

**HIV THE EYE OPENER****Dr BHARATWAJ RESIURE SRINIVASAN**Associate Professor, Dept of community medicine, Sri lakshmi narayana institute of medical sciences,  
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The "HIV/AIDS pandemic", are we responding appropriately? Many of those advocating western ideologies of 'condom vending machine' and the likes would treat with disdain the hoarse cries of the protagonists of Indian culture who are up in arms against such a publicization of the sex issue. The ones with a modern bent would fluently point out to the hidden urges of lust and craving for the flesh, that lurk deep within the surface, of the superficial proclamations of the self declared sentries of our culture. "Hypocrites" they would scoff at them. True, is it not? Sex is probably the strongest natural urge that moves a normal human being in this world. There are of course those who have transcended this need, their numbers far and few; the spiritual beacons of civilization.

So why need we talk openly of sex, because by knowing there is a possibility to get a knowledge about how HIV can be prevented. There are two factors that work on the psyche. 1. The fear about HIV and 2. How not to get it

through sex. Only a combination of the two can produce the desired result. During the act of sex the stirred up passions can hardly give space for reason to intervene unless there is this deep element of fear. So removing fear about HIV and promoting safe sex may not really go hand in hand. That is one aspect of it.

Now why is sex not so openly discussed in the civilization of our country? Simply because, it was considered a holy act, to beget, another of the human species into this world. Making it an open topic for discussion certainly would open avenues for people to belittle its significance and corrupt the process. The whole society was streamlined with a mind set to participate consciously and faithfully for a union that would result in the birth of a child that would be a blessing to the race. A kind of eugenics one might say.

As far as the enjoyment part of sex was concerned no civilization has delved into it as deep as in our culture. The Kamasutra treatise is unparalleled in history. The act itself

was used as a step to other levels of experiencing life and it did not just end with ejaculation!

The treatise and methods did not find free entry into the general public as it was meant only for the ones capable of going through it. The art of Tantra is a living example of how a human can make or destroy himself through the utilization of the energy that we call as sex.

For the majority of people, the act of sex was brought under the moral code of conduct that it may result in a society striving for higher levels of experience and excellence. How it got misused and corrupted is another story. HIV is just an indicator pointing to social moral deterioration & that's the way it has to be treated. By opening out the moral binds that have been created out of ages of wisdom and care, we are only calling disaster upon ourselves. The day a cure for HIV is found the western ideas of sex education would cease to be of much value, oh but there are other STD's one might say but these have been for ages and never was such a hue and cry raised for opening out the topic of sex as is being done now; but by then the western imposition of open sex discussion would have already caused a huge rupture in the age old framework of our society.

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Regulation and caution in the sexual domain has been the main teaching of innumerable saints of the yore. A reckless dissipation would only make a man a psychological wreck as is clearly seen by the increasing psychiatric morbidity in the western civilization. The population of people from the west coming to India to seek a solution about life problems has never been as much as it is now and yet we fail to see our strengths. What a tragedy?!

The issue of HIV is an eye opener to us that points glaringly at the way we Indians have misused and corrupted our lives. The eastern culture had chosen 'intelligent secrecy' as a way, to make sex not the guiding principle in people's lives. The western philosophy is diametrically opposite i.e. discuss it and make it such a commonplace issue that it ceases to dominate man's reason and actions. Both the ways may work. The eastern has certainly stood the test of time in creating a better knit social fabric and produced innumerable exalted beings that bear testimony to its undoubted efficacy. So we have to make the urgent choice. Choose one or the other. Any imposition of one on the other would only add to the turmoil of the already confused and struggling human mind and serve as a sure recipe for mass depravity.

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