

Levels of Awareness of Sex Education Among School Going Adolescents in Urban Areas

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Abstract

It is during the adolescent period an individual experiences developmental changes in their physiology as well as psychology, when it comes to sexual development. It is a point in their life where they can find all these changes to be overwhelming and sometimes may even be confused about their identities. Sex education is a program which primarily focuses on building a strong base regarding sexual health and learning the information about one's own and other's beliefs about their identity, their attitude regarding sex, relationships and most importantly intimacy.

The present study aims to study the levels of awareness about sex in the school going adolescents of urban areas (Delhi). A sample of 114 (65 males ; 49 females) aged between 15-18 years was taken from Delhi NCR region for the study. It was hypothesised that there would be a significant difference in the levels of sexual awareness , sexual knowledge , sexual intelligence , and knowledge about risky sexual behaviour among adolescents. The tool used was the Social Sexual Awareness scale by David F. Bogacki, Deborah J. Armstrong and Kenneth J. Weiss. Results showed that there was a significant difference in the levels of awareness , sexual knowledge , sexual intelligence and knowledge about risky sexual behaviour among the school going adolescents. Girls scored better as compared to the boys.

Key words: Sex education , Adolescence , Sexual Awareness , Sexual Knowledge , Sexual Intelligence , Risky Sexual Behaviour.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Sex education is a program which primarily focuses on building a strong base regarding sexual health and learning the information about one's own and other's beliefs about their identity, their attitude regarding sex, relationships and most importantly intimacy. As WHO states "Sexual health is considered to be a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

Sex education or sexuality education is one of the most important issues that need to be addressed for school counsellors, teachers, and parents and most importantly for the school going adolescents

It is during the adolescent period an individual experiences developmental changes in their physiology as well as psychology, when it comes to sexual development. It is a point in their life where they can find all these changes to be overwhelming and sometimes may even be confused about their identities. It is at this point in their lives where they are vulnerable and it is very easy for them to go off track or make the wrong choices, regarding sexual activities and their own identities.

Risky Sexual Behavior can be defined as practicing sexual behaviors that are considered to be unsafe and are potentially harmful to the individual. Risky sexual behavior includes unprotected sex, multiple partners, physical/emotional harm, forced/non-consensual sex , sexual violence

We should provide teens with all the resources required to not only help them defend themselves, but also to help them protect themselves and seek bystander involvement to discourage teens from becoming potential predators

In rural areas and semi urban areas, sex is seen as a taboo and a topic that should not be discussed openly, especially between parents and children. It is observed that in rural areas, comprehensive sex education is majorly lacking and the adolescents and even their parents and teachers are not as aware as they should be and all of this.

Even though in urban areas sex is discussed openly, as compared to the developing and rural areas, especially amongst adolescents, it is important that these adolescents are taught the right things at the right age.

II. SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY-

Albert Bandura

Since the theory aims to adjust and observe behavior in individuals it appropriately suits the requirements of a good sexuality-based program Modeling sexual behavior that is healthy and depicts it in a positive manner to the young people is utterly important. Majority of the knowledge they obtain about sexual behaviors come from the sexual activities that take place either on tv or movies , porn and magazines. Most of this "model" behavior has no mention of using

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protection, doesn't discuss about the risks and consequences of being careless about it, sometimes even depicts violence combined with sex and may also show involvement in sexual activities at an early age. This theory also helps in providing the young people or the adolescents with behavioral skills training for them to actually practice skills like saying 'no'.

III. STAGES OF CHANGE MODEL or THE TRANSTHEORETICAL MODEL-

Dr. Prochaska & Carlo DiClemente

PRECONTEMPLATION: This is the stage where the individual has not yet given a lot of thought or "contemplated" about switching or altering their behaviour.

CONTEMPLATION: In this stage, the individual takes the initial accumulative measures towards behavioral changes. The individual has a better and precise knowledge about the positives and negatives of altering the behavior but is not quite ready yet to alter the behavior because the negatives seem to outweigh the positives.

PREPARATION: In this stage, the individual is all set to act soon.

ACTION: In this stage the individual takes a step towards changing their behavior. The individual takes concrete measures to pay attention to the problem and work towards fixing the behavioral pattern but the change in behavioral pattern is not consistent.

MAINTAINENCE: The procedure of changing or altering behavioral patterns may take months and years which is why continuous management phase follows the action stage, in which behavior is enforced and encouraged more sternly and consistently and adopted assiduously.

TERMINATION: Such a phase where they have no temptation at all and have achieved maximum self efficacy. It is a helpful tool and model for educators and people who are looking for help regarding changing their behavior since it aids them to customize the messages regarding sexual health and provide mediation regarding the issues of individuals and groups with regard to what "stage of change" they actually are in.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahmad (2020) conducted a research on how awareness related to sex education is important for adolescent girls. In his research he shed light upon topics like "what is sex education" "why is sex education important" and the "objectives of sex education.. Dr. Ahmad spoke about how it is important that the female adolescents are given comprehensive sex education so that they don't adapt themselves to the backward and sexist ways of the society, when they grow up. Dr. Ahmad explained how sex education does not approve of sex in adolescence but it is trying to educate the youth, proactively, about the delicate topic of sex and to help them understand the adversities and the responsibilities of sex so that the rates of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted teenage pregnancies are lowered. He finally states that, giving female adolescents the appropriate knowledge about sex doesn't mean that we are telling them to go out and do it but to explain them the importance of staying safe and protecting themselves in the times that are about to come.

