
Sexuality and Disability

Shivani Singh
Banasthali Vidyapith

Sexuality

Sexuality is a central aspect of being human; intelligent life encompasses sex, gender identities, roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction.

Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behavior, practices, roles and relationships. While Sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed.

Sexuality is influenced by biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual factors. Sexuality includes not just what we think about sex and Sexuality and gender, identity and roles, sexual orientation, but intimacy and pleasure. These are things that we often forget about the needs for when it comes to people with disabilities.

Sexuality is not an act. It's not an action Sexuality can be internal. It can be a way of looking at the world, a way of experiencing sensations.

Sexuality is not genitality, but often we reduce it to genitality when we talk about it.

If anyone has any physical or intellectual disability, it doesn't change there is Sexuality and their desire to express it.

Disability may affect one's ability to have the sex life one would like to have. People with Disabilities may have to approach sexual activity differently, and they may have various questions and concerns relating to their physical or emotional health. The World Health Organization says that Sexuality is a basic need and the aspect of being human that cannot be separated from other parts of life.

If disabilities impair physical ability to engage in regular sex life or make you lack confidence, one may feel worried about having sex. Most people with Disabilities or Disabilities have anxiety about Sexuality and sexual performance, and these feelings are entirely natural.

Meaning of disabilities (under UNCRPD):

United Nations Convention on Right to the person with Disability:

UNCRPD said that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Example: If a person is disabled, then no availability of wheels/ lift or any special privilege that day requires is a physical barrier.

Example: Even if all infrastructure is provided apart from that, the attitude barriers create differentiation between the person with disabilities and non-disable because the administrative people don't allow them to enroll in school colleges or any administration.

UNCRPD also said that **"DISABILITY MUST NOT BE TREATED AS A CHARITY, BUT IT'S THE RIGHT WHICH IS PROVIDED TO THEM BY BIRTH."**

India signed UNCRPD on the first day of October 2007 and brought a paradigm shift from a charity (Social Welfare) to a Human Right (Justifiably).

Definition of Disability under RPWD Act 2016:

Right of a person with disability act 2016

2(s) "person with Disability means a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with barriers hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others.

RPWD Act 8 Principle of Empowerment:-

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make their own choice, and the person's independence.
2. Non-discrimination
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of people with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.
5. Equality of opportunity.
6. Accessibility
7. Equality between men and women
8. Respect for the evolving capacity of children with disabilities to perceive their identities.

Myths about people with disabilities and Sexuality

So there are lots of myths about people with disabilities and Sexuality, and these are some of the common myths that people with disabilities are asexual. Their Sexuality isn't part of their life also they are told that they are hypersexual, heterosexuals there are lots of assumptions about sexual behavior and that sexual behavior for people with disabilities is inappropriate behavior, the speculation around capacity and consent that people with disabilities cannot consent or are incapable of consent.

Also, a weird assumption made was that people with disabilities are only partners with others with disabilities, which is unique to the individual.

Society, over time, has developed many myths around Disability and Sexuality, which areas such that it's frustrating, offensive, and incorrect. Some of these stereotypes myths include that a person who is disabled doesn't need sex or can't have 'real sex.' Other misguidance includes that a person with a disability might have more critical needs than sex or should not have children because of society's taboo. On top of this, many non-disabled people tend to regard sex for people with disabilities as a taboo subject, and it is rarely discussed openly. Society tends to have an idealistic image of 'sexual attractiveness,' and anyone, whether with Disability or not, who doesn't meet these standards can feel dismissed.

Information about Disability and Sexuality only focuses on function or fertility, not on perfectly natural feelings and emotions, like attraction, desire, and love. To be seen as a non-sexual being can be devastating and challenging to accept.

If myths or misinformation affect one's life, one may feel tempted to avoid sex or limit your opportunities to have a sexual relationship (such as preventing meeting a partner). When lack of privacy from families/friends or living arrangements is involved, you may find sex particularly challenging.

Facts about people with Disability and Sexuality

Many people with disabilities can be sexual, can have sex can enjoy sex. They don't have to have sex with one another. They are very diverse sexually.

