

# Sexuality Education in Ayurveda and Kamasutra

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## Abstract

Ancient Indian system was always favorable in imparting effective sex education in the society. The erotic sculptures on temples like Khujurah, Konark and the popular literatures on sexuality like Kamasutra, Anangaranga proves that the ancient Indians were open about sexuality and sexual education for the betterment of mankind. This article discusses ancient Indian thoughts on sexuality particularly described in Ayurveda and Kamasutra which are still valid and appropriate in modern society.

## Introduction

India has always been the torch bearer of many scientific advancements, social movements and reforms alike. Long before western scientists and sociologists could focus on sexuality, an intimate subject to mankind, Indian medicine, literature and sculptures have vividly described the subject. This article focuses on Ayurveda, one of the oldest systems of Indian medicine and Kamasutra, acclaimed to be the oldest text on human sexuality in the world. Ayurveda considers sex as a part and parcel of everyone's life. Making proper use of Rasayans, one becomes endowed with good physique, potency, strength, and complexion and, in turn, becomes sexually exhilarated and sexually potent. Rasayans act inside the human body by modulating the neuro-endocrino-immune system. Vaajikaran Rasayan is the special category of Rasayan, which improves the reproductive system and enhances sexual function. Vatsayana's Kamasutra similarly ascribes a deep, positive value to sex.

According to the ancient text, sex isn't simply for reproduction, but positive sexuality also matters. Sex is pivotal to one's physical and mental health. Kamasutra also offers a fascinating account of human psychology [1,2].

## Ayurveda (Rules for Healthy Life)

Ayurveda considers sex as a part and parcel of everyone's life. But as with most of the rules of life, control and moderation are the keys to a healthy sex life. Here are a few healthy sex rules as outlined in ancient Ayurveda text books.

1. Sex should only be done with man on top position. In olden days, when sex was predominantly seen as the way to beget children this concept was prescribed for better conception. This sex position facilitates the entry of semen into the vagina properly.
  2. Sex should be avoided during the menstrual period. Sex should not be done with a partner whose private parts are dirty, who are too obese or very emaciated. Sex should be avoided soon after delivery and with pregnant women. Like wise, the rules proscribes Sex when one feels the urge to urinate or defecate. Sex should also not be done in uncomfortable postures, as it may lead to injury.
  3. Sex should not be done with a woman, other than one's wife. As a guiding rule, Ayurveda strictly recommends fidelity and faithfulness between partners. It concentrates more on love factor than lust factor. According to Ayurveda, sex should not be done with animals like the goat, buffalo, etc. Ayurveda strongly stands against bestiality. It recommends avoiding
- body orifices which are non-sexual like oral, anal, etc., for penetrative sex. It advises to avoid sex in the abode of the teacher, gods and kings, in monasteries, burial grounds, places of torture and of sacrifice and meeting of four roads. It also clearly lays down that sex should not be done with children and old women. One should avoid violence during sex. Ayurveda considers sex as the means to express mutual love and respect and not anger, enmity and hatred. Sex should also not be done with the person who does not possess good mental qualities. One sex partner may take advantage of the other.
4. One should not indulge in sex after a heavy meal. Sex is also a form of exercise. This advice is akin to the rule that one should not do exercise immediately after meals. It may cause indigestion problems and Vatadosha. Similarly, sex should not be done with hunger and thirst. When one is hungry, there is already increase of Vata and Pitta in the body. If somebody do sex when hungry, it may cause Vata and Pitta related issues like dizziness, headache, bloating, gastritis, etc.
  5. One should not indulge in sex during illness. As per Ayurveda, sex and immunity power are inter-related. The immunity power is explained with the term Ojas. During illness, Ojas is depleted. If one indulges in sex when one is ill, it would further deplete the Ojas. This will delay the healing process. Abstinence is highly recommended during youth which boosts immunity [3,4,5].
  6. After sexual intercourse, one should take bath,

apply scented paste, expose to cool breeze, drink syrup prepared from sugar candy, cold water, milk, meat juice, soup, Sura (fermented liquor prepared from grains), Prasanna (clear supernatant fluid of Sura) and then go to sleep; By these, the vigour of the body returns quickly to its abode again [6].

7. When it comes to frequency, Ayurveda vividly outlines sex frequency in different seasons of a year for couples. During winter, person can have sex every day. This is because, the body strength is maximum during Shita (winters). The frequency should be once in three days in Vasanta (spring season) and Sharat (autumn season) because of moderate body strength during these seasons. The season with the lowest recommended frequency are Varsha (rainy) and Nidagha (summer) i.e., once in 15 days owing to low body strength during these seasons. Ayurveda cautions against having sex on days of special significance (new-moon, full-moon, eclipse, festivals, mourning days and others). This technique gives a break to both the partners from sex and brings back freshness.
8. As per Ayurveda, if one indulges in improper sex act, it may lead to giddiness, exhaustion, weakness of the thighs, loss of strength, depletion of tissues, loss of acuity of senses and premature death. If one obeys the prescribed sex rules, it would lead to good memory, intelligence, long and healthy life, nourishment, acuity of sense organs, good physical strength and slow ageing process.

