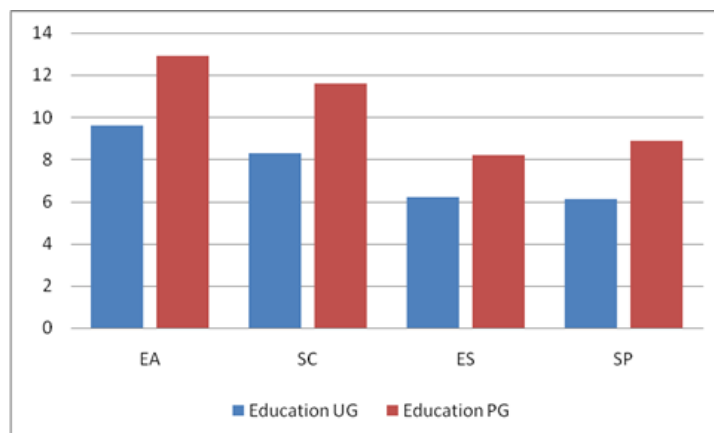
Graph 3: Various Factors of Pornography Consumption Scale such as EA, SC, ES & SP, in Different Age Groups of College Students

The above table shows the mean and SD of various factors of pornography consumption scale such as (EA, SC, ES & SP), in different age groups of college students. For example, the table shows that students scored more irrespective of their age, age group 24-29 scored higher on each subscale of EA

(13.7 ± 6.2), SC (12.7 ± 4.8), ES (8.9 ± 3.9), and SP (9.6 ± 3.8) followed by age group 20-24 EA (12.1 ± 4.9), SC (10.5 ± 4.7), ES (7.7 ± 3.4) and SP (8.3 ± 3.5) and age group 15-19 EA (9.5 ± 4.4), SC (8.7 ± 4.0), ES (6.2 ± 3.2) and SP (6.2 ± 3.4).

Table 4. Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Level of Education on Dimensions of PCI

Education	N		Emotional Avoidance	Sexual Curiosity	Excitement Seeking	Sexual Pleasure
Under Graduate	49	Mean	9.6	8.3	6.2	6.1
		Std. Deviation	4.8	4.1	3.1	3.3
Post Graduate	67	Mean	12.9	11.6	8.2	8.9
		Std. Deviation	4.9	4.5	3.6	3.4
Total	116	Mean	11.5	10.2	7.4	7.8
		Std. Deviation	5.1	4.6	3.5	3.7



Graph 4: Mean and SD of Various Factors of Pornography Consumption Scale such as (EA, SC, ES & SP), in the Different Education Levels of College Students

The above table shows the mean and SD of various factors of pornography consumption scale such as (EA, SC, ES & SP), in the different education levels of college students. For example, the table shows that more educated students scored more on the pornography consumption scale, postgraduate students scored higher on each subscale of EA (12.9 ± 4.9), SC(11.6 ± 4.5), ES(8.2 ± 3.6), and SP(8.9 ± 3.4) followed by undergraduate EA (9.6 ± 4.8), SC(8.3 ± 4.1), ES(6.2 ± 3.1) and SP(6.1 ± 3.3).

Discussion

In the phase of the lockdown scenario of the COVID-19 Pandemic, most internet users consumed pornography by different means for different purposes. The present study explored and found that different individuals are using internet pornography for different purposes: males are using internet pornography for Sexual curiosity and Excitement seeking than females, while females are using internet pornography for emotional avoidance and sexual pleasure than males. Purpose

to use of internet pornography of emerging adults. Schneider [9-10] found that women use Internet pornography differed from men's Internet pornography use." Both genders can be equally physiologically aroused by viewing sexual activities online; however, men were more psychologically aroused than women.

Additionally, men tended to be drawn to pictures and movies based on arousing images. Women tended to be drawn to stories, online sex chat rooms, or anything that closely resembled a relationship. Internet pornography meets individuals' needs, but its effect on individuals' lives significantly and excessive use is very harmful such as pornography significantly distorts attitudes and perceptions about the nature of sexual intercourse. Men who habitually look at pornography have a higher tolerance for abnormal sexual behaviors, sexual aggression, promiscuity, and even rape. In addition, men begin to view women and even children as "sex objects," commodities or instruments for their pleasure, not as persons with their inherent dignity.

Pornography addiction increased significantly during the lockdown. The addictive aspect of pornography has a biological substrate, with dopamine hormone release acting as one of the mechanisms for forming the transmission pathway to pleasure centers of the brain. In its absence, individuals face many physiological changes in withdrawal features such as agitation, restlessness, increased heart rate, breathing difficulty, etc. Also, the increased sexual permissiveness engendered by pornography increases the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease or being an unwitting parent in an out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Furthermore, pornography affects people's emotional lives. Married men involved in pornography feel less satisfied with their marital sexual relations and less emotionally attached to their wives. Women married to men with a pornography addiction report feelings of betrayal, mistrust, and anger. Pornographic use may lead to infidelity and even divorce. Adolescents who view pornography feel shame, diminished self-

confidence, and sexual uncertainty. Although its pathological use is harmful to an individual's life, its healthy use is beneficial for everyone to understand sexuality, sexual behavior and increase sexual knowledge.

Limitations

The present study has tried to capture all the possible correlates of the purpose of the use of internet pornography during the lockdown times of the COVID-19 Pandemic among emerging adults in north India. But it has certain limitations: The sample size was small, and only students were included in the study, making it difficult to generalize the result. Moreover, the ratio of male and female students was not equal.

Conclusion

Primary aim of the study was to estimate the purpose of using internet pornography among emerging adults in the lockdown scenario of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The study results revealed that most of them use internet pornography due to curiosity, excitement seeking, emotional avoidance, and sexual pleasure. Therefore, the study suggests that sex education for emerging adults should be imparted in the school curriculum. Furthermore, school counselors should be appointed to guide them in dealing with these situations post to the pandemic scenario.

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