



Digital Infidelity and Its Impact on Mental and Sexual Health: A Multifaceted Approach to Mitigating Risks in Asian Societies

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Abstract

The evolution of Online adultery poses considerable psychological and public health concerns, predominantly around mental well-being and sexual health. Research suggests that anonymity and disinhibition inherent in digital interactions can lead to intensified engagement in risky sexual behaviors, including unprotected sex and the augmented transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These risks are further intensified due to cultural stigma, inadequate awareness, and restricted access to sexual health resources in Asian countries. Such high-risk behaviors that include adverse mental health outcomes and engagement due to psychological factors such as escapism, emotional dissatisfaction, and guilt impair rational decision-making. The concealed nature of online adultery confounds attempts in STD diagnosis and treatment, compelling the execution of specialized healthcare interventions. Such risks can be mitigated using targeted strategies such as confidential counseling, anonymous testing, and expanded access to sexual health clinics. The necessity for integration of digital literacy into sexual education, besides collaborations with online platforms, has become the core of public health initiatives. Moreover, public health initiatives that integrate digital literacy into sexual education, besides collaborations with online platforms, can play a crucial role in adopting safer online behaviors and reducing STD transmission. A multifaceted approach addressing these challenges, including the development of comprehensive healthcare services, the promotion of digital literacy in sexual health education, and strategic partnerships with digital platforms. By recognizing to mitigating the risks associated with online adultery, public health outcomes can be enhanced, along with mental well-being and empower individuals to make informed choices regarding their sexual health. The current study steps beyond factual studies of occurrence and investigates the health, psychological, and social consequences of these growing facts while indicating directed interventions.

INTRODUCTION

The ability to transform social relationships and communications has undergone rapid changes in the last decade with the invention of the internet. Online adultery is no longer a niche and rather has infiltrated public health concerns. The prevalence of the internet and the accessibility of online platforms are factors in the rise of adultery in Indian culture. Online dating services provide covert ways to search for adulterous partners that sneakily add to the numbers in adultery cases. Sociocultural attitudes against adultery have also undergone rapid changes with shifting beliefs and growing acceptance of non-monoga-

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mous partnerships^[1]. Lack of face-to-face human connection results in less concern for sexual health, and potential experiments with random people may cause unsafe sexual experiences, including potential transmission of STDs.

On the other hand, lack of understanding of and stigma against internet adulterers has reduced access to sexual health information and preventative techniques ^[2]. Motivated by reasons that include escape, emotional unhappiness, and approval seeking, individuals in Online environments may encouraged in sexually dangerous behaviors being prompted by a lack of restraint. Additionally, such engagement in risky behaviors frequently may lead to negative impacts on mental health and decision-making ^[3]. High-risk engagement may lead to high exposure from online probable partners who may carry STD specially designed healthcare facilities for those engaged in internet-based relationships may be the need of the hour. Difficulties in the diagnosis and treatment of STDs for online adulterous activities may be dealt with through targeted treatments ^[4].

Internet penetration and online platforms for adultery

The dominance of the internet and accessibility of online platforms have accelerated the growth of adultery in Indian culture. Moreover, the mushroom growth of Online dating services and casual affordability has eased the acceptability to look for short-term casual encounters that add to the number of people looking for adulterous affairs. Another Research ^[3] discovered a considerable effect of the internet on adulterous relationships in urban India. The author held the internet as the catalyst for the development of websites that cater to those looking for online adulterous relationships. Another study^[2] stated that the accessibility and anonymity of internet platforms have made it simpler for them to engage in adulterous relationships. Online adultery has become more prevalent in India because of the country's mounting internet access to more than 624 million internet users in 2019, a sizeable share of the country's population, according to a study from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) ^[5]. Therefore, the increase in adultery

instances in Indian culture can be attributed to the growing use of the internet and the availability of online platforms.

