

Attitude towards Sex Education among Teachers and Class XII Students of Senior Secondary Schools of Tura

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Abstract:

Education is the process of gaining various experiences. While growing, it is important to receive correct information for wholesome development of personality and one of the programme is sex education. It is an educational programme to assist young people in their physical, social and emotional development as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, personal-hood and aging. Sex education involves the acknowledgement and understanding of the process of sexual development and interaction that starts at conception and affects the individual for the rest of his/her life. It enables individual to recognize and be comfortable with their sexuality.

Key words.: Sex education, attitude, students, teachers

Article History: Received: 25th April 2018, Revised: 20th May 2018, Accepted: 14th June 2018, Published: 30th June 2018.

Sex education is different from the concept of what the ordinary man thinks. It is generally believed that sex education is synonymous with family life education. Sex education applies to the instruction of young people with regard to the basic facts of reproduction and sex. The primary goal of sex education is facing and accepting the facts of life and honestly communicating them to children and to help them cultivate a healthy sexual morality, acceptable to both society and themselves without causing any unnecessary conflicts between individual expression and social norms (Handa, 1994). Sex education has been defined as an educational programme, designed to provide the learners adequate and accurate knowledge of the biological, socio-cultural and moral dimensions of human sexuality. It embraces the biological, socio-cultural and ethical aspects of human sexual behaviour.

WHO defined Sex education as "An educational programme designed to provide the learner's adequate and accurate knowledge of the biological, socio-cultural and moral dimensions of human sexuality. Human sexuality is the core of sex education and is the function of the total personality which includes the human reproductive system and processes individual feelings about being a woman or a man; it embraces the biological, socio-cultural and ethical aspects of human sexual behavior (WHO, 2006)."

I. IMPORTANCE OF SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Sex education plays an important role for the young people in our community; it prevents them from catching sexually transmitted diseases, having to deal with an unplanned pregnancy and confronting HIV/AIDS.

Sex education is not only important as a developmental process in the life of a child; it arms the child with the tools to understand him or her better in relation to the immediate

environment and the threats that could emerge from such interaction. Through sex education young people would gain incremental knowledge of the ability to protect themselves and alert people of the threats of sexual exploitation if they are sexually educated. Sex education provides people with the information they need to understand their bodies and gender roles in positive ways. It is about better understanding of humanity, reproductive rights and developmental changes such as puberty, menopause, aging, that could experienced in the course of one's reproductive life. It provides safety net for young people whose lives are infiltrated by messages from the media that may not reflect core family values (Cotney, 2008).

II. GARO HILLS

The Garo Hills are part of the Garo-Khasi range in Meghalaya, India. They are inhabited mainly by tribal dwellers, the majority of whom are Garo people. Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is located in this range. The Garos call themselves Achik-mande. In the Garo language Achik means Hills and mande, Man. So, Achik-mande means the Hills people. Tura is a municipality, which is located in the district of West Garo Hills in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya. As of 2011 India census, Tura has an average literacy of 73%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 77%, and female literacy is 70%. In Tura, 14% of the population is under 6 years of age.

III. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Sex education is needed for better family life. Today the Indian society is much backward to realize the importance of sex education. A large population of the rural population is illiterate and ignorant.

Many adults and adolescents suffer a lot on account of improper or many a time incorrect information received from

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misleading literature, movies and sexually perverted, ill motivated or inexperienced companions. Such inaccurate, adequate and even distorted information about sex from unwholesome sources (even parents can misguide their children for saving their prestigious position) not only creates unhealthy attitude towards sex and sex problems. Therefore, sex education is important because young children as well as adolescents and adults need to be told about the venereal diseases in a scientific way. They should learn the causes, measure of prevention and treatment of these diseases. It helps the children in getting proper information about their sex related curiosity and problem. There is much importance of sex education as a means of developing healthy attitude among the students.

In Tura, many students studies in different schools and colleges. There is a need of sex education in Tura as many students are spoiling their youth with early pregnancies, abortions, AIDS, mental tension and sexually transmitted diseases. They are not aware of the various diseases that are cause due to sexual relationship. Educating youth about sex is very essential, so that they can protect themselves against such abuse. Rape cases not only take place in big cities of our country but it has spread all over every state small or big which we can see even in small town like Tura. This may be due to lack of parent's guidance, and the exposure of students to dating clubs, and correct exposure to wrong information which are freely available. Providing them with proper sex education can help tackle their problems to quite an extent. It is important that teachers should be trained to teach and spread awareness on sex education. The curriculum should have information on sex education so that correct information is provided in a formal way.

