

Research Article

Men in Our Lives

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A B S T R A C T

Background: Everybody has read about girls, moms and wives. It's time to read & learn something about men. The men in our lives are 'unsung heroes'. A good father is one of the most unsung, un-praised and unnoticed and yet one of the most valuable asset in our society. It is with gratitude and a challenge to understand 'MEN' in our lives, that this paper is written. Our hypothesis is that in India I. Fifty percent of adult males (1) are married; (2) have female friends; (3) are healthy; (4) burdened with the responsibilities; (5) enjoy games, hobbies and touring etc. II. 20% of males are addicted to one or the other substances and III. To study the Sexual-orientation of men.

Methods: It is a cross-sectional study carried out over a period of one month from 23rd April to 22nd May 2018, at field practice area of the Department of Community Health, of a tertiary care hospital in Delhi. The study includes 53 subjects (males) within the age group of 21 - 66 years. A pretested questionnaire including the socio-demographic profile, marital & health status, hobbies was used as a study tool to achieve the objectives of the study.

Results: The study shows that 27 (50.94%) out of 53 men were married, there were 26 (49.06%) men who had female friends. Men who were healthy were 47 (88.68%). Forty five (84.9%) of men were burdened with some or the other responsibilities. 27 (50.94%) men enjoy movies and games & sports like cricket. Forty seven (88.68%) men have toured in India but only 7(13.21%) have been to foreign countries. Addiction was found in 10 (18.87%). Five (9.43%) were bisexual, 1(1.89%) was homosexual, whereas 7 (13.21%) subjects did not disclose their sexual orientation.

Conclusion: Men do have lots of responsibilities yet try to keep healthy by taking interest in games and hobbies. More studies could be conducted on men folk.

Keywords: Female-friends, Sexual-orientation, Unsung Heroes

Introduction

Everyone has read about girls, moms and wives Every day and everywhere we read about 'women'. I am a woman too but I realize that in today's world sometimes the thought

process is skewed towards women and in the bargain 'Men' are left out, without giving them a proper recognition.

The male brain is highly specialized, using specific parts of one hemisphere or the other to accomplish tasks. Men

are able to separate information, stimulus, emotions, relationships, etc. into separate compartments in their brains. They see individual issues with parts of their brain, while women look at the holistic or multiple issues with their whole brain (both hemispheres). All of a woman's senses are, in some respects, more finely tuned than those of a man.¹ Men aren't always on the same page as women.² Men are from Mars and women are from Venus-one is so different from the other.

The men in our lives are 'unsung heroes'. A good father is one of the most unsung, un-praised and unnoticed and yet one of the most valuable asset in our society.³ A boy/man is one of the most beautiful creations of God. He starts compromising at a very tender age. A boy of 3 years stops riding his tricycle for his younger sister. A boy-friend allows the girl-friend to take his 'Silky Dairy Milk Chocolate.' A young man of 26 gets married prepared to shoulder the responsibility of a young lady and also of the 'would be children'. A man with a kid plans for the kid's education and arranges for kid's school fee. A man in his thirties takes a loan and keeps paying EMIs for a 'House' for his family. It is usually a man who has to arrange for *roti* (bread), *kapada* (clothes) and *makan* (house). He is the Home Bank. All depend on him. He does all this without complaining. He is happy in the happiness of his family.

He does not share his worries with his wife as she is a part of him. He has to bear that burden alone. He does not find or very rarely finds a friend with whom he dares to share his worries and fears. It's time to learn something about men. We very well know that a man and a woman are two wheels of a cart. If they both don't work together to pull the cart, it would be a disaster. It is with gratitude and a challenge to understand 'MEN' in our lives, that I write this paper. I shall explore what a 21st century man feels, is burdened with, aspires for and contends with. My hypothesis is that in India I. Fifty percent of adult males (1) are married; (2) have female friends; (3) are healthy; (4) burdened with the responsibilities; yet (5) enjoy games, hobbies and touring etc. II. 20% of men are addicted to one or the other substances and III. To explore kind of sexual orientation men have

Materials and Methods

Study design

A cross-sectional study was conducted over a period of one month from 23rd April to 22nd May 2018 at the field practice area of the Community Health Department (CHD) of tertiary care hospital in Delhi. Total 53 (men) were included in the study group.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

1. Inclusion Criteria

All males >18 years of age:

- Male staff of CHD
- Male relatives of female CHD staff
- Randomly selected males at the field practice area of CHD

2. Exclusion Criteria

In case any of the males in the above mentioned categories did not want to take part in the study.