Accessibility and anonymity as facilitators of online adultery

Both accessibility and anonymity are considered important factors that foster internet adultery in Indian culture, creating a potentially favorable environment to practice extramarital affairs more covertly and easily. Researchers ^[2] examined the negative aspects of online infidelity and found that internet platforms provide individuals with better accessibility, allowing them to quickly interact with those who could be attracted to having adulterous relationships without regard to distance. Also, the anonymity provided by internet platforms helps both genders to reduce the chance of being exposed or recognized by using pseudonyms or anonymous accounts. Impulses can be explored freely as they ensure security while preserving anonymity. Conventional offline meetings can be avoided with anonymity, and the ease of online platforms enables one to explore more choices than traditional affairs. While most studies highlight the rapid prevalence and popularity of online adultery, several critical gaps remain unexplored. Most studies lack empirical evidence and potentially discuss the general impact of extramarital relationships. Furthermore, the consequences of online adultery on mental health, marital stability, and sexual health remain underexplored.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for interdisciplinary studies that can integrate psychology, sociology, and public health to evaluate the long-term effects of online infidelity on individuals and families. The absence of research on legal and ethical perspectives regarding online adultery in India, particularly in the context of marriage laws and privacy concerns, is another grey area of concern. Insufficient analysis of platform policies, digital safeguards, and their effectiveness in regulating user behavior has been witnessed with potential for future research in these directions.

Future research should also investigate potential intermediations, which include digital literacy programs and awareness campaigns, to mitigate the

risks related to online infidelity. Studies addressing such gaps can provide a more thorough understanding of online adultery and its wider sociocultural and legal impact in India. The current study is an effort to integrate these aspects to bridge existing research gaps by offering a Multimodal analysis of online adultery in India. This study steps beyond normal descriptive studies of prevalence and discovers the health, psychological, and social implications of this rapidly increasing phenomenon while indicating targeted interventions to overcome the negative impacts.

Online Adultery and Risk of STD Transmission

A major proportion of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be attributed to the rise of participating consenting individuals in online adultery. Less concern for sexual health in online interactions due to lack of personal connection increases the chances of STD transmission through unprotected sex. However, the lack of empirical data indicates little research on the relationship between online adultery and STD transmission in India. Hesitance in deliberation on indulgence in marital consensus relationships is one of the prime reasons for the lack of availability of data. However, possible hazards associated with online adultery were identified [6], who investigated the sexual behaviors of individuals who used the internet as a medium for unprotected sex in extramarital relationships. Lack of awareness on the impact and prevention of STD transmission among different genders (males-males and females-females) relationship was realized [7]. The study by the author also reflected the impact of engagement in frequent dangerous sexual practices that included many sexual partners and unprotected sex as one of the primary reasons for contracting STDs. Despite the lack of sufficient research, the possibility of similar hazards in the Indian setting cannot be ruled out.

Lack of personal connection and reduced concern for sexual health

Modern social values may lack personal connection and reduced concern for sexual health, which predominates high rates of sexually transmitted

diseases (STDs) and unsafe sexual behaviors in Indian society. Fewer studies in Indian settings indicate the probable outcomes of lack of intimacy in traditional relationships and the ignorance of sexual health in online interactions. [8], in his study, summarised that detachment in personal relationships and alternatively seeking online connections with anonymity can be interlinked with less concern for sexual health. The study reflected the greater eagerness of sample participants to engage in hazardous sexual behaviors with a non-existent sense of responsibility for their own sexual health. Similarly, research on traits and motivation [9] revealed detached and disinhibited mindset not only lessened their concern for sexual health but also augmented their inclination to participate in hazardous sexual behavior. The absence of realistic interpersonal contact with one or more partners and the lack of care for sexual health in online interactions may raise the risk of STD transmission.

Increased likelihood of engaging in unprotected sexual encounters

Adultery committed online raises the possibility of having unprotected sexual interactions, which might increase the danger of STDs in Indian society. Online adultery increases the likelihood of having unprotected sexual interactions, where either of the partners may not agree to health concerns and may compel another sexual partner to engage likewise. Studies in this direction highlight the difference between virtual adultery and online adultery. Research [10] discussed virtual relationships as adultery is still a matter of debate in US courts due to lack of physical intimacy. He further states that continuance of indulgence in online adultery may lead to significant marital issues involving neglect and abandonment. Neglect emerging in real-life relationships can spur a heightened sense of getting engaged in experimental and adventurous involvement with random online partners.