Many parents feel uncomfortable about having conversation with their children about sex, but avoiding the subject will not stop their children from having sex or keep them safe. If enough care and guidance is not given to a child, it would have an adverse effect on the family as well as the society. Therefore, Parents and Teachers have to be very tactful so that their students/children do not obtain wrong information as misconceptions.

Hence, in view of the above issues, the investigator is interested to conduct a study on Attitude towards Sex Education of class XII students, their Parents and Teachers of Tura.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the Attitude towards Sex Education of Class XII Students.
- 2) To study the Attitude towards Sex Education of Teachers.
- 3) To find the difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female students and Teachers.
- 4) To find out the difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of Class XII Students of different streams.

V. HYPOTHESES

1. Ho – There is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between Students and Teachers.
2. Ho – There is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between male and female.
3. Ho – There is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between male and female Teachers.
4. Ho – There is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between male and female Students.
5. Ho – There is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between Arts and Science.

VI. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to the Higher Secondary school students of Tura.

VII. REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

The study on 'Sources of sex information' found that children are often reluctant or too embarrassed to approach parents with the topic and therefore have turned, particularly in more recent times, to more formal sources of sexual health education such as school-based lessons (Goldman & Goldman, 1998). (Singh, 1986) in a study "Adolescent pregnancy" found that sexual health education either does not have an adverse effect on unprotected sex and adolescent pregnancy, or may even promote more appropriate choices around sexual health. Furthermore, there is evidence that policy, service provision, and prevailing attitudes may interact differently from one socio-cultural context to another important in reducing levels of sexual activity. The authors concluded: In many communities, concerned parents or community members have feared that education about sex or AIDS may increase sexual activity by condoning contraception; this analysis does not indicate such an association.

The study by (Paulussen, Kok, & Schaalma, 1994) on "Antecedents to adoption of classroom-based AIDS education in secondary schools" found that teachers' adoption and implementation of HIV programmes is dependent on their beliefs about the interest and enthusiasm of students, the feasibility of the classroom procedures and their ability to deliver the curriculum. Provision of clearly documented lessons which are effective in the classroom has been found to impact on the confidence and skills of teachers to deliver the lessons as planned. Ongoing engagement and support of teachers played an important role in their ownership of the curriculum. Teachers commented on their appreciation of the ongoing support from the outset of the project. The study on "An investigation into the attitudes of teacher trainees" by (Lokotwayo, 1997) revealed that the attitudes of teacher trainees are positive towards sexuality education. Seventy-seven percent of the sample believed that sexuality education empowers children to deal effectively with sexual matters. Eighty-three percent of the sample was of the opinion that sexuality education minimizes unwanted pregnancies. Sixty-five percent was positive about the inclusion of sexuality education in the primary school curriculum. The study revealed that most subjects were comfortable in dealing with various topics of sexuality education.

(WHO, 1998) in a study “Improving adolescent health and development” found that Adolescent girls are also at high risk for reproductive health problems and their adverse consequences as they are vulnerable to sexual assaults, rape, prostitution, malnutrition, unsafe abortion and reproductive tract infections (RTIs) including sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. An ever growing body of data has revealed that early sexual initiation can lead to tragic social, economic and health consequences. (Gyarmathy, MCNutt, & Molnar, 2002) in a study “Evaluation of a comprehensive AIDS education Curriculum” found that the most successful teachers implementing the curriculum were young, engaging and were ‘outsiders’ to the students. They encourage research focusing on identifying teacher characteristics associated with good outcomes such as knowledge, age and personality factors. While this is ideal and high quality training of teachers at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level is vital for appropriate sexual health promotion in classrooms, there are of course budgetary and practical considerations. The present research highlighted the importance of investing in extensive and ongoing liaisons with various levels of the education system.

Sex and relationships education (SRE) was regarded with low priority partly because of the anxiety around sex education among parents, governors, teachers and their pupils in a study “Teacher’s view of teaching sex education” by (Alldred, David, & P., 2003).

(Boler, Adoss, Ibrahim, & Shaw, 2003) in a study “The Sound of silence” difficulties in communicating on HIV/AIDS in schools found that in both India and Kenya, though teachers played a major role in giving young people information on HIV/AIDS and sexuality they were constrained by social and cultural factors. The result of this is that teachers resulted to ‘selective’ teaching where they restricted teaching only the biological aspects and left out those that have to do with sex and relationships.