In Charak Samhita, Chikitsasthana, Chapter II, sutra 40, it is mentioned that a person

desirous of longevity should not enter into sexual activities before the age of sixteen years. Similarly in sutra 41 & 42, it is mentioned that a young boy of tender age does not possess all the tissue elements in their matured form. If he enters into a sex act, his body gets dried up like a pond having little water [3,5].

### Vajikarana

In Sanskrit, Vaji means horse, the symbol of sexual potency and performance. Thus, Vajikaran means producing a horse's vigor, particularly the animal's great capacity for sexual activity in the individual. Vajikarana or Vrishyachikitsa is one of the eight major specialties of the Ashtanga Ayurveda. This subject is concerned with aphrodisiacs, virility and improving health of progeny. As per Charak Samhita, by proper use of Rasayans, one becomes endowed with good physique, potency, strength, and complexion. Rasayans are helpful in many common sexual dysfunctions, including infertility, premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. The therapy is preceded by living in strict compliance with the directions mentioned in Ayurveda classics, various methods of body cleansing and other non-medicinal strategies like sexual health promoting conduct, behavior and diet. Certain individualized herbal and herbo-mineral combinations are administered as per the nature of a person according to Ayurveda [7].

As per Charak Samhita, the man who seeks pleasure should resort to Vajikaran regularly. The medicines or therapy by which the man becomes capable of sexual intercourse with the woman with great strength like a horse, which endears him to women and which nourishes the body of the person is known as

Vajikaran. The Vajikaran bestows contentment, nourishment, continuity of progeny and great happiness. Vajikaran therapy is said to revitalize all the seven dhatus (body elements), therefore, restores equilibrium and health. It offers a solution to minimize the shukra (sperm and ovum) defects and to ensure a healthy progeny [7].

Vaajikaran Rasayan is a special category of Rasayana, which improves the reproductive system and enhances sexual function. They act on higher center of the brain, i.e., the hypothalamus and limbic system. Vajikaran also claims to have anti-stress, adaptogenic actions, which helps to alleviate anxiety associated with sexual desire and performance. Chauhan et al. (2010) in a study showed that administration of Vajikaran Rasayana viz. *C. orchoides*, *A. longifolia* and *M. pruriens* ethanolic extracts modulate the level of the pituitary hormones FSH and LH. This in parts can explain the positive effect of the herbs on sexual functioning [7].

As per Ayurveda, it is recommended that persons under 17 years of age and over 70 years of age should not consume Vajikarana preparations. These preparations have to be consumed by 'Jitendriyapurusha' or man who has control on his senses and desires. If Vajikarana preparations are consumed by 'Ajitendriyapurusha' or man who has lost control over his senses and desire, it may prove harmful to the society [6].

## **Kamasutra** (Principles of Sexuality)

Kamasutra is the oldest existing Indian text about sexual pleasure. It is believed to be a digest of a large work by Nandi, an attendant of the God Shiva, implying a divine origin. Many also believe that Vatsyayana composed 'Kamasutra' (Aphorisms on Love), in a small

volume as an abstract of the whole of the works of different authors such as Nandi, Shvetaketu, Dattaka, Babhravya, Charayana, Suvarnanabha, Ghotakamukha, Gonardiya, Gonikaputra and Kuchumara etc. Kamasutra is considered to be the most famous guide to sensual pleasure ever written, indeed, one of the most notorious books in the history of the world. Its acute insights into human nature are still relevant today [8,9].

The part of the Kama Shastra, which treats the sexual union, is also called 'Sixty-four' (Chatushshashti). The followers of Babhravya say, on the other hand, this part contains eight subjects, viz., the embrace, kissing, scratching with the nails or fingers, biting, lying down, making various sounds, playing the part of a man, and the mouth congress. Each of these subjects being of eight kinds, and eight multiplied by eight being sixty-four, this part is therefore named 'sixty-four'. But Vatsyayana affirms that as this part contains also the subjects, including striking, crying, the acts of a man during congress, the various kinds of congress, and other subjects, the name 'sixty-four' is given to it only accidentally [8,10].

Besides the treatise of Vatsyayana, the following works on the same subject are procurable in India: The Ratirahasya (secrets of love), The Panchasakya (the five arrows), The Smara Pradipa (the light of love), The Ratimanjari (the garland of love), The Rasmanjari (the sprout of love), The Ananga Ranga (the stage of love) and Kamaledhiplava (a boat in the ocean of love) [8,9,10].

