

Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myths among Adolescents Suresh Sankapal*

Abstract

The primary aim was to study the attitude towards sex education and sex myths among adolescents. Adolescent phase is a crucial phase that brings in a lot of challenges for them. Two schools were selected and a sample of 150 students participated in this study. Age group taken for study was between 14 to 18 years (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th Std) male and female students. They were asked to fill a questionnaire about attitude towards sex education prepared by Mishra (2008), and Sex Myths Checklist developed by Kumar (1993). Statistical techniques such as means, standard deviation, Pearson's 'r' and 't' test were used for the analysis of collected data. The correlation (-0.11) between attitude towards sex education and sex myth scores among female adolescent, which is not significant at 0.05 level but a correlation (-0.42) between attitude towards sex education and sex myth scores among male adolescent, which is significant at 0.01 level. The student 't' test (0.93) was calculated on the bases on mean and SD scores related to attitudes towards sex education of 150 adolescents, which is not significant. The Sex Myth check list of 150 adolescents' student 't' test (2.89) is significant at 0.01 level.

Keywords: Attitude, Sex Myths, Sex Education, adolescent

One of the many factors fundamental for people's experience of health and well - being is sexuality. Sexual health should be recognised as an affirmative concept associated with wellbeing and positive qualities as being more than reproductive health. It is linked to the expression of individual collective needs, Human rights and responsibilities.

A definition of sexual health was developed by WHO: Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality, it is not merely the absence of disease dysfunction or information Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships. In Europe, in general sexual and reproductive health of most adolescence is good but still adolescence is at risk group for poor reproductive health. Sex and relationship education have a long tradition and is mandatory. Sweden was the first country in the world to introduce mandatory sex education in 1955.

Sex education:

The American school health association defines; sex education is to be distinguished from sex information and can best be described as character education. It consists of instruction to develop understanding of physical, mental, emotional, social & psychological face of human relations as they are affected by male and female relationships. It includes more than anatomically reproductive information in emphasizes of attitude development in adolescence about sex education Sex education is defined as a broad programme that aims to build a strong foundation for lifelong sexual health by acquiring information an attitude beliefs and values about one's own identity relationship and intimacy. The importance of delivery of sex education in timely fashion is significant. Current statistics show that almost one in every fifth

person in the world is a teenager. They engage 18% of the world's population with 88% living in developing countries. India has the largest adolescent population living in urban areas.

The term adolescent comes from the Latin word meaning to grow to maturity. According to the WHO, 10 to 19 years of age are called adolescents. It is the period in which the maximum amount of physical, psychological, emotional and behavioural changes occurs. Physical health and behavioural problems of adolescence are interrelated and these factors are related to the development of an unhealthy social environment in the adolescent. So, adolescents and need to provide preventive interventions for behaviours such as poverty, unemployment, delinquency, sexual harassment, etc.

Sex education should be an integral part of the learning process that begins in childhood and continues in adult life and its lifelong learning process It should encourage the exploration of values and morals and moral values It should foster self - esteem, self - awareness, a sense of moral responsibility, and skills to avoid and resist sexual experience. Health education plays an important role in human life and also has a fundamental right: it can help increase self - esteem, develop effective communication skills, and promote awareness of health and disease knowledge. The mixture of myths or stigmas, secrecy, ignorance, social disparity and negative media message confuses young people and promotes low self - esteem. Due to the lack of a clear protocol for sexuality education, such as the content, how to address additional rules and regulations for educational services and how these services should be fulfilled in different social, economic and cultural settings is not clear, so that this study was conducted to identify the attitude of adolescents towards sex and

sexual myths among adolescents. Sex education is synonymous with the protection and preservation, expansion, improvement and development of the family based on accepted ethical standards.

Sex education is not simply a unit on reproduction that teaches how babies are conceived and born. It has a much richer scope and goals. Sex education is to generate a positive look and should be to indicate the immense possibilities of human fulfilment that security offers, it should not focus on controlling by suppressing sexual expressions, developing negative feelings and impressions about sexuality in children.

