



## **A Comparative Study of Attitude Towards Masturbation Between Male and Female University Students.**

*Inayat Kaur*

Student, Department of Psychology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. Email Id: kaurinayat2001@gmail.com.

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### **Abstract**

Since the past many years, across many religions and cultures, masturbation has been considered as an act associated with negativity, immorality, lust and sin. One is unsure of when, how and why this stigmatic attitude towards masturbation began, and why it is still in continuation today, after all the research and proofs of its normalcy? This long-standing stigma has resulted in deletion of the topic of masturbation from sex education curriculum as a healthy sexual practise. It leads to positive sexual experiences among adults, both inter and intra-personally. A sample of male and female university students, 30 each, was taken, ranging from the ages 18 to 25. Standardized tools were used to measure the attitude towards masturbation. The results found out, indicated no significant difference between the two genders. Women as compared to men show a more positive attitude towards masturbation, but the difference is quite minimal. Masturbation is a part of a growing child's sexual needs and must not be suppressed. Parents must talk to their preteens and teens so as they get accurate and authentic knowledge about the subject. One gets to discover the uniqueness and sensuousness of their own bodies, know more about their preferences and sexual desires. Often we are conditioned to look at our genitals as a filthy body part, thus many of us grow up hating the way our genitals look. Good sex education will not only teach us about sex, but also to respect your own as well as other's bodies, choices and sexuality.

**Keywords** – Masturbation, Male, Female, University Students.

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### **Introduction**

Masturbation often referred to as “solo-sex”, is touching of the genitals to receive sexual pleasure and orgasm .It is common for people to masturbate alone or in the presence of a consenting partner. It is normal for people of all ages, genders and sexual orientations to masturbate. It can induce pleasure, relieve tension and promote rest and relaxation. The intensity of sexual desire among college students is very high and they have an attitude where they want to explore everything. A majority of college students are aware of this natural biological functioning of our body, but are still not open to discussion about it and think of it as some sort of an abnormality, and some, a sin. A lot of taboos and stigmas are attached to the subject of masturbation, for example, the possibility of a person going blind, impotence in later life, shrinkage in the levels of testosterone among males and frigidity among women, decrease in immunity level, pimples and acne, and fracturing of the penis. Gym culture has been booming for the past few decades wherein gym trainers with absolutely no knowledge about sexual health advise their male clients not to masturbate as it can lead to loss of proteins from the body! Penis curvature, penis shrinkage and erectile dysfunction are a few more myths attached with masturbation.

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### **Attitude Towards Masturbation**

Masturbation is touching your genitals and other sensitive areas like breasts, buttocks or thighs, for sexual pleasure. It is defined by researchers as any sort of bodily self-stimulation that results in excitation of the genitals. It is done by touching, stroking, or massaging the penis or clitoris until an orgasm is achieved. Use of sex toys like vibrators, dildos etc. are common while practising masturbation. In children, masturbation is a normal part of the growing child's exploration of their sexuality, sensuousness and genitalia. Masturbation is considered by clinicians a normal and healthy part of sexual enjoyment without any detrimental effects. Most writers use the word masturbation to mean sexual stimulation that leads to climax or orgasm (Shearer, 1972). Wikipedia (2018), defined masturbation as the sexual stimulation of one's own genitals for sexual arousal or other sexual pleasures, usually to the point of orgasm. The stimulation may involve hands, fingers, everyday objects, sex toys such as vibrators, or a combination of these. Mutual masturbation is masturbation with a sexual partner and may include stimulation of a partner's genitals (fingering or a hand job), or to be used as a form of non-penetrative sex. In a study conducted by Carvalheira and Leal (2013), the results reveal a high incidence of masturbation practices among women wherein 91% of women have masturbated at some point in their lives and about 29.3% of them in the preceding one month. Masturbation appears to be related to greater sexual repertoire, more sexual fantasies and greater ease in reaching sexual pleasures and orgasm. Women masturbate using direct and indirect techniques. The study further demonstrates that masturbation is a positive component in structuring female sexuality. In males, masturbation happens by the excitation of sexual organs, and continues until the point of top sexual pleasures or occurrence of an orgasm. It is controlled by three important factors namely

hormonal, environmental and emotional (Steven, 2002; Josie, 2003). There is social stigma, taboos and myths regarding sharing of information about sexual activities among men all over the world (Jenny, 2010). In a study conducted by Arafat and Cotton (1974), the authors have attempted to examine what was long held that men and women differ in such practices. The research indicated findings that there are many differences in variables examined like cause of masturbation, feelings after masturbation and fear of being discovered, and, intensity of masturbation, but there are many similarities as well as frequency and the average age of starting masturbation. According to Malfetti and Eidlitz (1973), authorities agree that masturbation does no harm, but some of them caution it by doing it in excess. By excess they mean psychological, as masturbation can become an outlet to relieve tension and anxiety that are not sexual in nature, for example, concern over one's schoolwork, rejection by peers, and uncertainties about self-worth. According to Ray and Afflerbach (2014), it was predicted that participants who received positive masturbation education at home or school will have more positive attitude towards masturbation than the ones who received negative or no masturbation education at home or school. The results of the study indicated that positive messages learnt are not correlated with positive attitude. However, negative messages are associated with negative attitude towards masturbation. In a study conducted by Masters and Edwardes (1962), describe masturbatory practices according to the culture of the Middle East and the orient, especially with regards to children and adolescents, but indicate fairly high prevalence among adults as well in the traditional cultures. But, it is quite probable that masturbation occurs in adults in more cultures than it is generally admitted to or supposed. Furthermore, it is not possible to state with complete accuracy the prevalence with which solitary sex is practiced. Data derived by questioning thousands of people by surveys in clinical studies for instance studies by Kinsey et al. (1948, 1953), show that is extremely common among males and females of all ages. Kinsey reports that 92 per cent of males masturbate to the point of orgasm at least once in their lifetime; however stimulation is not limited to masculine sex society only. In another study conducted by Leitenberg, Detzer and Srebnik (1993), on male and female young adults found out that no linkage was observed, suggesting that early masturbation experience is beneficial or harmful to sexual adjustment in young adulthood.

