

In an age where nothing sells like sex, sexuality and sensuality have become the mantras of the new generation wannabes. Interestingly, the two terms, though used synonymously, have different connotations. Dhruv Futnani, a student of architecture, throws light on the much-confused terms, "Sensuality is not just the way you dress. It is the overall impact on the senses and varies from person to person. It could be the perfume you wear or the smile in your eyes; sensuality grows on you. A subtle emotion you feel, a streak in personality, sensuality gives scope for imagination as it is provocative! Sexuality hits you on the face."

For 19-year-old Pranav Nahar, the two are interrelated, like strength and fitness. He says the head decides sensuality, and the hormones decide sexuality! "Sensuality is a refined usage to artistically describe something, an attribute that may vary according to taste. It describes a meeting of minds and covers a larger area than just sex."

While he is clear as to what the terms mean, Madhav Sattanadhan, 21, feels they work in tandem: "It is a grey area. There is no black or white as one can lead to the other. It is the person who looks at you who decides."

Let's face it, people want to appear their most attractive to the other sex. For Paul George Mapillai, director, Goldwire Communications, sensuality played a vital role in deciding his life partner. "If you don't feel sensual about your partner, you will be bored soon. Sexuality is 80 per cent physical and 20 per cent attitude. A sensual person is genuine, pure, confident, down-to-earth and beautiful. Someone who gives me a feeling of security." For him, sensual people show sexuality when they start expressing themselves.

Why do men date sexual women but settle down with the sensual? Says IG Aiyappa, director, International Logistics Firm, "A man wouldn't want everyone lusty after his wife. It's okay to admire a woman for her sensuality. But if men are lusty after her, it makes him feel insecure."

Divya Rajaram, senior executive, Thomas Cook (I) Limited, feels this attitude speaks more of

Sexual or SENSUAL?

Does sexuality provoke you while sensuality stirs you up? Does your head decide on one and your hormones on the other? Views that try to clear the air



While Karisma 'sexy, sexy' Kapoor is today a sensuous glam figurine, the Kamasutra condom brought sex out of the bedroom. Both are distinct metaphors of changing attitudes towards sex

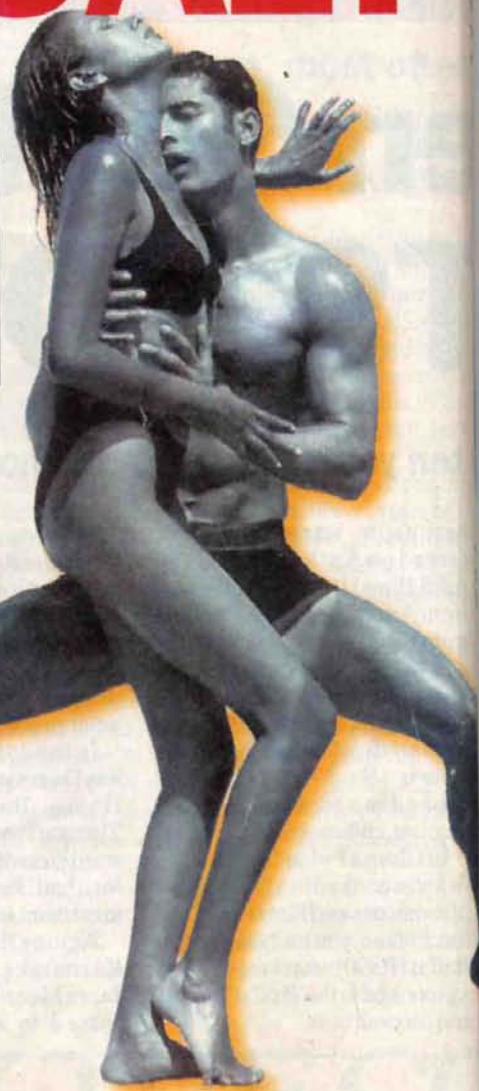
the average Indian male's double standards. "The woman a man dates is not the kind he will take home to his mother. When it comes to a relationship, men get turned-off by someone easy to get. Women, sexual by nature, are described by men as 'great girlfriends, but the last woman on earth they'd marry!' Sad, but

true, that a woman has to underplay her sexuality if she doesn't want to be labelled 'fast'."

Theatre personality Kartik Iyer feels that this chauvinistic attitude has its roots in culture, "in a society where women have been kept inside too long. But society is changing and hopefully attitudes will change too."

"Sensuality is a subtle undertone. Its lack of perversity makes it different from sexuality."

Somewhere along the way, sensuality seems to have started emanating positivity, and sexuality negativity. Says Divya Rajaram, "Sexuality is associated with the primitive and the unrefined. Today, we pride ourselves



in our education and culture. Sex only occupies a part of our lives and is definitely not the be-all and end-all of existence. Yet, we are hit with so much sex in a simple thing like an advertisement that we forget what the product is! Tomorrow, no matter what Madhu Sapre achieves in her life, she will be remembered as the girl who posed nude."

On the other hand, the Kamasutra campaign is extremely sensual, albeit bordering on the sexually provocative. Yet, a section of society is horrified by the braz-



ness of the campaign. The media boom in the last few years has resulted in an absolute cultural revolution especially in tradition-oriented societies.

"Since it happens everywhere, you tend to think it's acceptable on a psychological level. There are sensual icons like Maria Goretti who the youth want to emulate."

Youngsters are trying hard to be what they are not. Bombarded with images of what a sensual person should be, they land in a neon zone. Perspectives and morality codes differ for each person.

While nudity may be taboo in our culture, it may be normal elsewhere. What matters is that we have our own checks and decide for ourselves where to draw the line. We should be equipped to handle the outcome of our behaviour," says Divya.

According to Pranav Nahar, "Three to four generations ago, sex was not taboo. It was a celebration and viewed as natural

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and not harmful." Does that mean people in ancient India had loose morals or that they were more progressive? Many see Madhubala as the epitome of sensuality. In an age where there was hardly any exposure, she had enigma and class. Sensuality thus became paramount when compared to sexuality as it's not what you see but what you don't see

Television icons like Maria Goretti have become figures youth want to emulate — the way they dress, talk, act

that becomes important. Says 19-year-old Cheruba Devraj, "With age and sophistication, sexuality becomes sensuality. It is only when you go overboard that sensuality becomes vulgar. Sensuality is today a symbol of sophistication and grace."

Some disagree that sensuality can be learnt with age. Like Kartik, "Sensuality is carrying it off on your own. It's cultural, and it's left to you to accept or discard it."

Most men look at sensuality in terms of women. As Pranav Nahar puts it, "Men don't compliment men! We might say he's friendly or sweet, but we'd never call him handsome or sensual!"

The traditional Indian sari is viewed as the pinnacle of sensuality by many. Kartik Iyer: "It reveals sensual parts. It can be draped to look sexually vulgar too." Echoes IG Aiyappa, "The traditional look is totally sensual. For instance, Mahima Chowdry in 'Pardes'. But she has fallen from the sensual to the sexual, with weird roles!" Goes to show, there are two sides to a coin — it's the way you portray and carry yourself that will determine which side you fall.

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