Need of the sex education

As the child grows, she develops an understanding of the various aspects of life around her. These include sex related understanding which may not always be complete and would sometimes be incorrect. Children obtain information about sexuality from various sources. They are parents, siblings, relatives, friends, servants, books, scientific and non - scientific movies, television and offline. It is not necessary for a particular child to obtain information from all sources, it can be any or a combination of the sources mentioned above (Devi, et al., 1988).

Need for sex education in adolescence and public discussion of topics of a sex education are widely considered as Taboo in the Indian society, there for acting as a barrier to delivery of adequate and effective sexual education to Indian adolescence's education at school level has attracted strong objections and apprehension from all areas of the society including parents' teachers and politicians (Khubchandani, J. et al., 2014; Bramhe, et al., 2020). expertise from healthcare professionals along with parents and time will be required in order to bring about the what is likely to be a gradual range in the existing conservative attitude.

The primary objective of sex education is to see that children receive the correct information with regard to their sexuality. Sexual growth is a natural process but the young adolescent is not given the appropriate scientific knowledge which would help him to understand this natural process better. Adolescents get knowledge about sex and related topics from films and cheap books but they may not get the right knowledge and the knowledge will be incomplete (Kumar, R. et al., 2017). The increase in spread of STDs and AIDS and high rate of adolescent pregnancy is another major issue which cause for imparting sex education without any delay. Ismail, S. et al. (2015) stated that sex education can reduced risk of sexual abuse, and a reduced risk of STD including HIV. Similar findings were published by Sharma, Rajani (2020). From these above points sex education in adolescents is a basic need for them for becoming a responsible individual. So, it should be

mandatory to give, age - appropriate knowledge among youth and adolescents, about changes during puberty, sexuality, mode of transmission and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and to maintain healthy and safe sexual life.

An adolescent is the phase of transition from being a child into an adult. It extends from 12-19 years of age. This transition involves biological, psychological and social changes. This is a stormy period for both adolescents and as well as for the parents too, as it creates a lot of confusion in both of them about how to handle the changes. So, parents ' involvement remains a necessity in adolescents ' sex education (Mahajan, Payal and Sharma, Neeru 2005; Achille, O. A. et al., 2017; Shin, H. et al., 2020). Individual sharing or discussion is a powerful tool to educate adolescents. Discussion also helps the child to solve the problem and develop a positive attitude about the various aspects of life.

Objectives of the sex education

- To understand changes taking place at physical and mental level with the help of scientific explanation.
- Eliminate undue fear and misunderstandings about these changes
- To create awareness and responsibility towards sexuality
- Reducing teenage pregnancy.
- Preserving human values
- To resolve doubts and myths about sexuality
- Understanding and controlling emotions.
- To create happy married life.
- To make responsible citizens of country.
- To prevent spread of STDs and HIV by creating awareness about it.
- To reduce sexual abuse by creating awareness in adolescents.

Measures Taken by Government to prevent sexual abuse in children and adolescents.

Prevalence of sexual abuse, violence and physical abuse are increasing among the adolescence due to lack of proper scientific knowledge of sexuality. A study on child abuse in India conducted by ministry of women and child development reports that 53 % of boys and 47% of girls some form of sexual abuse address and find themselves at a vulnerable stage of their life. Sexual violence against children all countries, all social backgrounds, all cultures and all religions. Children are the first victims of sexual violence and among them children with disabilities are the mostly affected. There is no minimum age for being a victim of sexual violence. Before puberty girls and boys could be victims in the same proportions so it is important to create awareness about sexual violence in the mind of adolescence girls and boys throughout through sex education (Prabhu,