Consent

Informed Verbal Consent was taken from all participants. Some wanted to fill questionnaire anonymously without disclosing their addresses & identities, which was allowed. Confidentiality of data was ensured.

Study area

Out of these 53 men, 9 were from Dilshad Garden & neighboring areas, 17 were from Delhi NCR, 1 from Uttar Pradesh, 18 from Sunder Nagari, East Delhi and 8 others were anonymous(did not want to reveal their address & identity).

Sample size

Total of 53 subjects - 15 male staff, 20 male relatives of female staff and 18 area men, in the age group of 21 -66 years were included in the study.

Study Tool

A pretested questionnaire including the socio-demographic profile, marital & health status and the hobbies etc. was used as a study tool. Most of the questions could be answered in by ticking. It had:

- Socio-demographic profile: Name, Age, Address, Religion, Caste, Siblings and No. of children;
- Marital status: Married and Unmarried, Age when got married, Sexual-orientation and Number of Friends including girl-friends;
- Health status: Physical health, Exercise, Yoga, Mental health, If any Disease, If any Addictions;
- Enjoyment/ Entertainment: Hobbies, Games & sports interested in Material possessions, Number of tours in India and abroad

Statistical Analysis

Data Collection

The questionnaire were distributed to the participants and collected back in a week. For the participants of the field practice area investigator took help of ANMs.

Analysis

In order to subject the data to statistical testing, the collected data were entered in the computer. The data were cleaned and tabulated in the MS-Excel and analyzed for the frequency and percentages.

Results

Out of the total 53 participants, the youngest was 21 years and eldest was 66 years old. The mean age was 39.37. [Table-1(A)].

The maximum participants were Hindus, followed by Muslims and Christians [Table-1(B)].

Category-wise 52.83% belonged to General category followed by Scheduled Caste 30.19% [Table-1(C)].

Table 1(A).Age wise details of participants

| Age -groups | No. | % |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| 21-<40 | 31 | 58.49 |
| 40-<60 | 17 | 32.08 |
| 60-75 | 5 | 9.3 |
| Total | 53 | 99.87 |

Table 1(B).Religion wise details of participants

| | No. | % |
|-----------|-----|-------|
| Hindu | 37 | 69.81 |
| Muslim | 9 | 16.98 |
| Christian | 7 | 13.21 |
| | 53 | 100 |

Table 1(C).Caste wise details of participants

| Caste | No. | % |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|
| General | 28 | 52.83 |
| Schedule Caste | 16 | 30.19 |
| Schedule Tribe | 3 | 5.66 |
| Other Backward Classes(OBC) | 4 | 7.55 |
| Not known | 2 | 3.77 |
| | 53 | 100 |

Education, Occupation and Income of men

33(62.26%) of the subjects were either 12th pass or professionals whereas 17(32%) were 10th pass or less educated and 3 (5.66%) were illiterates. Occupation-wise Professionals, semi-professionals, clerical and shop-owners comprised of 31 (58.49%), while skilled and semi-skilled were 15(28.3%).

followed by unemployed 7 (13.21%). Thirty three (62.26%) of subjects had the income of more than Rs. 10356 per month followed by 12 (22.64%) who had income of less than Rs. 10356 per month whereas 8 (15%) were unemployed (Table-2).