According to a survey by [6], a substantial percentage of individuals stated to have indulged in unprotected intercourse with their internet relationships. The absence of prevention during such indulgence may induce the risk of STD transmission. In continuation to the above facts, [11] study the usage

of prevention techniques, particularly hygiene and condom usage, that seemingly decreased during online sexual activity as compared to offline safe sexual practices. This research highlights the possibility that adventurism and experimentation in internet environment may increase the likelihood of having unprotected sex. Although these studies don't specifically address online adultery in the Indian setting, they do offer perceptions of the potential hazards of having discreet and unsecured sex in online relationships.

Limited awareness and stigmatization of online adulterers

Lack of information and the stigmatization of online adulterers continue to affect understanding and reaction to internet adultery in Indian society. At this rate, such hazardous online practice may likely continue and long-term deeper indulgence in such behavior may linger or deter any possible resolution. Similar studies in other contexts also shed light on the dynamics of self-regulated or socially imposed awareness and inherent stigmatization related to the disclosure of psychological and physical remedial measures arising from such practices in the Indian context. Public perception of infidelity and online adultery reveals a lack of knowledge and conceptual non-acceptance of such practices. In a study ^[12], most participants accepted online adultery as a matter of private concern, which inherently prevented them from gaining access to information related to its prevalence and related mental and physical hazards. Progression of such knowledge becomes incisively complicated due to related stigmatization and hinders the path to engagement in safer sexual practices. Social stigma and severe social judgment encircle those who were found to engage in online adultery^[13]. Seeking sexual health-related information, materials, or assistance may become very difficult in such situations. Although no such studies have been conducted yet in the Indian setting, the findings from related studies indicate the possible impact of low knowledge and public perception of online adultery.

Psychological Implications of Internet-based Adultery

Adultery committed over the internet can have serious psychological repercussions for those

involved in these kinds of relationships in Indian society. Serious psychological repercussions that include marital satisfaction, guilt, concealment, and emotional well-being have been observed for those involved in these kinds of relationships in Indian society. In this context, ^[14] discovered experiences of participants include a variety of feelings, including joy, guilt, worry, and loneliness due to online relationships. Mental upheaval and confidentiality were some of the difficulties faced by the participants who engaged in relationships in online adultery. Similarly, another study described other emotional repercussions that included a range of feelings, including guilt, embarrassment, and dread of being discovered by society ^[15]. Such feelings may negatively impact one's psychological health and level of relationship happiness. Adultery committed online in secrecy may have a further negative psychological impact. Greater stress owing to the need to maintain secrecy and emotional discomfort may have a poor impact on mental health.^[6] The findings underscore the need to reconsider the emotional well-being of individuals involved in such relationships and any potential negative results on their mental health. Although these studies don't specifically address the Indian setting, they do offer interpretations of the psychological effects of online infidelity.

Escapism, emotional dissatisfaction, and seeking validation online

Online adultery is commonly motivated by psychological factors involving escapism, emotional discontent, and the desire for approval. These negative elements act as stimuli in the context of emotional fulfillment and validation, adding to the attractiveness and appeal of online interactions. There is not much evidence of psychological drives that influence online infidelity in the Indian environment, but studies in similar contexts affirm the presence of related factors in different regions. Results of psychological tests from a study ^[16] pointed higher frequency of online interactions in search of emotional fulfillment and escapism. Individuals with real-life troubles often seek emotional happiness from online interactions. In martial cases, emotional discontent in present relationships may lead individuals to look

for emotional connection and online validation from unknown and random partners. External affirmation of emotional support with anonymity may also lead to engagement in sexual activities for confirmation from another partner. These studies demonstrate how escapism, emotional unhappiness, and the need for approval can persuade people to commit online adultery. Seeking online emotional gratification and validation may be alluring, appealing to people to look for associations outside their present relationships.

Non-inhibition and engagement in risky sexual behavior

Non-inhibition and the use of hazardous sexual behavior are frequently discussed psychological issues connected to online adultery. The internet environment, with its alluring anonymity, impulsivity, and loosened social boundaries, encourages dangerous sexual behavior among those who seek psychological gratification outside traditional relationships. Results from ^[6] analyzed the sexual behaviors of those who are absorbed in online adultery and cybersex, which initiates from online conversations to offline physical engagement seeking physical gratification from timid or not-so-engaging traditional relationships. Lack of restraint or impulsiveness may lead to an increased chance of participation in dangerous sexual practices, such as unprotected sex. Furthermore, a study conducted ^[17] explored the effect of disinhibition in guys who engage in online sex with men. The study showed the impact of the perceived anonymity and lax social restrictions of the online environment on heightened disinhibition, which in turn boosted indulgence in hazardous sexual practices. Study outcomes indicate that people participating in online adultery may be more ready to encounter dangerous sexual behaviors, such as unprotected sex, due to continuous disinhibition experienced in the online setting.