V., 1998). To understand this sexual education is must. The protection of children from sexual offences act 2012 came into force on 14 November, 2012. Act was passed in the Indian parliament in May, 2012 act is popularly known as POCSO Act. The act defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years and provide protection to all children under age 18 years from the offence of sexual assault sexual harassments and pornography. Both boys and girls fall within the preview of the act. The definition of sexual offence is broad and not restricted to rape on this act ensure effective access to justice it provides for special procedures for reporting cases special procedures for recording statements of child victim and special courts for trial of such offences. To deal with child abuse cases, the government has brought in a special law namely the protection of children from sexual offences act as to come into force with effect from 14 November, 2012 according to add child as any person below 18 year of age and defines different forms of sexual abuse including penetrative non penetrative assault as well as sexual harassment and pornography etc. Under this act various kinds of punishments are also there according to crime. Such kind of knowledge is also important for adolescents, to deal with physical and sexual abuses and to raise their self-esteem and self - confidence also.

Sexual myths

Sex and sexuality are heavily shrouded in mystery and myths. When it comes to adolescence sexual behaviour these mysteries can contribute to a variety of negative outcomes including unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among others. So, one must give extensive attention to dispelling myths on issues ranging from how and when pregnancy occurs and infections are transmitted to what constitutes normal body development patterns of attraction or types of frequencies or behaviour this misconceptions and gaps in know ledge are often based on stereotypes and faulty assumptions here, we attempt to share some myths about sex in sexual behaviour.

Goldenberg (1977) has rightly observed that there is probably no other area of our life which we care so much, but know too little as. And whatever little we know about sex during our childhood and adolescents' years, we know it in bits and pieces through sources like friends acquaintances and cheap sex books which tend to mislead us more than to provide a proper understanding of human sexuality.

During one study Kumar (1991) on sex related myths, it was observed that quite a few college students, especially males believed that masturbation caused impotency or penis size determines one's sexual potency. Such kind of beliefs helps to develop sexual anxiety in them which may play havoc with their

sexual life. Allen has also reported a close relationship between acceptance of sex myths and felt sexual anxiety.

Some Myths are like, sex produces instant adulthood, in the desire to become adults quickly some adolescents believe that engaging in adult activities like sexual intercourse smoking drinking alcohol driving a vehicle will make them adults. Adolescents believe that alcohol and drugs increase sexual desire do not relate the possibility of pregnancy with sexual intercourse without protection, they believe there is no risk of pregnancy during menstrual period, boys prefer to marry a virgin. The gender differences in behaviour indicate at tab use rooted in the cultural cradle of society, in which sexual education, repressive in nature, contribute to maintain men and women role and sexual values firmly set even today, although the new generation has started to introduce new behaviours.

Sexuality is a natural and normal component of adolescent development and promoting healthy development means knowing fact vs myth. In order to prevent risk behaviour resulting from the taboos and myths sex education is important. Reproductive capability is now established at earlier age but the subject of adolescents' sexuality is still a taboo in societies. There is widespread ignorance about risk of unprotected sex problems among adolescents. Unfortunately, need for sex education is not perceived and fulfilled in India. especially in rural areas. This study concludes that there is intense need of sex education as it has a significant impact on attitude of adolescents about sex education and sex myths.

Significance of the study

The significance of the study follows from the need of sex education and the reality with regard to the lack of information on human sexuality of the students and the sexual abuse the children have to endure. The increasing incidence of child abuse, unwed mothers, adolescent pregnancies and abortion, the increase in HIV infected persons especially in the younger age group and the growing number of divorcees among young couples highlight the importance of imparting sex education to the young people. The age gap between a person becoming sexually aware and the marriageable age has increased. This exposes them to curiosity, which is not quenched in the normal way in which other aspects of human life are dealt with. Sexual growth is a natural process but the young adolescent is not given the appropriate scientific knowledge, which would help him to understand human sexuality better. Children acquire information about sex and related topics from sources that are not reliable. Hence, imparting of scientific and correct information is a

must. The information obtained as a result of this study includes the awareness the students have about human sexuality. Thus, Will sex education helps to clear myths about sex in adolescents? and Will sex education help them to become a responsible person in society? are questions Infront of adolescents.

