AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON HEALTH VULNERABILITIES OF URBAN YOUTH HAVING HIGH CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND PREFERENCES FOR LATE MARRIAGES

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PRESENTATION STRUCTURE
NEED FOR STUDY
OBJECTIVES & METHODS
FINDINGS
CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD
NEED FOR STUDY

The recent data from India Census 2011 shows that India has largest youth population in the world. Present youth is healthier, more urbanized & better educated.

With the increased media exposure promoting high profile & luxurious life style as an indicator of individual success, there has been preferences for professional courses like business management mostly among urban youth. But at the same time their awareness towards sexual & reproductive health has not increased and hence they face significant risks on these fronts.

These vulnerabilities remain poorly understood and catered for, and it is only over the last decade or so that researchers and policy makers have started giving attention to these issues.
**Need For Study**

Even so the information on intimate partnerships among young youth, female and male, married & unmarried is sparse and evidence is practically non-existent.

While some studies establish that employment related stress adversely impacts the RH among youth females and that high career aspirations may have negative impact reproductive health (Wilhelmia A. Leigh and Julia L. Andrews, 2002) there are few youth specific studies mapping their career aspirations in context of their RH.

Thus, the present paper examines this in greater detail through qualitative & quantitative approaches. It studies the aspects of current aspirations among educated urban youth in reference to their reproductive & sexual health behaviour.
**Study Objectives & Research Methods**

**Objective:**
- To map aspirations of urban educated youth in their last semester of MBA/Engineering/MCA
- To assess preferences towards marriage
- To assess awareness towards sexual & reproductive health
- To analyze their current sexual & reproductive behavior

**Research Design:** Exploratory

Qualitative: In-depth interviews (n=30), Case Studies (2)

Quantitative: Interviews (n=200)

Secondary data: India Census 2001, 2011. IIPS study 2006–07

**Study Area:** Agra & Mathura (UP, India)
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Gender:
46% Female; 54% Males

Education Stream:
MBA–80%; MCA–10%; Engineering–10%
(all final semester students)

Place of Residence:
75% Agra; 25% Mathura (all Urban)

Mean Age:
22.93 years
## Career Aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspire to purchase car within one year of job</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspire for job in a metro city</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspire annual salary =&gt; USD 1 Lakh after one year of job</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely want to work in foreign country</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration score out of 10.00</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quotes from Students:

- **It’s very humiliating for entire family if one is not placed in a high paying job after doing course like MCA; people keep asking about salary, perks, city of job**
  - 25 yrs MCA student

- **I have done an expensive professional course like MBA…not only mine but my parents aspirations are also attached. I want to fulfill my family’s dream of job giving a very comfortable life**
  - 24yrs MBA student

- **Our role models are successful business entrepreneurs who lead an expensive lifestyle; they are quoted for that. Gone are days when people struggled to success. Today technology has made achievement easy**
  - 24 yrs Engineering student
**Youth Preference for Marriage**

Preferred Marriage Age: 29.4 years

Proportion planning to marry after age 30 yrs: 71.4%

**Reasons**

- Want to spend more time in studying: 5%
- Want to give enough time in settling down in career: 95%

“I am now 25 years; will complete MBA this year and would be in job then. First 3 years are gone in experimenting type of job & nature of company. It’s a struggle period. At age 28-29 when one feels settled in job, then can think of marriage”

- 25 yrs MBA student

“After engineering I want to do MBA and then would do PhD”. My family is into business & hence marriage takes place at around 25 yrs but I don’t want to join my family business”

- 25 yrs Engineering student

Marriage age as per Urban DLHS-3:
- men 25.5 yrs
- women 21.2 yrs

“After studies one can’t jump into marriage. Want to see the world, enjoy & work without family responsibilities; and then it’s a trend now to marry after 30”

- 27 yrs MBA student
## ATTITUDE TOWARDS MARRIAGE

### Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage before 30 yrs age spoils career</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To live a complete life marriage is not a must these days</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage only fulfils human need for sex</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If marriage does not succeed &amp; creates problem to job/career then one should definitely go for divorce</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**‘Attitude towards Marriage’ Score out of 10.00** 7.18

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**"first one year in Indian marriages are gone in observing various rituals and observing family functions with visiting relatives, this eats up quality time and energy from job where expectations are very high..."**  
- 24 yrs MBA student

**"It is OK to remain bachelor for careers in specialized fields like journalism, politics, film acting, etc. Friends or life partners can live in or stay together for whatever time they find comfortable"**  
- 26 yrs MBA student

**“Our huge farms were enough to meet household requirements of fathers joint family; but it’s a different time as there are lot expectations from us. I have to earn and that too in prestigious service sector jobs and also with a standard life style; early marriage definitely poses stumbling block”**  
- 24 yrs Engineering student
Marriage type preference:
Love : 54%
Arranged : 46%

Reasons: Love marriage
- Opportunity to know each other better: 69.6%
- There is freedom to lead one’s life-style: 21.7%
- Greater chance of success: 4.3%
- Already in love: 4.3%

Reasons: Arranged marriage
- Respect parent’s wishes: 38.9%
- Greater chance of success: 33.3%
- Parents more experienced, hence can choose better partner: 16.7%
- It’s our tradition, can’t go against it: 5.6%
- To gain family, relative’s & social approval: 5.6%

In a conservative patriarchal society like India where arranged marriages are prevalent, the high preference for Love marriages needs attention from policy and planning perspectives.
## ATTITUDE TOWARDS PREMARITAL PHYSICAL INTIMACY & SEXUAL RELATIONS

### Dimensions Present

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Present Study</th>
<th>IIPS Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kissing before marriage is all right</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A boy’s future will be ruined if he has sex before marriage</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A girl’s future will be ruined if she has sex before marriage</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ATTITUDE INCLINED TOWARDS HIGH PHYSICAL INTIMACY

- A boy’s future will be ruined if he has sex before marriage: 33%
- A girl’s future will be ruined if she has sex before marriage: 63%

### PREMARITAL ROMANTIC RELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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<th>IIPS Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romantic relation (proposal accepted by girl friend or boy friend)</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend’s aware of relationship</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s aware of relationship</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Greater proportion of romantic relations reported among target group.
**Physical Intimacy**

**Marriage Intentions**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intend to marry pre-marital partner</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever held hand</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever hugged</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever kissed</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever had sexual relations</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Premarital Sexual Risk Behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>IIPS Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used condom at first sex</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condom use to avoid pregnancy</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condom use to avoid infection</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional programmes like MBA or MCA require collaborative learning and several team based assignments. There is greater degree of togetherness shared between both the genders; intimacy also increases with romantic relations...leading to high preference for love marriages and hence higher risk behavior.
CONCLUSIONS WAY FORWARD

- With more than 1000 MBA, 650 MCA and around 200 engineering institutes (Business India Study, 2010) the educated, affluent urban youth requires focused and customized programmatic attention to address their emerging sexual and reproductive health requirements. There is a trend found among them:
  - High career aspirations and preference for late marriages
  - High physical intimacy and sexual relations
  - Greater sexual risk behaviour

- There is a need for more comprehensive studies with higher sample size capturing adequate geographic variations and probing in greater detail on various of the above aspects are required.
THANK YOU