## **Sexual Union with respect to Size, Endurance and Temperament**

A distinctive feature of the Kamasutra is its

classification of men and women according to the size of their genitals so that couples can combine for maximum pleasure. Positions that work well for couples of equal size may not be as good for couples of unequal size. Small, medium, and large genitals go together in different combinations, or unions. Thus, the best unions are small with small, medium with medium, and large with large. Union with one size larger or smaller is high or low; union with two sizes larger or smaller is very high or very low. Males are differentiated as hare, bull, or stallion according to the size of their sexual organ and females are defined as doe, mare, or elephant cow. Thus, there are three equal sexual unions when there is intercourse between similar partners. With permutations, there are six unequal genital combinations. When genitals of unequal size are combined and the man's is larger, there are two high unions with the combinations ordered stepwise. Non contiguous sizes make a very high union. In the opposite case, there are two low unions, and noncontiguous sizes make a very low one. Among these, the equal unions are the best. A man has dull sexual energy, if he is not sexually excited during intercourse, if he shows little virility, and if he cannot stand wounds. The same goes for the woman also. In the same manner, lovers are quick, average, and long-lasting when it comes to endurance. But there is a dispute regarding the woman. A woman does not reach orgasm just like a man. Her sexual itch is continually being removed by the man. When she is suffused with a sensation of psychological pleasure, she experiences a different feeling called sexual satisfaction. Thus, women are fond of a lover with sexual staying power. They are unhappy, if a man's sexual

energy runs out before they have reached the climax [8,11].

Men's pleasure comes at the end of the sexual act, whereas, the pleasure of women is continuous. Woman's genital fluid is also visible, just like that of a man. But the difference in approach and the difference in psychology among man and woman towards sex is due to nature; the man as the active partner and the woman as the passive receptacle. The man is satisfied thinking, that he is the attacker, while the woman thinks, she is being attacked. Both the partners turn unhappy if a man's sexual energy runs out and they have not reached climax [8,11].

### **Sexual Union According to Passion and Time**

There are nine kinds of union in terms of the force of passion or carnal desire in the partners. A man is called a man of small passion if his desire at the time of sexual union is not great, his semen is scanty, and if he cannot bear the warm embraces of the female. Similarly, there are men of middling passion, and men of intense passion. In the same way, women are supposed to have the three degrees of passion or sexual feeling as specified above in the case of men. Lastly, according to time, there are three kinds of men and women, the short-timed, the moderate-timed, and the long-timed. Vatsyayana is of the opinion that the semen of the female falls in the same way as that of the male. In regard to time, there are nine kinds of sexual intercourse. There being, thus, nine kinds of union with regard to dimensions, force of passion, and time, respectively. By making combinations of these, innumerable kinds of unions would be produced. At the first time of sexual union, the passion of

the male is intense, and his time is short, but in subsequent union on the same day, the reverse is the case. With the female, however, it is the contrary, for at the first time her passion is weak, and her time is long, but on subsequent occasions on the same day, her passion is intense and her time short, until her passion is satisfied. They are unhappy if a man's sexual energy runs out and they have not reached climax [8,11].

### Women Acting the Part of a Man and of the Work of a Man

When a woman sees that her lover is fatigued by constant congress, without having his desire satisfied, she should, with his permission, lay him down upon his back, and give him assistance by acting his part. She may also do this to satisfy the curiosity of her lover, or her own desire of novelty. There are two ways of doing this. First, at the time of the congress when she turns round, and gets on the top of her lover, in such a manner as to continue the congress, without obstructing the pleasure of it. Second, the female acting the man's part from the beginning of the congress. A woman during her monthly courses, a woman who has been lately confined, and a fat woman should not be made to act the part of a man [8,11].

### Conclusion

Both Ayurveda and Kamasutra have vividly described human sexuality. In Charak Samhita, Chikitsasthana, Chapter 1, Sutras 3 & 4, it is mentioned that a person should always

seek the intake of aphrodisiacs because, he can earn dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), priti (love) and yasas (fame) through this therapy only. A person gets these benefits through his progeny and the aphrodisiac therapy enables him to procreate children. A sexually excited female partner is the aphrodisiac par excellence. She is the receptacle of the sex act. Kamasutra also says man, the period of whose life is one hundred years should practice Dharma, Artha and Kama at different times and in such a manner that they may harmonize together and not clash in any way. He should acquire learning in his childhood, in his youth and middle age, he should attend to Artha and Kama, and in his old age, he should perform Dharma, and thus seek to gain Moksha, i.e., release from further transmigration.

The Kamasutra of Vatsayana ascribes a deep, positive value to sex: it isn't simply for reproduction, sexual happiness also matters, and it's important for one's physical and mental health. It also gives a fascinating account of human psychology. In his discussion of harem intrigues, seductions, and liaisons, Vatsyayana brilliantly analyses the vulnerabilities and frailties of the human mind. This is where the Kamasutra is truly universal, since his analysis of human nature is still recognizable today anywhere in the world. It is a work that should be studied by all, both old and young. It can also be fairly concluded that those early ideas, which have gradually filtered down through the sands of time, proves that the human nature of today is much the same as it was long ago.

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