Objectives of the study

1. To measure attitude towards sex education among adolescents.
- 2.To explore the relationship between attitude towards sex education and sex myths among adolescents.
- 3.To find out the difference between boys and girls related to sex education.
- 4.To discover the difference between boys and girls related to their sex myths.

Hypotheses of the study

- 1.There will be significant positive correlation between attitude towards sex education and sex myths among adolescents.
- 2.There will be no significant difference between boys and girls related to their attitude towards sex education.
- 3.There will be no significant difference between boys and girls of their sexual myths.

Method

Sample

B. M. Rote Junior College, Kolhapur and Magdum Highschool, Kolhapur were selected for data collection. The sample was representing the population which researcher want to study. Since it is difficult to study entire population, a sample was

out the attitude of adolescences towards sex education and sex myths, using comparative study and correlational research design.

Tools

The following tools was used to assess the attitude about the sex education

Attitude towards Sex Education (ATSE): This tool was developed b5 Usha Mishra (2008). It consists of 30 well designed questions and each have five alternatives, in which 16 items are related to positive attitude and 16 items are related with negative attitude towards sex education. The responses are to be given on the scale form itself as it is consumable booklet. Reliability of the test was computed by split - half method using Spearman Brown Formula and by test - retest method after an interval of one (0.82) and one week (0.80).

Sex Myth Check - List: This tool was developed by Kumar Pramod (1993). It consists of 23 highly sensitive items given in the yes - no format. the male, female and both sex related myths are given separately in this test. The test - retest reliability has been to be found 0.70 with the one - week interval.

Data Analysis

Appropriate statistical techniques such as means, standard deviation, Pearson's r, and ' t ' test was used for the analysis of collected data.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 is shows the corelation between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth Checklist among 75 female adolescents. The mean score for Attitude Towards Sex Education 114.21 and standard

Table 1: showing the corelation between Attitude Towards Sex Education (ATSE) and Sex Myth Checklist (SMC) among 75 female adolescents

Variables	Mean	SD	r value	p-value	Significant
ATSE	114.21	9.72	-0.11	0.35	Not Significant
SMC	3.24	2.03			

selected as follows - 75 students from 9th standard, and 75 students from 11th Standard was selected. Total Number of respondents in the sample for the study was 150 students (75 boys and 75 girls).

Research Design

Research design is the blue print for the collection data for analysis. It answers what where when and how of the research study. It is an outline of the

deviation is 9.72 which is equal to the normal score of standard norms. Also, the mean score for Sex Myth Checklist 3.24 and standard deviation is 2.03 which is lower than to the normal score of standard norms. The mean score is lower than the standard score due to cultural, and religious factor.

The correlation (-0.11) between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth Checklist among female

Table No. 2: showing the corelation between Attitude Towards Sex Education (ATSE) and Sex Myth Checklist (SMC) among 75 male adolescents

Variables	Mean	SD	r value	p-value	Significant
ATSE	115.64	9.01	-0.42	0.00	Significant at 0.01 level
SMC	4.16	1.87			

research objectives, sample selection to analysisof the data. In the present study attempt was made to find

adolescent, which is not significant and the p value (0.35) also indicates the same. The hypothesis no. 1 is

rejected, it means score of Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth is signifies that there is no relationship between these variables.

Table 2 is shows the corelation between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth Checklist among 75 male adolescents. The mean score for Attitude Towards Sex Education 115.64 and standard

Table 3 showing the mean difference between male and female adolescents' Attitude Towards Sex Education. The mean score of male adolescents is 115.64 and standard deviation is 9.01. Also, the mean score of female adolescents is 114.21 and standard deviation is 9.72. Both the mean scores are normal to standard norms. The students' t test (0.93) is

Table 3: showing the Mean, SD, t-value and significance between male and female related to their Attitude Towards Sex Education.