Impact of online affairs on mental health and decision-making

Online dating can have a negative effect on a person's mental health and ability to make decisions. The mental health of individuals may be negatively

affected due to engagement in online dating as their decision-making ability can be swayed in disarray. Due to the persistent necessity of maintaining secrecy, emotional complexity, and possible conflicts, psychological anguish may impair one's ability to think rationally and logically. Insights based on many cultural studies carried out in this direction indicate the influence of online affairs on mental health and decision-making, notwithstanding the scarcity of such research in the Indian context.

In a similar context, ^[14] investigated the experiences of people with online affairs and revealed a variety of emotional difficulties, such as worry, guilt, and loneliness, that arise from online dating and adultery. Juggling between offline life and online interactions led to tensions followed by psychological distress and had a severe impact on mental health, as indicated by the results of the study. Additionally, another research ^[13] discovered considerable harm to mental health due to the presence of increased stress, guilt, and emotional instability, which might affect one's capacity to make decisions. Further, psychological discomfort and impaired judgment make it difficult to understand the scales of online connections and make wise decisions about relationships. These studies establish the possible effects of online interactions on mental health and decision-making, yet most of them are not exclusively focused on the Indian setting. The results emphasize the urgent need to consider the mental health of individuals who may engage in online activities along with addressing the possible issues they might encounter.

Medical Consequences of Internet-based Adultery

Adultery committed online might have negative medical effects on the people involved in such interactions. Discussions from research reveal negative medical effects on the people involved in such interactions. The possibilities of diminished sexual health and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are the main effects, as per the results of much research. Similarly, another study ^[18] investigated the association between online sexual behavior and STIs among men who have sex with men (MSM). The study further stated that those who engaged

in online sexual behaviors had a higher chance of contracting STIs than people who did not. These facts reveal the potential connection between online sexual behavior^[19]. Further research indicates having several partners and inconsistent condom use among those engaged in sexual activity online had a higher predisposition to engage in dangerous sexual practices. Such randomized practices risk sexual health and raise the chance of STI transmission. Although such studies do not particularly address adultery committed through the internet, they do indicate the chances of negative health effects from online sex activity, including adultery.

Online platforms and increased exposure to potential partners with STDs

Randomly engagement in adultery on online dating sites may lead to STD exposure to one to more prospective partners who are sexually active and present a greater risk of catching and transmitting STDs. Studies carried out in other contexts offer information on the correlation between online platforms and greater exposure to possible partners with STDs, notwithstanding the paucity of research specifically focused on the Indian context. One such study^[20] observed the sexual risk behaviors of those who used the internet to find partners for unprotected sex. The author concluded that those who looked for online partners were more likely to engage in hazardous sexual behaviors and likely to discover partners who had STDs than people who looked for partners offline. ^[21] linked the internet use and sexual risk behaviors among men who have sex with men (MSM) and were infected by STDs. MSM who looked for partners online ran a larger chance of meeting people who had STDs than those who looked for relationships offline. Greater rates of infection and transmission in online adultery scenarios may result from this greater exposure to possible partners who may have STDs. Although these studies do not particularly address online adultery, they do shed light on the possible dangers of using online dating sites to find partners and the increased risk of encountering STD-positive partners.

Challenges in diagnosing and treating STDs resulting from online adultery

The latent nature of online connections, the lack of access to sexual health services, and likely difficulties in partner notification, contact tracking, diagnosing and treating sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are some of the major hindrances that restrict remedies possible through accessible health services. Besides, research^[22] identified major obstacles related to online sexual networking users intimating their HIV partners and tracking their online partner's contacts (few or many). Anonymity and little personal information shared in online encounters make it almost impossible to identify and notify such sexual partners, making it obscure to carry out accurate contact tracing and prevent further transmission of STDs. A study^[23] mentioned the difficulties online adulterers engage in online sexual activity while trying to receive sexual health care. Stigma, disclosure anxiety, and lack of knowledge about treatments were key barriers that prevented people from receiving an STD diagnosis and accessible treatment. The results from such studies focus on the challenges and hurdles in identifying and addressing STDs triggered by internet adultery. Additionally, conditions such as the secrecy of online connections and the lack of access to sexual health services further restrict identification and information about sexual partners, which can lead to therapy being given too quickly or not at all.