Marital status and Men's outlook towards 'age at marriage', 'sexual orientation' and number of friends including 'girl-friends'

There were 27 married and 26 unmarried men. 13 (24.53%)

had got married between the age of 26-30 years, 9 (16.98%) between 21 to 25 years, 3 (5.66%) below the age of 21 years, 1 (1.89%) at the age of 34 years and 1 (1.89%) at the age of 36 years. Out of 53 subjects, 40 (75.47%) were heterosexuals, 5 (9.43%) were bisexual, and 1 (1.89%) was homosexual, whereas 7 (13.21%) subjects did not reply to this question [Table-3(A)].

In context with the relation with the female or ladies as a friend, out of 53 subjects 27 (50.94%) subjects had no female friends, 16 (30.19%) had 1-5 friends whereas, 6 (11.32%) had 6-10 friends and 4 (7.54%) had more than 10 friends [Table 3(B)].

Table 2.Education, Occupation and Income wise details of subjects

| Education | No. | % |
|------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Professionals/ Honours | 12 | 22.64 |
| Graduate or Postgraduate | 17 | 32.08 |
| Intermediate or Post High School Diploma | 4 | 7.55 |
| High School Certificate | 5 | 9.3 |
| Middle School Certificate | 6 | 11.32 |
| Primary School Certificate | 6 | 11.32 |
| Literate | | |
| Illiterate | 3 | 5.66 |
| Occupation | | |
| Profession | 18 | 33.96 |
| Semi Profession | 7 | 13.21 |
| Clerical | 3 | 5.66 |
| Shop Owner | 3 | 5.66 |
| Farmer | | |
| Semi Skilled | 8 | 15.09 |
| SKILLED | 7 | 13.21 |
| UN-EMPLOYED | 7 | 13.21 |
| Income | | |
| >41430 | 10 | 18.86 |
| 20715-41429 | 10 | 18.86 |
| 15536-20714 | 10 | 18.86 |
| 10357-15537 | 3 | 5.66 |
| 6214-10356 | 9 | 16.98 |
| 2092-6213 | 3 | 5.66 |
| <2091 | | |
| NIL | 8 | 15.09 |

Table 3(A). Marital status, age at marriage, education and sexual orientation of subjects

| Marital Status | No. | % |
|--------------------|-----|--------|
| Married | 27 | 50.94 |
| Unmarried | 26 | 49.06 |
| | 53 | 100 |
| Age at Marriage | | |
| <21 years | 3 | 5.66% |
| 21-25 | 9 | 16.98% |
| 26-30 | 13 | 24.53% |
| 31-35 | 1 | 1.89% |
| 35-40 | 1 | 1.89% |
| Sexual Orientation | No. | % |
| Did not reply | 7 | 13.21 |
| Heterosexual | 40 | 75.47 |
| Homosexual | 1 | 1.89 |
| Bisexual | 5 | 9.43 |

Men’s outlook towards health, exercise, yoga, diseases and addiction

Self-reporting on their health maximum number of subjects 40 (75.47%) said that they were either in very good or good health. There were 25 (47.17%) subjects who exercised and 7 (13.21%) did YOGA for 30 minutes 5 days-a-week. Thirty eight (71.7%) subjects didn’t have any disease whereas 43 (81.13%) subjects were not addicted to any substance (Table-4).

Men’s responsibilities

Twenty four (45.28%) did not have children. The major stress factor was the responsibility of ‘Family’ and next was ‘Job’, whereas 8 subjects did not feel any type of stress of responsibility (Table-5).

Table 3(B). Details of male & female friends of subjects

| | Male | | Female | |
|----------|------|-------|--------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| NIL | 9 | 16.98 | 27 | 50.94 |
| 1 to5 | 30 | 56.6 | 16 | 30.19 |
| 6 to10 | 7 | 13.2 | 6 | 11.32 |
| 11to15 | 1 | 1.88 | 2 | 3.77 |
| 16 to 20 | 2 | 3.77 | | |
| >20 | 4 | 7.55 | 2 | 3.77 |
| | | 99.98 | | 99.99 |

