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DESHMUKH NOVEMBER 24, 2011 | UPDATED 15:26 IST

Savita Bhabhi in all of us

Indian women are on the road to sexual liberation



India Today Sex Survey 2011.

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I have always looked at **Savita Bhabhi** as a candid reflection of both men and women in **Indian society**. Every man, at some point of his life, has been attracted to someone he is 'not supposed to be attracted to'- be it a teacher, an aunt, neighbour's wife or a sister-in-law. This is also true for women, maybe to a lesser degree.

I think it's hypocritical to pretend otherwise. Making Savita a bhabhi was a conscious decision. People in India use terms like bhaiya and bhabhi like Mister or Miss. It does not imply family **relations**. Savita is someone's wife and therefore by default, not supposed to be attracted to other men. That is the taboo we play with.

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Here at Kirtu, my website, we also try to come up with stories that use **sex** as a tool of empowerment. For example, our recent tongue-in-cheek take on female crime-fighting: the Encounter Specialist, or the south Indian femme fatale Velamma. Of the daily visitors to our site, 30 per cent are women and that's saying something.



It is believed that generally men are turned on by the visual while women are turned on by the intellectual. Then shouldn't a lot fewer women be watching porn? I think for Indian women, Savita Bhabhi is not just about sex. She brings a feeling of liberation, mental role-playing and humour. As for censorship, banning a film, book or comics only generates curiosity about what the government is trying to hide.

It is difficult for me (being located outside India) to accurately comment on the changing perceptions towards sex in India. I personally see three Indias. There is urban India, rural India and diasporic India. **Female sexuality** is quite different for each of them. Both sex and power bring confidence and they are complimentary to each other.

In the urban context, I can see Indian women are becoming more and more open about their sexuality. They are now comfortable talking about it with their girlfriends and their lovers. They can demand sex in ways Indian women could not imagine doing 20 years ago. While it is encouraging, we are still a long way from being a sexually liberated society like the

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West or like that in ancient India.



Most cases of moral policing that I see in the Indian media, like beating up of youngsters for celebrating Valentine's Day or targeting an actress for advocating **safe premarital sex**, are, in my opinion, cases of attention-seeking self-righteous organisations and individuals. It has nothing to do with morality or policing.

Someone recently asked a funny question: after having introduced the comic strip, do I see a breed of Savita bhabhis roaming around freely in Indian cities? I think she was already there in the minds of Indian men and women.

While I love sex, I also believe in the sanctity of marriage. Porn is fictional entertainment. It is not meant to be real. It is an outlet for our fantasies. To say that Savita Bhabhi would inspire married women to become promiscuous is like saying Batman would inspire rich men to become nocturnal, cape-wearing vigilantes.

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Deshmukh is the pseudonym of Puneet Agarwal, the creator of the erotic comic strip Savita Bhabhi.

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