Need for tailored healthcare services to address the unique needs of online adulterers

Personalized healthcare services can cater to the unique needs of individuals engaged in online adultery. Such services must consider unique, difficult behavior and address issues related to online adultery. In this respect, research^[24] identified the healthcare requirements of those engaged in extra-marital affairs and highlighted the significance of such conditions. Awareness of the dynamics of online adultery among medical practitioners can be a precursor for empathetic treatment with a

nonjudgmental attitude. Furthermore, an extended study in this direction^[25] on the relevance of the experience of therapists emphasized the necessity of readjusting therapy strategies to resolve the unique difficulties and complexities of those affected by online adultery. The online adultery dynamics can be resolved by trust-offering support, emotional discomfort and empathetic communication- encouraging open conversations about sexual health. Findings and results from the author highlight the value of establishing customized healthcare treatments that recalibrate and meet the specific requirements of those who participate in online adultery. Customized healthcare treatments include appropriate guidance, counseling, and discovering new ideas that address not only specific problems but also simplify understanding of both existing and emerging complexities in online adultery. Studies done in such contexts shed light on the significance of individualized healthcare, but more may be needed for dealing with the native Indian environment.

Addressing the Issue: Strategies and Interventions

Addressing the issues of online adultery necessitates the implementation of preventive education, support, and counseling. Studies carried out in different contexts present insights into potential techniques and interventions aimed at the identification, planning, and implementation of key alternatives related to problem resolution and feasible mitigations. Some of the necessary strategies and interventions may include:

Raising awareness about the risks of online adultery and STD transmission

Promoting sexual health and encouraging responsible behavior need increasing public knowledge of the dangers of online adultery and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Campaigns related to sexual health awareness and assured responsible behavior might need adequate research on spreading public knowledge of the dangers of online adultery and the spread of sexually transmit-

ted diseases (STDs). Although no explicitly focusing studies on educating people were found, studies from related research do provide some tactical knowledge for support in real-life solution development.

Public health campaigns

To increase awareness of the hazards of online adultery and STD transmission, certain public health initiatives can be planned, developed and implemented. Public health initiatives, inclusive of information gathering and dissemination of the precautionary and preventive nature, should be undertaken under the national health initiative policy. A study^[26] suggested the use of a variety of media, including print, radio, television, and social media, and other necessary tools to cater not only to safe sexual practices but also educate the public on the value of periodic testing and potential consequences of engaging in dangerous online activities.

School-based Sexual Education

Another study^[27] suggested the development of comprehensive sexual education programs in schools that should include the value of information on consent, healthy relationships, and the prevention of STDs among existing dangers of online adultery.

Healthcare provider education

Healthcare professionals can be methodically trained to contribute to the existing efforts for dealing with STD transmission and prevention in online adultery in terms of direction, counseling, proper testing, and treatment alternatives for the people who commit online adultery^[28].

Online Platforms and Social Media

The research highlighted the role of collaboration of health management with online platforms and social media in controlling health-related awareness. Security features such as pop-up cautions, references to sexual health services, and instructions for appropriate conduct to assist users in making educated decisions can be innovatively circulated among online audiences who may be potential users of online adultery-related activities. Awareness-raising tactics can be deployed via the means

of social engagement with potential participants in online adultery.^[29]

Providing accessible and confidential sexual health services

Providing accessible and confidential sexual health services is essential to address the needs of individuals engaged in online adultery and promote overall sexual health. Confidentiality and accessibility are two important paradigms upon which rests the most effective solution for addressing the goals of STD prevention and early cure system. Some of the most feasible solutions may include:

Integrated Sexual Health Clinics

A researcher^[30] suggested the establishment of integrated sexual health clinics as a one-stop solution that can supply a range of services that include suitable testing, counseling, and treatment of STDs that suit both accessibility and convenience for individuals engaged in online adultery.