Table 4. Health, exercise, YOGA, diseases and addictions among the participants

| Self-reported Physical Health | Total | % |
|----------------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Poor | 6 | 11.32 |
| Fair | 7 | 13.21 |
| Good | 30 | 56.60 |
| V. Good | 10 | 18.87 |
| | 53 | 100.00 |
| Exercise 30 minutes 5 Days per Week | | |
| Yes | 25 | 47.17 |
| No | 28 | 52.83 |
| | 53 | 100 |
| YOGA 30 minutes 5 Days per Week | | |
| Yes | 7 | 13.21 |
| No | 46 | 86.79 |
| | 53 | 100.00 |
| Non Communicable Diseases | | |
| Diabetes Mellitus | 4 | 7.55 |
| Hypertension | 6 | 11.32 |
| Joint Pain | 3 | 5.66 |
| Others | 6 | 11.32 |
| Nil | 38 | 71.70 |
| | 57 | |
| Addiction | | |
| 1. Cheweing Tobacco | 2 | 3.77 |
| 2. Smoking | 4 | 7.55 |
| 3. Drinking | 8 | 15.09 |
| Nil | 43 | 81.13 |
| | 57 | |
| Note: One person may have more than one NCDs | | |

Subjects’ outlook towards enjoyment

More than 27 (50.94%) men were interested in watching movies and playing cricket. But 7 (13.21%) did not have a hobby and 1 (1.89%) did not like any games or sports.

Thirty one (58.49%) possessed a car, 27 (50.97%) had a Mobile phone and 22 (41.51%) had their own house. Six (11.32%) subjects had not done any touring in India whereas, 46 (86.79%) had not been to any foreign country (Table-6).

Table 5. Subjects' children and responsibilities

| No. of Children | No. | % |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|
| 0 | 24 | 45.28 |
| 1 | 9 | 16.98 |
| 2 | 8 | 15.09 |
| 3 | 9 | 16.98 |
| 4 | 3 | 5.66 |
| | 53 | 100 |
| Responsibilities | | |
| Job | 34 | 64.15 |
| Family | 39 | 73.58 |
| Parents | 23 | 43.4 |
| Loan | 8 | 15.09 |
| Nil | 8 | 15.09 |

Table 6. Entertainment – Hobbies, Games & Sports, Materialistic-possessions and number of tours in India and Abroad

| Hobbies | | |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|
| Movie | 27 | 50.94 |
| Singing | 19 | 35.85 |
| Dancing | 5 | 9.43 |
| Playing | 12 | 22.64 |
| Reading | 12 | 22.64 |
| Nil | 7 | 13.21 |
| Games & Sports | | |
| Cricket | 27 | 50.94 |
| Hockey | 11 | 20.75 |
| Football | 7 | 13.21 |
| Badminton | 11 | 20.75 |
| Others | 7 | 13.21 |
| Nil | 1 | 1.89 |
| Material Things I Possess | | |
| Scooter | 10 | 18.87 |
| Motorbike | 21 | 39.62 |
| Car | 31 | 58.49 |
| House | 22 | 41.51 |
| Mobile | 27 | 50.94 |
| Nil | 5 | 9.43 |
| India Tours | | |
| 0 | 6 | 11.32 |
| 1 | 2 | 3.77 |

| | | |
|----------------------|----|-------|
| 2 | 8 | 15.09 |
| 3 | 9 | 16.98 |
| 4 | 22 | 41.51 |
| >4 | 6 | 11.32 |
| Total | 53 | 99.99 |
| Foreign Tours | | |
| 0 | 46 | 86.79 |
| 1 | 3 | 5.66 |
| 2 | 1 | 1.89 |
| >4 | 3 | 5.66 |
| Total | 53 | 100 |

Discussion

Though men spend nearly one third of their time in the workplace, the home environment is also equally important for good health. Work provides income and contributes to a better socioeconomic condition which, in turn, is related to good health. However, if the home environment is not peaceful it leads to mental health problems. Usually Indians are not used to giving adequate importance to the welfare of the family members (including men).

This study was undertaken to understand men in our lives. It is generally understood that men and women are quite different. Usually men are called 'insensitive' and women are 'touchy-feely'. Men talk silently to themselves while women love to talk.⁴ On Venus their motto is "Love, is never having to ask!" whereas at Mars if you want support you simply have to ask for it.⁵ Thus it is difficult for women to understand the male outlook towards education, money, enjoyment, sex and life as a whole. It was with this intention that the study was planned.