In a study “Sexual health and HIV/AIDS” study found that schools are the most frequently cited main source of information on sexuality issues (human sexuality, puberty, birth control, HIV/AIDS) and rank highest as the most useful/valuable source of sexual health information (Boyce, Doherty, Fortin, & Mackinnon, 2003).

(Bethesda, 2003) in an article “Sexuality education” suggested that sexual education should be taught in schools to help young people make healthy decisions regarding sex throughout their lives. Without comprehensive sexual education program facilitated by a professional who is educated in these issues, young adults will often base their decisions on misinformation from press and unvetted internet sources.

(Gupta, Mathur, Singh, & Saxena, 2004) in a study “Reproductive health awareness of school-going, unmarried, Rural Adolescents” found that the vast gap in adolescents’ knowledge of sexual and reproductive health is reflected in their behaviours, with less than 10% of sexually active adolescents in India using contraception. The high prevalence of STIs in India is particularly concerning considering the degree to which Indian adolescents contribute to the high figure. Indian adolescents continue to be ignorant of safe sex practices which play a significant part

in the current situation. This is of great concern in view of the current dearth of sex education programmes in India.

(Kirby, Laris, & Roller, 2006) in a study “Impact of sex and HIV education programs on sexual behaviors of youth in developing and developed countries” evaluated the impact of 83 sex education programmes, demonstrating that sex education programmes have a significant positive impact on young people's risky sexual behaviours. Education programmes were distinguished as being of particular importance to adolescents, regardless of nation or community setting and have been shown to be particularly effective in reducing reported risky sexual behaviours in school going adolescents in developing countries. Furthermore, European countries that have a long history of school-based sex education, such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, demonstrate a correlating trend of low teenage birth rates and low rates of STIs in adolescents. However, it is important to acknowledge that other societal, familial, cultural and health service factors exist which may influence rates of teenage pregnancy and STIs in these countries.

(Westwood & Mullan, 2007) in a study “Knowledge and attitudes of secondary school teachers” found that teachers have had inadequate sexual health knowledge to efficiently teach sexually transmitted infections or emergency contraception, although their general sexual health knowledge appeared to be good; which suggests that teachers require sufficient specialist knowledge in sexual health to contribute to current recommendations for sex and relationships education in secondary schools.

A study “Attitude of higher secondary school teacher towards sex education” conducted in Bhavnagar district, 70 teachers were selected as sample. The method used in the research was survey. It was found that there is significant difference between the male and female teachers where the female teachers have positive attitudes than the male teachers (Chauhan, 2012). A study “Attitude towards sex education as perceived by parents and teachers,” all students of class XI and class XII of Agra district affiliated by U.P. Board of education, the teachers teaching higher secondary classes and parents of XI and XII class students were selected for the study. It was found that the teachers of XI and XII classes were also in favour of imparting sex education to adolescents and they have positive attitude towards sex education (Vashistha, 2012).

VIII. RESEARCH DESIGN

The design used in the research with its sample selected for the study, method of the study, the instrumentals or the tools used, the means of data collection and the technique for analysis are described in this chapter.

Population: The population for the study includes 717 students of Class XII from Government and Private schools of Tura, and Teachers.

Sample: Random sampling was to select 60 Teachers and 150 Students for the study.

The present study has been carried out by implementing the ‘Descriptive Survey Study’.

Tool: Attitude towards Sex Education tool was used developed by Usha Mishra.

IX. RESULT

Attitude of Class XII Students towards Sex Education

The attitude of class XII students towards sex education is calculated using frequency distribution scores and means scores.

Frequency distribution of class XII students on attitude towards sex education

Table 1: Frequency Scores of Students on Attitude towards Sex Education.

Score range	Stanine grade	Frequency	%	Interpretation
Above 129 120-129	9	23	15.34%	Very high Attitude towards Sex Education.
100-119	8	89	59.34%	High Attitude towards Sex Education.
80-99	6	38	24.67%	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education.

From table No.1 shows that majority 59.35% and 15.34% students have high Attitude towards Sex Education with mean scores between 100-129, and 24.67% scored between 80-99 which is moderate attitude towards sex education. This indicates that majority of Higher Secondary students of Tura have High and positive Attitude towards Sex Education. This also indicates that students are ready to learn and be informed about sex education in schools.