Online Sexual Health Platforms:

The concept of online sexual health platforms not only provides resources with accessible information but also provides virtual consultations to enhance the availability and convenience of sexual health services^[31]. These platforms should create suitable constructs that tend to offer confidential support, anonymous testing options, and personalized advice tailored to the needs of online adulterers.

Telemedicine and Mobile Apps:

Technologies such as customized mobile apps and telemedicine provide remote consultations, prescription services, and reminders for testing and treatment, ensuring confidentiality and convenience^[32]. (Anonymous Testing and Partner

Notification

A study mentioned the usage of anonymous testing options for STDs, such as home testing kits or designated drop-in centers, that allow partner notification programs for the potential flow of information between related partners and can address concerns about privacy and confidentiality. Such technology enabled information services can allow individuals to anonymously inform their partners and prevent

further transmission of STDs in such cases^[33].

Incorporating digital literacy and responsible online behavior in sexual education programs

Incorporating digital literacy and responsible online behavior into sexual education programs is critical for providing individuals, especially those involved in online adultery, with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the digital realm safely. Digital literacy and responsible online behavior in sexual education can be stressful in terms of implementation for those preserving anonymity and privacy involved in online adultery, as specialized skills may be needed to navigate digital realms safely. Results of studies in other countries indicate similar problems in the Indian context.

Comprehensive Sexual Education

-One of the studies laid the importance of privacy settings, consent in online contacts, recognizing and avoiding hazards, and comprehending the potential implications of engaging in online adultery. The author also briefed about the necessity of dedicated comprehensive digital literacy and ethical online behavior^[34].

Critical Evaluation of Online Information

Sexual education programs must be about the empowerment of individuals to make informed decisions on their sexual health by critical examination of available online information and by the ability to distinguish reliable sources from misinformation or biased content^[35] 3. Open Dialogue and Communication:

Educators should open discussions and communication in sexual education programs that include discussions about online boundaries, healthy relationships, and the hazards of engaging in online adultery, creating an environment of easiness that enables counseling and real support^[36]. 4. Collaboration with Technology Experts:

Curriculum development, sharing best practices, and navigating the digital realm with the support of technology professionals, psychologists, and online safety organizations can lead to curriculum development of sexual education programs, sharing

best practices, and navigating the digital realm responsibly^[37]. Therefore, the integration of digital literacy with responsible online behavior in sexual education programs can harness the necessary skills and knowledge to make informed choices, endorse sexual health, and responsible involvement in online activities.

Collaborating with online platforms to promote safe and responsible use

Encouraging safe and responsible use in the context of online adultery can be attributed to mutual collaboration among online platforms.

Development of Guidelines and

Policies

Guidelines, including expectations, provide information about sexual health resources, the significance of consent, and safe sexual practices can set clear standards and policies about online adultery^[31]. Safety Features and Reporting

Mechanisms

Safety features such as content filtering, user reporting, and moderating are instances of techniques that can be used to establish a safer online environment and prevent potential concerns^[38]. Promoting Digital Citizenship:

The concept of digital citizenship that includes offering instructional tools, encouraging positive participation, increasing awareness about the dangers of online adultery and responsible online behavior can create a more respectful and supportive online community^[39].

Training and Support for Platform

Moderators

^[40] investigated the contents of training to detect and handle concerns linked to the online industry. Besides raising awareness about the potential consequences of online adultery, Stakeholders must collaborate to assist in safe and responsible internet usage, including safeguarding the well-being of those engaging in online activities by collaborating with existing online platforms.

FINDINGS

The findings of the discussion can include evidence and their implications (See Table 1).

Therefore, based on the above study, we can interpret that:

$$\Sigma \text{STD} = f(\text{IU}, \text{ADY})$$

Where,

IU is Internet usage & ADY is Adultery respectively.

Implications of the Research

Social Implications

Risky sexual behaviors are mostly likely due to increased anonymity in online interactions and contributes to spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) putting a greater burden on public health systems. The impacts can be seen beyond just physical health, with experience of guilt, anxiety and emotional distress leading to poor decision making. Cultural stigma has been found to discourage seeking medical aid, aggravating mental health struggles and risk of contracting STD's. Marital conflicts, family breakdowns, and long-term emotional consequences are initial signs of online adultery commonly found in conservative societies in India. Integrating digital literacy with sexual education can boost knowledge of both avoidance and possible remedies of ill effects of online adultery in India.

