

Remembrance

Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) program was about to be launched by the Government of India, in 1996, in which male involvement in reproductive health issues of the family was a highly emphasized new concept. Keeping in line with this new concept, KEM Hospital Research Center had taken up a research project entitled "Improving Women's Reproductive Health through Men's Involvement" for which , I was selected to work as a 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Counselor' in the Male Sexual and Reproductive Health clinic, which was a service part of the project. But I was in a dilemma of whether to enter in this new field or stayback in my old comfortable job, in the area of child psychology and parenting.

I still remember the day, Dr. Banoo Coyaji explained her vision to me emphasizing the very vital issue of sexual and reproductive health. She said, "youngsters who are at the threshold of adulthood and about to step into a new century are sadly "un-informed, ill-informed and mis-informed" about vital facets of their lives and are totally unprepared to meet the responsibilities and challenges of adulthood. We have to take up the challenge, in our small way, by initiating steps to create awareness and fulfill the need for such services like "Male Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinic". On one hand we are expecting that men should get involved for betterment of women's reproductive health but no services are made available for men's sexual and reproductive health problems. We will have such clinic where male patients would receive multi-dimensional sexual health services under a one roof. This is my dream. We will explore this untouched area" and I want you to work in this clinic". I was deeply drawn by her words and finally started working in the area of sexual and reproductive health.

After I started working with the patients with sexual problems, I was deeply moved by the agony of men with sexual dysfunction, especially in the patriarchal society of ours where men are looked upon as stronger, more virile and more in need of sex as compared to women. I have seen couples emotionally disturbed with sheer frustration but still struggling to cope with their sexual problems, in their own small ways. 'Sexuality' being a tabooed and sensitive topic, even today, acceptance of the problem, disclosure, diagnosis and finally treatment seeking becomes problematic.

Male sexual dysfunction, being a poorly researched topic in India, it is imperative to explore this topic in order to gain insights into this grey area. This research study has been taken up with inspiration that the researcher might be able to bring some issues, related to male sexual functions, to the forefront.