

Chasity and Curiosity: attitudes and Behaviour of Young People in Medan Regarding Virginity and Premarital Sex

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Abstrak

This study focuses on single young Indonesian's attitude and behavior regarding virginity and premarital sex. The transition from a traditional to a modern society has raised concern about changes in Indonesian young people's lives and values, in particular regarding premarital sex. Data used in this paper are based on the survey among 875 single young people age 15-24, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions conducted over a period of seven months (July 1997-January 1998) in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Results suggest that young people in Medan are increasingly tolerant of premarital sex. Although for most of them a woman's virginity is a great concern, it is no longer seen as the most important factor in choosing a future spouse. The demise of parental arrangement of marriage and the growing opportunity to know the future spouse long before marriage mean that the potential wife's personality is now of more significance than her virginity. Losing virginity does not necessarily mean losing respectability. Of 875 unmarried young people being studied, nine percent of women and 27 percent of men reported having had sex; these figures doubled for those who approved of premarital sex.