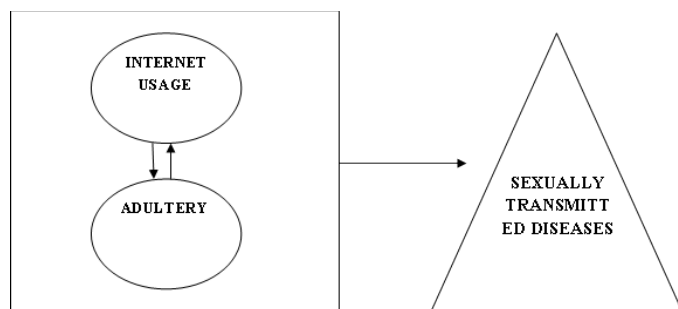
Economic Implications

In terms of economic burden, higher health-care costs and limited resource availability can be attributed to investments required for sexual health clinics, anonymous testing, and mental health services to meet STD's based healthcare needs. Workplace productivity, absenteeism and conflicts are some of the psychological distress conditions inherited from online adultery and needs to be attended through corporate mental health programs. Ethical issues related to online adultery are some of the concerning effects owed to growth of dating and social networking platforms, that can be resolved to some extent through collaboration between stakeholders and better regulations from government bodies. More funding needs to be initiated into public health campaigns to ensure safer

Table 1: Key issues, supporting evidence, and their implications for online adultery

| <i>Factors/Issues</i> | <i>Evidence</i> | <i>Implications</i> |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Increased Risk of STD Transmission | ^{[6]; [7]} found higher rates of unprotected sex and risky sexual behaviors in online adultery. | Similar risks likely exist in India due to anonymity and disinhibition in online interactions, increasing STD transmission. |
| 2. Lack of Personal Connection | ^{[8]; [9]} highlighted reduced concern for sexual health and increased risky behaviors due to online anonymity. | Detachment in online interactions may contribute to higher STD rates in India, though specific data is lacking. |
| 3. Unprotected Sexual Encounters | ^{[6]; [11]} found that individuals engaging in online adultery are less likely to use condoms. | Increased likelihood of unprotected sex in India, raising the risk of STD transmission. |
| 4. Limited Awareness and Stigmatization | ^[12] found lack of awareness about online adultery; ^[13] highlighted stigma preventing access to sexual health resources. | Stigma and lack of awareness in India may exacerbate the spread of STDs and hinder access to sexual health services. |
| 5. Psychological Implications | ^{[14]; [15]} identified guilt, anxiety, and emotional instability in individuals involved in online affairs. | Psychological distress may impair decision-making and mental health in India, though specific studies are lacking. |
| 6. Escapism and Emotional Dissatisfaction | ^{[16]; [41]} found that escapism and emotional dissatisfaction drive individuals to seek online adultery. | Similar psychological factors may motivate risky online behaviors in India. |
| 7. Disinhibition and Risky Sexual Behavior | ^{[6]; [17]} linked online disinhibition to increased risky sexual behaviors. | Online disinhibition may lead to unprotected sex and multiple partners in India, though specific research is needed. |
| 8. Impact on Mental Health | ^{[14]; [13]} found that online affairs cause stress, guilt, and impaired decision-making. | Mental health challenges may hinder individuals' ability to make informed sexual health decisions in India. |
| 9. Medical Consequences (STIs) | ^{[18]; [19]} linked online sexual behaviors to higher STI rates due to risky practices. | Similar risks of STIs may exist in India, though specific data is unavailable. |
| 10. Challenges in Diagnosing and Treating STDs | ^{[22]; [23]} highlighted difficulties in partner notification and contact tracing due to online anonymity. | The secretive nature of online adultery in India may complicate STD diagnosis, treatment, and prevention efforts. |
| 11. Need for Tailored Healthcare Services | ^{[24]; [25]} emphasized the importance of specialized healthcare services for individuals engaged in online adultery. | India requires tailored healthcare services to address the unique challenges of online adultery, including counseling and sexual health support. |
| 12. Raising awareness | ^{[26]; [27]; [28]} highlighted the effectiveness of public health campaigns, school-based education, and healthcare provider training in raising awareness. | Awareness campaigns in India can educate individuals about the risks of online adultery and promote safer sexual practices. |
| 13. Accessible Sexual Health Services | ^{[30]; [31]; [33]} emphasized the importance of integrated clinics, online platforms, and anonymous testing for accessible sexual health services. | Accessible and confidential sexual health services in India can improve STD prevention and treatment for individuals engaged in online adultery. |
| 14. Digital Literacy in Sexual Education | ^{[34]; [35]} highlighted the importance of teaching digital literacy and responsible online behavior in sexual education programs. | Incorporating digital literacy into sexual education in India can empower individuals to make informed decisions and reduce risky online behaviors. |
| 15. Collaboration with Online Platforms | ^{[31]; [38]; [40]} emphasized the role of platform guidelines, safety features, and moderator training in promoting safe and responsible online behavior. | Collaborating with online platforms in India can mitigate risks associated with online adultery and promote a safer online environment. |