Putri et. Al. (2020) investigated as to how using learning media to educate young children about sex is effective. They focused upon how sex education can be used to avoid any kind of sexual harassment and how sex education can be used to guide the children and the teenagers, in an effective way, about matters related to sex. The main aim of this research was to incorporate media by using audio-visual ways to introduce sex education in early childhood by the means of learning media. The research focuses on understanding the impact of audio visual means and serial imagery to teach sex education in early childhood. As a result it was found that the use of audio visual media and serial imagery, specifically instructional videos and series drawings is not an effective means to give knowledge related to sex education in early childhood.

Fisher et.al. (2020) conducted a research on the perspectives of teenagers about pregnancy in teenage and infections that are transmitted sexually (STD) in their classrooms and out of their classrooms as well. They conducted semi structured interviews and they came up with 4 themes surrounding sex education in and out of the classrooms which included the activities related to prevention; behaviors that were information seeking; their own views on issues like teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and how to address them and lastly, what would be the appropriate place to address these issues. They found out that many outcomes indicated that students would not like to take part in these information seeking activities till the time it affected them on a personal level. This research helped in making recommendations and suggestions regarding the interventions required for addressing issues like sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy.

Proulx et.al (2019) did an exploratory study on how belonging to the LGBTQ community is related to the mental health issues and how it leads to victimization of students of this community in high schools in various states of USA. After data analysis it was seen that schools that provide sex education that includes the LGBTQ community in its curriculum have a lower rate of students who experience mental health issues and victimization in schools. Gay and lesbian students reported low chances of experiencing any kind of bullying and students that identifies themselves as bisexual had lower chances of being depressed or showing any kinds of depressive symptoms. The researchers suggested that the results obtained from this study can be used to improve and enhance the interventions provided in schools.

Carr et.al(2017) did a study about the various policies regarding sex education on a state level in USA after observing the high rates of unwanted pregnancies in teenage. In order to reduce the rates of pregnancy in teenage various states in USA have employed policies that endorse sex education that works on the abstinence principle which teaches students not to indulge in sexual activities before they get married. The research findings indicate that abstinence based sex education does not have a relationship with the rates of pregnancies, births and abortions in teenage but it was also found out that there are some policies which are related to the rates of sexually transmitted infections in some states.

V. METHODOLOGY

AIM: To assess the levels of awareness of sex education among the school going adolescents of urban areas

VI. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To measure the difference in the level of sexual awareness among school going adolescents (boys and girls)
- 2) To find out the difference in the level of sexual awareness and sexual knowledge among school going adolescents (girls and boys)
- 3) To study the difference in the levels of sexual awareness and sexual intelligence among school going adolescents (girls and boys)
- 4) To assess the relationship between sexual awareness , sexual knowledge and knowledge about risky sexual behavior among school going adolescents (girls and boys)

VII. HYPOTHESES

1. There will be significant difference on the level of sexual awareness among school going adolescents (girls and boys)
2. There will be significant difference on the levels of sexual knowledge among school going adolescents (girls and boys)
3. There will be significant difference between sexual awareness , sexual knowledge and intelligence and risky sexual behavior among school going adolescents (girls and boys)
4. There will be significant difference on the levels of sexual awareness and sexual intelligence among school going adolescents (girls and boys)

VIII. SAMPLE

Purposive sample consisted of 114 participants in which 65 were males and 49 were females who took part in the study, willingly.

Inclusion criteria:

1. all participants were able to understand English and fill the form.
2. Their age ranged from 15-18 years
3. They had to be in / above 11th or 12th grade.

Demographic variables were comprised of name, age, gender, school and to which grade they belonged to.

IX. TOOLS USED

NAME OF THE TOOL	AUTHOR AND YEAR	NO. OF ITEMS	RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY
Social Sexual Awareness Scale	David F. Bogacki, Deborah J. Armstrong, Kenneth J. Weiss	30	Concurrent validity , Convergent validity ($r=.92$ $p<.05$), and construct validity. High correlation between performance on social sexual awareness scale and level of adaptive functioning ($r=.83$ $p<.001$) and capacity to consent to high risk sexual behavior ($r=.57$ $p<.001$)
Personal Information Schedule	Researcher, 2020		

X. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The data was analysed using mean, and t-test

Table 1: Mean and SD for gender distribution of the sample

	Gender	frequency	Mean	SD
	Girls	49		
Gender distribution			1.43	0.50
	Boys	65		
		total	114	

Table 2 : Mean , SD and t scores for Sexual Awareness among Girls and Boys

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t value	p
Sexual Awareness	Boys	114	49.11	8.23	6.132	Sig.*** 0.001
	Girls	114	51.12	5.18		

Significant at the level of 0.01

Table 2 depicts the t value (6.132). The t value is significant at both levels , thus indicating that there is significant difference in the scores of sexual awareness among adolescents (girls and boys).

