

# Pornography : Its Impact On Sexuality?

Pornography has existed across cultures for centuries, but digital access has transformed its reach, frequency, and impact. While occasional, mindful use may not be harmful, excessive or early exposure can affect sexual functioning, relationships, mental health, and adolescent development, making awareness, education, and timely professional guidance essential.

## Question: What are the types of pornography?

**Ans:** Pornography is any material which is created with the purpose of arousing the viewers/ listeners. It can be magazines or erotic novels, audio recordings, videos, websites, or at times live shows.

There are different types based on the contents

- softcore (nudity or implied sexual activity without explicit details)
- hardcore (explicit depiction of sexual acts)
- Fetish based ( focused on specific body parts or scenario)
- Sexual acts involving group or multiple partner
- Based on the target audience ( heterosexual , homosexual, bisexual, queer themed )

It is important to note that porn often presents exaggerated version of sexuality

**Question: Is pornography a result of the technology era?**

**Ans:** Explicit sexual images have been found in ancient Indian temples, ancient Chinese and Japanese art. However they were often linked to fertility or art; not for the hidden consumption. With the invention of the printing press, photography, films, DVDs etc it became more circulated; often secretly. However it was not that easily accessible. The digital and internet era, it has become easily- instantly accessible, and that too without spending much. Easy accessibility has changed the patterns of use.

- Can be seen privately
- Use frequency has increased dramatically; can easily turn into daily or compulsive
- addiction like patterns
- Often seen starting at an early age
- Online platforms make unlimited content, which are often intense
- Interactive platforms are emerging which often make it harder to disengage

Thus Pornography has existed since ancient times, its meaning- frequency and pattern of use has changed drastically and dramatically in the technology era.

## Question: Is porn always problematic? What are the signs that it is getting problematic?

**Ans:** Pornography consumption is not always harmful. When used mindfully and occasionally, especially in adults, it can be used for sexual arousal, stress relief, and communicating preferences in couples. Following are the warning signs when porn moves from recreational to problematic use- It becomes compulsory, spending more time on watching it

- The pornography content gets more intense or extreme to get that amount of stimulation or arousal



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- It is hard to control despite of knowing its negative impact
- Excessive thinking about porn or strong urges to watch them
- Reduced interest in real life intimacy
- Use affects real life relationships
- Affecting sexual functioning
- Used as a main coping to deal with emotional pain
- Start affecting mental health - academics-work - social life etc.

The problematic use of porn is treatable and is recommended to seek professional help

## Question: How pornography can affect sexual functioning?

**Ans:** Pornography can create sexual problems in some people, not everyone who watches it. Sexual functioning often gets affected when porn consumption becomes problematic. With excessive consumption of pornography sexual stimulation gets linked to watching pornscreens- novelty- specific sexual visuals etc; while the real life sex feels less stimulating. This can result in sexual problems in the partnered sex

- Less sex desire with a real partner
- difficulty in getting or maintaining penile erections (sexual arousal) with a partner; while no problem while watching the porn
- Problems with ejaculation ( delayed ejaculation)
- Difficulty in achieving climax

Pornography often showcases idealized bodies, constant readiness, prolonged sexual performance. This sets up unrealistic expectations about self or the partner resulting in

- Performance anxiety
- Lack of satisfaction with the partner

## Question: What are the effects of

## pornography on relationships?

**Ans:** If both the partners are ready or consenting; mindful use of pornography can help with curiosity, experimentations, communicating about preferences within the couple. However pornography can have negative impact on relationships when it is used frequently, secretly and replacing intimacy.

- If porn is used in hiding, can create feelings of secrecy- shame- guilt,
- The other partner can feel betrayed and affects trusts in the relationship
- Create conflicts - insecurities in the relationships- Sexual energy may get shifted away from relationship (to the pornography), sexual needs are predominantly met in isolation, less curiosity towards partner and feeling of emotional disconnection with the partner.
- Other partners might feel ignored or unwanted
- Sexual problems ( low desire, erectile difficulties, delayed ejaculation) while with the partner
- Unrealistic expectations resulting in dissatisfaction with the partner , low sexual confidence

## Question: is it true that pornography affects adolescents and young people more than the adults

**Ans:** The impact pornography on the younger individuals can be more negative as compared to adults. In young individuals, the brain's reward system is highly sensitive, the learning can happen quickly. The emotional brain is active while the part of the brain responsible for impulse control or judgement is still immature. Thus the sexual urges are stronger but without much control ; which puts young individuals in the higher risk of habit forming.

- compulsory use. Young individuals lack real life experience of sex and might look at the porn as a source of information. Thus their beliefs/ concepts about sexuality can be shaped or highly influenced by porn.
- Early exposure to porn in absence of real life experience can result in formation of distorted belief about sexuality such as,
- Unrealistic expectations of sexual organ & body size
- Self doubt- fear of not being normal
- Misunderstand consent- boundaries
- Consider sexual aggression as normal
- Consider extreme forms of sexual acts as normal sexuality
- Feel pressured to intimate acts even if not ready.

Considering this potential impact, it is far more important that young individuals have access to age appropriate sex education and open communications with adults and profession.