New data about people on the autism spectrum show greater diversity than with neuro-typical populations. With the Right support, capable of having sexual relationships, all people need to learn about and understand sex and relationships. So one of the significant impacts for people with disabilities is **SOCIAL ISOLATION** because we know about relationships from our context from our family and our peers from our social interaction. Social isolation and lack of typical peer experience limits social learning and is a pretty standard experience for a young

person with disabilities. So struggling with specific adult social experience can support social learning for people with disabilities.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND PERSON WITH DISABILITIES

The rates of Abuse, especially when we talk about sexual Abuse, are shockingly high for people with disabilities. According to Women with Disabilities in Australia research, 90% of women with an intellectual disability have been sexually abused. And a quarter of reported rapes are against women in Victoria are against women with disabilities. This sexual and other Abuse often goes unreported and usually occurs before the person being abused reaches 18.

Status of crime when we talk about people with disabilities and Sexuality:

The Worldwide statistics

People who are disabled are sexually assaulted nearly three times that the rate of people without disabilities. A survey organized in 2005 for people with disabilities indicated that 60% of respondents or people with disabilities had been subjected to some of the other forms of unwanted sexual activity. Unfortunately, almost half of the disabled people have never reported the assault. In general, we can say that people who are disabled experience domestic and sexual violence at higher rates than people who do not have a form of Disability. Consider the following:

- 83% of women with disabilities are more likely to have a history of undesired sex with an intimate partner 19.7% vs. 8.2%.
- Three percent of sexual Abuse involves people with developmental disabilities are ever reported.
- Fifty percent of girls who have a hearing disability have been sexually abused compared to 25 percent of hearing.
- Fifty-four percent of boys with a hearing disability are more prone to being sexually abused than 10 percent of hearing boys.
- Women's with disabilities are far more likely to have a history of undesired sex with an intimate partner 19.7% vs. 8.2%
- Approximately 80 percent of women and 30 percent of men with developmental disabilities have very often been found to be sexually assaulted; half of these women have been attacked more than ten times.
- People with disabilities have often faced a higher rate of explanation and Abuse, and they need appropriate safety and exploitation prevention education.

The Indian Statistics-

In India, data on disabled persons is collected through the Decennial Population Census and NSSO surveys (periodicity not regular). The discussions are on the number of disabled, distribution of disabled by various types of disabilities, their age groups, educational level, work status, and marital status. According to the Census 2011, In India, out of the 121 crore population, 2.68 Crore persons are 'disabled,' which is 2.21% of the total population. Population, India 2011 Disabled persons, India 2011 Person Males Females Persons Males Females 121.08 Cr 62.32 Cr 58.76Cr 2.68 Cr 1.5 Cr 1.18 Cr Among the people who are disabled, 56% (1.5 Crore) are males, and 44% are females. In total population, the males and the female populations are 51% and 49%, respectively. The majority (69%) of the disabled population resided in rural areas (1.86 Crore disabled persons in rural areas and 0.81 Crore people reside in urban areas). In the case of the total population also, 69% are from rural areas while the remaining 31% live in urban areas.

CONCLUSION

I would conclude by saying that the problem is not with the person with Disability but the environment that fails to accommodate a person with Disability.

People who are disabled are unnecessarily isolated, highly exploited, and generally, they are excluded from full participation in society just because of our community's hostile attitude and narrow mindset.

In context with Sexuality And Disability, people with disabilities have to face a higher explanation rate and Abuse. They need appropriate safety and exploitation prevention education.

Children with disabilities often don't have close relationships; they often do not have comprehensive social relationships.

Must solve many issues specifically for people with intellectual disabilities, so many adults with intellectual disabilities may not understand the abstract concepts of love or that pregnancy results in having a baby nine months later.

The example used needs to be concrete with the present atmosphere.

Also, the requirements for sexual health, such as a positive and respectful approach to Sexuality and sexual relationship and the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual exp free of Coercion, discrimination, and violence, are issues present for everyone and are particularly salient for people with Disability.

REFERENCE

- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ServicesAndSupport/disability-and-sexuality#about-disability-and-sexuality>.
- (Visit :<http://www.uctv.tv/>) Erica Monasterio
- Rupsa Mallika Director program's and innovation at crea (Ted xBanglore www.youtube.com)
- <https://youtube.com/c/SureshBadaMath>.