Table 3 : Mean , SD and t scores for Sexual Knowledge among Girls and Boys

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t value	p
Sexual Knowledge	Boys	114	47.01	7.62	1.884	Sig.*** 0.005
	Girls	114	50.23	4.15		

Significant at the level of 0.05

Table 3 depicts the t value (1.884). The t value is significant at both levels , which indicates that there is significant difference in the scores of sexual knowledge among adolescents (girls and boys).

Table 4 : Mean , SD and t scores for Knowledge about Risky Sexual Behaviour among Girls and Boys

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t value	p
Risky sexual behaviour	Boys	114	30.15	8.85	2.086	Sig.*** 0.001
	Girls	114	57.34	4.02		

Significant at the level of 0.01

Table 4 depicts the t value (2.086). The t value is significant at both levels , hence implying that there is significant difference in the scores of knowledge about risky sexual behaviour among adolescents (girls and boys).

Table 5 : Mean , SD and t scores for Sexual Intelligence among Girls and Boys

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t value	p
Sexual Intelligence	Boys	114	46.87	8.48	2.326	Sig *** 0.001
	Girls	114	53.71	5.26		

Significant at the level of 0.01

Table 5 depicts the t value (2.326). The t value is significant at both levels , which shows that there is significant difference in the scores of sexual intelligence among adolescents (girls and boys).

XI. DISCUSSION

The present study aims to assess the Levels of Awareness of Sex Education Among School Going Adolescents of Urban Areas. For the study , tools used for data collection were : The Social Sexual Awareness Scale (SSAS) with 30 items given by David F. Bogacki , Deborah J. Armstrong , Kenneth J. Weiss and a Personal Information Schedule by the researcher. The individuals on whom the test administered were between the age group of 15-20 years of age. The data was collected after the questionnaire was filled, on an excel sheet. After data collection , for analysis of the results , Mean, and t-test were used as statistical analysis.

in the first table a mean of the gender distribution of the participants was seen which showed that a higher number of boys(65) took part in the study in comparison to girls(49) which led to a little imbalance in the results.

In table 2 , the t values for the total sexual awareness score in girls and boys was seen. Significant difference is seen in the scores obtained. The findings implied that girls had scored higher in comparison to boys which puts light on the fact that girls are more sexually aware as compared to boys. Boys scored a low of 17 out of 60 whereas the minimum score for girls was 38 out of 60.

In the third table , which focuses on the sexual knowledge among girls and boys it was observed that there is significant difference in the scores. It is observed that there is significant difference in the levels of sexual knowledge between girls and boys. The outcomes suggest that girls scored higher in this domain which implies that girls have more sexual knowledge in comparison to boys.

The fourth table focuses on knowledge about risky sexual behaviour. Risky sexual behaviour refers to indulging in sexual activities that are potentially harmful to the person and their partner. In this domain , significant difference was observed in the scores of girls and boys. Girls were seen to have a much higher level of knowledge about safe sexual practices and risky sexual behaviour , whereas , boys seemed to lack the knowledge required about risky sexual behaviour.

Table 5 discusses the level of sexual intelligence in girls and boys. Sexual intelligence is the capacity of an individual to make informed decisions when it comes to sexual practices. After analysis significant difference was observed in the

scores of boys and girls, which implies that boys scored comparatively low. Girls scored higher than boys in this domain.

It was found that adolescents with higher age group, belong to urban area and private school with higher SES favours sex education in school. It was considered statistically significant. In urban adolescents most common preference for sex education was school/teacher i.e., 357(48.0%) and in rural area 347 (46.7%) doctor was the most common medium for getting sex education.

The study also showed that girls were more aware and showed more maturity when it came to sexual awareness, sexual knowledge and knowledge regarding risky sexual behaviour.

The results from these researches prove our hypothesis that there is significant difference in the levels of (i) sexual awareness, (ii) sexual knowledge and (iii) knowledge about risky sexual behaviour among the adolescents (girls and boys) of urban areas.

XII. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to assess the Levels of Awareness of Sex Education Among School Going Adolescents of Urban Areas. The study was conducted on 114 participants residing in Delhi- out of which 112 belonged to high school (11th and 12th grade) and 2 had finished their schooling. It was found out that significant relationship exists between the level of sexual awareness among school going adolescents (girls and boys). There is significant relationship between the level of sexual awareness and sexual knowledge among school going adolescents (girls and boys). Significant difference was observed in the levels of sexual awareness and sexual intelligence among school going adolescents (girls and boys). There was significant difference in the levels of sexual awareness and knowledge about risky sexual behavior among school going adolescents (girls and boys)

XIII. REFERENCES

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