Attitude of Teachers Towards Sex Education

The attitude of teachers towards sex education is calculated using frequency distribution scores and means scores.

Table 2: Frequency Scores of Teachers on Attitude towards Sex Education.

Score range	Stanine grade	Frequency	%	Interpretation
Above 129 120-129	9	13	21.67%	Very high Attitude towards Sex Education
100-119	8	38	63.34%	High Attitude towards Sex Education
70-99	6	8	13.34%	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education

From table No 2 have shown that majority 63.34% and 21.67% Teachers have high Attitude towards Sex Education mean scores between 100-129, and only 13.34% have moderate attitude towards sex education. This indicates that majority of Higher Secondary Teachers of Tura are ready to introduce sex education in schools in Tura. They feel it is necessary and it is high time that adolescents should be given right information regarding sex education so that they do not commit heinous mistakes and crimes later due to ignorance.

Difference between students and teachers on attitude towards sex education

To test this hypothesis means score, standard deviation and t-test has been employed in order to find out the significant difference in the Attitude towards Sex Education between Students and Teachers.

Table 3: Difference in mean scores on Attitude towards Sex Education of Students and Teachers.

	Status	N	Mean	SD	t value	Remark
Attitude towards Sex Education	Teachers	60	111.27	11.35	2.23	Significant at 0.05 level
	Students	150	107.45	10.87		

From table No.3 has been found that the mean scores of both the Teachers and Students are 111.27 and 107.45 while the standard deviation is 11.35 and 10.87 respectively. The obtained value of t is 2.23 with df = 208 and is significant at 0.05 level. The above computed data indicates that there is a significant difference in the Attitude towards Sex Education between Students and Teachers. Thus the null hypothesis that there is significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education between Students and Teachers is rejected. The teachers have better attitude towards sex education as compared to students. It indicates that as teachers are considered as parents in schools and have more knowledge than students, sex education should be introduced in school as separate subject so that students will have positive attitude towards sex education.

Difference in attitude towards sex education of male and female teachers.

To test this hypothesis mean scores, standard deviation and ‘t’ test has been employed in order to find out the significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female teachers.

Table 4: Difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female teachers.

	MF	N	Mean	SD	t value	Remark
Attitude towards Sex Education	Male Teachers	24	108.17	13.14	-1.65	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Female Teachers	36	113.33	9.63		

From table 4 has been found that the mean scores of both male and female teachers are 108.17 and 113.33 while the standard deviations are 13.14 of male teachers and 9.63 of female teachers respectively. The obtained value of t is -1.65

with $df = 58$ and is not significant at 0.05 level. The above computed data indicates that there is no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female teachers. Thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant different in Attitude towards Sex Education between male and female teachers is not rejected.

Difference in attitude towards sex education of male and female students.

To test this hypothesis mean scores, standard deviation and t-test has been employed in order to find out the significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female students.

Table 5: Difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female students.

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t value	Remark
Attitude towards Sex Education	Male Students	51	106.08	10.615	-1.12	Not Significant at 0.05 level
	Female Students	99	108.15	10.991		

From table 5 has found that the mean scores of male students is 106.08 and female students is 108.15 and the standard deviation of both male and female students is 10.615 and 10.991 respectively. The t-value is -1.12 with $df = 148$ and it is found that it is not significant at 0.05 level. It has been observed that the Attitude towards Sex Education of female students is higher as compared to male students. Thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant different in Attitude towards Sex Education between male and female students is not rejected.

Difference in attitude towards sex education of arts and science stream.

To test this hypothesis mean scores, standard deviation and t-test has been employed in order to find out the significant different in the Attitude towards Sex Education between Arts and Science stream.

Table 6: Difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of Arts and Science stream.

	Stream	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	Remark
Attitude towards Sex Education	Arts	83	107.71	11.192	0.33	Significant at 0.05 level
	Science	67	107.12	10.541		

From table 6 has found that the mean scores of Arts is 107.71 and Science is 107.12 while the standard deviation of Arts stream is 11.192 and that of Science stream is 10.541

respectively. The t-value is 0.33 with $df = 148$ and it is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore the null hypothesis that there is no significant different in Attitude towards Sex Education between Arts and Science stream is not rejected.