Our study showed 27 (50.94%) out of 53 men in the age group of 21 – 66 years were married. Maximum number i.e 13 (24.53%) got married in the third decade of life. It was also found that there were 26 (49.06%) men who have female friends which means the Indian society is changing and it is ok for men to have female friends too. Having a girl as your best friend is a fantastic thing to happen to any guy. They are super fun and caring, they understand you better. But even the best rosebush has thorns, and having a girl best friend can be a pain too. The biggest disadvantage of having a girl best friend is that the whole world thinks you are together, including your parents. They simply assume that you two will end up together one day.⁶ Men who thought themselves to be healthy were 47 (88.68%). The number of men who were burdened with some or the other responsibilities were 45(84.9%). They felt responsible for their families. The growing interest in the role of men in the family has been triggered by diverse demographic,

socio-economic and cultural transformations that have occurred over the past several decades, impacting the formation, stability and overall well-being of families⁷. The time is changing for better and the prevailing framework with which many fathers approach their role in the family as an equal partnership with their wife. They do their role as that of a team player with shared responsibility with their wife rather than split responsibility. Instead of taking sole ownership for the financial support of the family, many of them share it with their wife⁸.

The study found 27(50.94%) of men enjoy movies and an equal number enjoys games & sports like cricket. Sports offer a living mixture of the abstract and concrete, the impersonal and the personal, fixed laws and ceaseless spontaneity. Sometimes, at a tense moment in a big match, you can feel vast ocean-streams of desires, fears, hopes, swirling around the ground. We are not just “consumers” of cricket. Watching is not a passive process; it engages a range of faculties – imagination, interpretation, memories.⁹

We observed that there were a higher proportion of men who have toured in India but much less has been to any foreign country. Present day men are happy to spend money. They are not like their parents – saving money.

Addiction to tobacco and alcohol was found among 10(18.87%) study subjects. While addiction is not a gender specific disease, it does affect men and women differently. More men are diagnosed with chemical dependency (addiction) than women, although studies have yet to clarify whether this is due to biology or society. Community does acknowledge that men face unique gender challenges that make them more susceptible to substance abuse.¹⁰

According to the American Psychological Association, sexual orientation refers to an “enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes”, as well as to “a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions”.¹¹ The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, a sexual orientation law think tank, released a study in April 2011¹² estimating based on its research that 1.7 percent of American adults identify as gay or lesbian, while another 1.8 percent identify as bisexual. Our study showed that 38 (71.7%) men were heterosexual, 6 (11.32%) homosexual and 9 (16.98%) who did not reply to this question. Homosexuality is mostly a taboo subject in Indian civil society and for the government. Under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, sex with persons of the same gender is punishable by law.¹³ On 10 July 2018, the Hon’ble Supreme Court upholding the importance of the rights of the LGBT community through Justice D. Y. Chandrachud in the proceedings of the court held that choosing a partner is every person’s fundamental right.¹⁴

On the basis of these facts the present study proved the hypothesis that:

- 50% of adult males (1) are married; (2) have female friends; (3) are healthy; (4) 84.9% are burdened with responsibilities; yet (5) 50.94% enjoy games & hobbies and 88.68% have toured in India
- Nearly 19 % of men are addicted to one or the other substances
- There are 10% with a different sexual orientation.

Limitations of the study include a small sample size mainly from Delhi. Therefore the generalization of this study is limited to male population residing in Delhi. As we had a good rapport with people, response of the study subjects during the interview was excellent. Therefore the internal validity of the study is good.

Conclusion

We Indians are not used to giving adequate importance to the welfare of our family members. The responsibility lies with all of us, women and men alike for improving the ‘health of men in our lives’. Men do have lots of responsibilities yet try to keep healthy by taking interest in games and hobbies. We recommend that studies with larger sample size should be undertaken to be able to confirm & generalize the findings of this study.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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