### **Purpose**

The purpose is to make a comparative analysis of attitude towards masturbation among male and female university students.

### **Hypothesis**

- No significant difference between both the genders.
- Women have a slightly more positive attitude towards masturbation than men.

### **Method Sample**

A total of 60 participants, from Chandigarh and Ambala participated in the study of which there were males=30 and females =30, N=60. The age of the subjects ranged from 18 to 25 years. The participants were university students.

### **Measures**

**Negative Attitude Towards Masturbation Inventory**, as given by Abramson and Mosher (1975) is a 30 item inventory, 10 of which has reversed scoring, 5- point Likert type scale anchored by not at all true for me to strongly true for me. Higher scores indicate a more positive attitude towards masturbation and less guilt. Lesser scorer, on the other hand indicates negative and irrational attitude and beliefs attached with masturbation.

### **Procedure**

The participants were informed about the purpose of research and questionnaires were filled through Google forms. They were also asked to consent the Google form. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological test was administered to the participants.

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## **Analysis of Data Results**

The responses of the participants were analysed using a t-test to see attitude towards masturbation among male and female university students. Table 1 shows the number of males and females who filled the questionnaire, mean and standard deviation. Table 2 shows independents sample t-test, and table 3 shows the group descriptive of the sample.

**Table 1 shows number of respondents, mean and standard deviation of sample.**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Attitude towards Masturbation</b>
N	Female	30
	Male	30

	Gender	Attitude towards Masturbation
Mean	Female	115
	Male	108
Standard deviation	Female	15.8
	Male	18.7

**Table 2 shows Independent Samples T-Test.**

		Statistic	df	p
Attitude towards Masturbation	Student's t	1.61	58.0	0.113

**Table 3 shows the Group Descriptive of the sample.**

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
Attitude towards Masturbation	Female	30	115	116	15.8	2.89
	Male	30	108	107	18.7	3.42

## Discussion of Results

The results found out that there is no significant difference between the two genders ( $p=0.113$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Mean of female and male sample are 115 and 108 respectively. The female sample as compared to the male sample has a higher mean which indicates that women, marginally, have a more positive attitude towards masturbation than men. According to a study conducted by Allen and Kaestle (2011), nearly all the participants learned about masturbation from friends or media and never parents or teachers. Gender was a salient feature in coming to terms with pleasure and stigma. Many women reported either still struggling with contradiction or accepting it as normal. Most men recognized the beneficial aspects for a healthy sexual development that results from masturbation. Both male and female participants identified differential sexual scripts as contributing to the double standard. The effect of masturbation on sexual behaviour is evident in the fact that masturbators (especially women) often tend to be more orgasmic and less frigid than non-masturbators (Ellis, 1955). Kinsey et al. (1953) concludes that the frequencies of masturbation provide a significant measure of the level of a female's interest in sexual activity.

## Conclusion

The research study comprehends the attitude towards masturbation among male and female university students. No significant difference was found out between males and females. Women only had a slightly more positive attitude towards masturbation than males. Various approaches can be adopted to inculcate a positive and pragmatic attitude towards masturbation. The stigmatic attitude has led to people feeling guilty and sinful towards their religion and partners after masturbating. Other implications being not knowing enough about your body's preferences and other negative effects like suppression of sexual desires leading to stress, anxiety and irritability. One could follow the teachings of certified sex educators online, read books written by educated and trained personnel or listen to podcasts to gain precise and clear cut information. With accurate information, one could enhance their sexual experiences by using a lubricant, and explore more using sex toys. Masturbation is a great way to understand not just about oneself but also about your partner's likings.

## Suggestions

Masturbation is a great way to learn about your body and sexual feelings without any complications that might arise with sex or sexual things with someone. One can feel good without worrying about sexually transmitted diseases (STD'S) and unwanted pregnancies. One gets to learn about erogenous zones in our body i.e. areas in our body more sensitive than the others, for instance, ears, neck, nipples, inner thighs, belly button etc. With masturbation, one gains insight into what we like and what we don't like sexually and what gets us in the mood. One can either listen to sensuous music, or read erotic literature, the list is endless. One won't go blind or lose virginity or fracture their penis. If kids are caught masturbating by their parents, they must educate them that it is a normal part of growing up and must be done privately. Schools must not skip this topic as a part of sex education. Masturbation teaches you that orgasms don't happen instantly and that they aren't necessary for an enjoyable experience. One must wash their hands and make sure to pee before and after they're done. Many people are of the view that one must stop masturbating once they are in a relationship as they fear cheating on their

partner or them not being able to enjoy sex later in life if they play with themselves. However, masturbation does not equate to cheating on one's partner and does not decrease our ability to enjoy sexual experiences with them. It helps to deal with stress, period cramps and the inability to fall asleep. Using sex toys like vibrators, dildos, pressure-wave or anal toys can be very pleasurable. There is no such thing as 'too much masturbation'. Some people masturbate more than the others and there is no normal frequency. Masturbation is a personal decision and there are no hard and fast rules as to how, when or how much it needs to be done.

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