(Source: Author analysis)



(Source: Author analysis)

Figure 1: Diagram showing internet usage and adultery interrelationship leading to sexually transmitted diseases

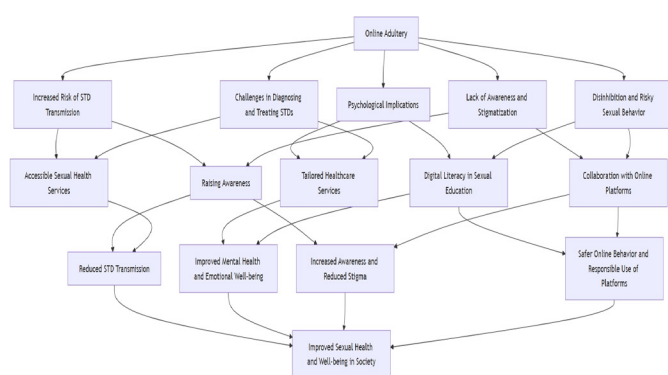


Figure 2: Flowchart for Understanding online adultery dynamics (Source: Author analysis)

health practices keeping in mind both health and societal impacts.

Legal Implications

Legal amendments are crucial as it lays the foundation of mitigating ethical concerns such as risk warnings, privacy protections, and moderation against exploitation. Clauses related to privacy, confidentiality, social stigma should be carefully regulated to ensure that no one gets devoid of available facilities under collaborative health programs. Some reassessment of family and marriage can also lead to faster resolutions to problems such as divorce cases, custody disputes, and spousal rights and provides fair ground for all parties concerned.

CONCLUSION

The evidence highlights significant risks and challenges associated with online adultery, particularly in the context of sexual health and mental well-being.

The review covers multiple studies highlighting facts and opinions in the context of sexual health and mental well-being. Multiple studies do indicate and ascertain various characteristics related to the physical and mental state of well-being. The challenge has been to gather more knowledge to identify and understand alarming risks involved in online adultery and mitigate its impact on the rising cases of Sexually transmitted diseases due to online adultery. The present study has been able to bridge the gap between understanding significant risks and challenges and suggesting feasible implementation plans to achieve the goals of minimising impact on STD's.

While some studies dealt with investigation of online anonymity and disinhibition that contribute to higher rates of unprotected sex as the prime reasons for increase transmission of STD's, other similar studies expressed concerns over cultural stigma, lack of awareness, and limited access to sexual health resources as independent factors impacting STD's specially in a country like India. From psychological perspective, emotional dissatisfaction, and guilt can further transcendence risky behaviors and impair decision-making, leading to detrimental mental health effects. Authors also argue the nature of concealment of identities which makes it rather difficult for support structure to directly reach those affected. Some others suggest improvisation in public campaigns using tailored healthcare services, including counseling, anonymous testing, and accessible sexual health clinics. Alternative measures could also include integration of digital literacy into sexual education programs that possibly can foster partnerships with online platforms to create a safer digital environment.

Addressing these challenges in Indian condition using digital collaboration among stakeholders, may lead not only improvement in mental health outcomes but also foster partnerships with online platforms towards creating a safer and healthy digital environment with positive outcomes (See Figure 1 and Figure 2).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research. This study was

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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