X. DISCUSSION

The present study found out that Attitude towards sex education of students is high with the mean scores of 107.78 and with a standard deviation of 10.87 whereas in a similar study McManus et al (2007) found that the moderately high exposure of participants to school-based sex education, the proportion of students who believe sex education to be an important part of the school curriculum (86.7%) greatly exceeds those who receive this education. This study suggests that approximately two thirds of students' knowledge regarding contraception and sexual health comes from the school environment. However, Kirby et al.(2006) evaluated that sex education programmes have a significant positive impact on young people's risky sexual behaviours.

In the present study it was found that the mean scores of Attitude towards Sex Education of Teachers is high whereas Vashishtha(2012) found that the teachers of XI and XII classes were also on favour of imparting sex education to adolescents and they have positive attitude towards sex education. Lokotwayo (1997) revealed that the attitudes of teacher trainees are positive towards sexuality education.

The present study revealed that there was no significant difference in Attitude towards Sex Education of male and female. However it was found that female attitude towards sex education is higher as compared to male whereas in a similar study Jembela (2008) revealed that female teachers hold more positive attitudes towards sexuality education than male teachers. Chauhan (2012) also found that female teachers have positive attitude towards sex education than male teachers. Hindin J, Hindin MJ (2009) also found that a significantly higher proportion of females obtain information from their parents and other family members compared to male students.

The present study observed that there was no significant difference in attitude towards sex education of Arts and science students. This indicates that the attitude towards sex education of Arts and Science students is similar and have positive attitude towards sex education. It also shows that students of both Arts and Science stream are ready to learn about sex education which is the need of an hour.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

After going through the major findings of the study on Attitude towards Sex Education of Class XII students and Teachers of Tura, the investigator felt a need to give suggestions. The following are some of the suggestions framed by the investigator.

- 1) The present study showed that the students' attitude towards sex education is positive therefore there is a need of introducing sex education as a separate subject starting from elementary to higher levels so that students will understand about dangers of sexual diseases

- 2) Sexual education should be taught in schools to help young people make healthy decisions regarding sex throughout their lives. Without comprehensive sexual education program facilitated by a professional who is educated in these issues, young adults will often base their decisions on misinformation from press and unvetted internet sources.
- 3) Teachers delivering sexuality education should be trained when organizing training programmes need to take into account the level at which the teacher educator is going to teach. Matters relating to sex should be discussed in a direct, unemotional and unembarrassed manner in an objective, matter of fact voice as is done in the case of other subjects.
- 4) Formal instruction of sex is highly essential at the secondary and higher stage. Students pick up sex knowledge from films, newspapers, magazines, and conversation of elders. Therefore it is necessary for the education to estimate the degree of instruction in this regard.
- 5) There is a need of carefully selected books on the subject should be made available to the students in the library.
- 6) The teachers should take up sex education seriously in order to develop healthy attitude towards sex. One should impart knowledge about sex to students in the most spontaneous and natural way.
- 7) There is a need to organize separate training for teachers on sex education that will help them to teach the students comfortably and in unembarrassed manner. As teachers require sufficient specialist knowledge in sexual health to contribute to current recommendations for sex and relationships education in secondary schools.

XII. CONCLUSION

Sexuality education aims at reducing the risks of sexual behaviour like unwanted pregnancies and infection with sexually transmitted diseases. It is also about developing young people's ability to make decisions over their entire lifetime. It should include opportunities for young people to develop life skills. Some of the life skills include being able to communicate, listen, negotiate, ask for and identify sources of help, advice and assertion. Other important skills include being able to recognize pressures from other people, to resist them, deal with the challenge of prejudice and seek help from adults. It also equips young people with the skills to be able to differentiate between accurate and inaccurate information.

From the results of the study it is concluded that students have a positive attitude towards sex education which shows that students are ready to learn and be informed about sex education. Teachers have positive attitude towards sex education because they feel it necessary and it is high time that adolescents should be given right information regarding sex education so that they do not commit heinous mistakes and crimes later due to ignorance. Female shows favourable attitude towards sex education than male as they understand the problems in society due to ignorance and prejudices. The attitude towards sex education of the Arts students is similar to science students.

It can be concluded that adolescents require information and skills to assist them to learn about sexuality, to explore their attitudes and values, and to practice the decision making and other life skills they need to make informed choices about their sexual lives and protect their health. The teachers and parents both have to play an important role in giving information on which also helps them to get rid of sex related problems sex education. Thus, it is clear that imparting sex education to children and adolescents is of a great importance.

XIII. REFERENCES

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