

13
**PRELIMINARY RANDOM OBSERVATIONS ON THE COURTING BEHAVIOUR
OF UNDERGRADUATES IN A RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSITY**

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Investigation of sexual habits and practices is a relatively recent development. Scientific observations and studies in this field are few, especially in Sri Lanka. Studies on sexual habits among the College and University students of America had been reported by Robinson *et al.* (1968), Davis (1969), Kaats & Davis (1970) and Bell & Chaskes (1970). According to Mosser & Kalton (1971) classification of obtaining data about a group of people, the direct observation method was adopted in this study, due to the conservative tendencies of our society.

The courting behaviour of undergrads were observed, at frequent intervals, for two years, from afternoon to late in the night. The places of observations included the vicinity of the Girls' Halls of Residence in Peradeniya University, corridors of lecture blocks, library and surroundings, Gymnasium building and the adjacent locations, canteens, sports pavilion, Arts Theatre and Open-air blocks.

The observations and comments were described under the following headings: Initiation of pairing, campus 'dates', erotic play, 'con-session', partner selection, and inter-racial/inter-religious pairing. Six reasons are cited for the occurrence of pairing at the Campus. These are: band-wagon effect, two-some nature of campus life, insecurity of our time, stimulation of sexual attitudes, economic 'buffer', and escapism.

The following inferences are made; (1) The curiosity, excitement and the ever-present liberty from the prying eyes of guardians and society elders, climaxes in the profuse pairing at Peradeniya Campus. (2) Pre-marital courting has become almost as accepted among campus girls, as with campus boys. (3) The established value of Oriental culture, that pre-marital courting is wrong, is crumbling.

It is concluded that, as the living conditions at the University of Peradeniya is far from satisfactory for the ever-increasing numbers, the social, educational and family pressures of the students produce various sorts of sexual behaviour, which need attention and study.

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