Group	Sample (n)	Mean	SD	t- value	p-value	Significant
Male	75	115.64	9.01	0.93	0.18	Not Significant
Female	75	114.21	9.72			

deviation is 9.01 which is equal to the normal score of standard norms. Also, the mean score for Sex

calculated on the bases of above mean and SD scores of Attitudes Towards Sex Education 150 adolescent,

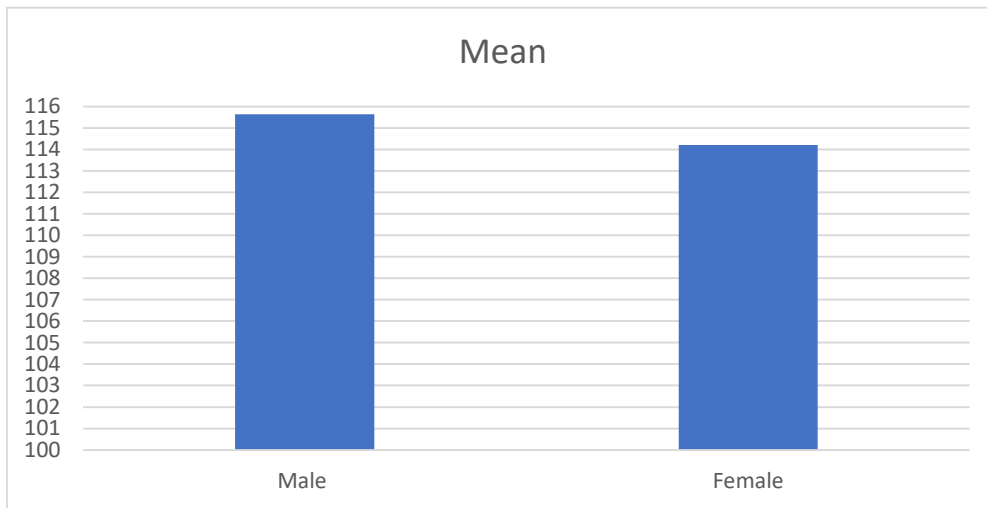


Figure 1: shows mean difference between male and female adolescent's Attitude Towards Sex Education.

Myth Checklist 4.16 and standard deviation is 1.87 which is lower than to the normal score of standard norms. The mean score is lower than the standard score due to cultural, and religious factor.

The correlation (-0.42) between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth Checklist among female adolescent, which is significant and the p value (0.00) also indicates the same. The hypothesis no. 1 is rejected, it means score of Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth Checklist is signifies that there is negative relationship between these variables. This correlation indicates that Attitude Towards Sex Education increases in value, Sex Myth will decrease;

which is not significant and the p value (0.18) also indicates the same. The hypothesis no. 2 is accepted, it means score of Attitude Towards Sex Education between male and female adolescent are same to each other.

This mean difference indicates that Attitude Towards Sex Education between male and female adolescent are approximately same and the difference between means are due to by chance. The male and female are equal attitude towards sex education, it seems in below figure 1.

Table 4 showing the mean difference between male and female adolescents' Sex Myth Checklist. The

Table 4: showing the Mean, SD, t-value and significance between male and female related to their Sex Myth Checklist

Group	Sample (n)	Mean	SD	t- value	p-value	Significant
Male	75	4.16	1.87	2.89	0.00	Significant at 0.01 level
Female	75	3.24	2.03			

similarly, if Sex Myth decreases in value, Attitude Towards Sex Education increase.

mean score of male adolescents is 4.16 and standard deviation is 1.87. Also, the mean score of female

adolescents is 3.24 and standard deviation is 2.03. Both the mean scores are normal to standard norms. The students' t test (2.89) is calculated on the bases of above mean and SD scores of adolescents' Sex Myth Checklist150 adolescent, which is significant and the p value (0.00) also indicates the same. The hypothesis no. 3 is rejected, it means score of Sex Myth between male and female adolescent are differ to each other.

This mean difference indicates that Sex Myth between male and female adolescent are significant. This significant difference between means shows that male is higher score than female adolescent. The male and female are significant differ to sex myth and it seems in below figure no. 2.

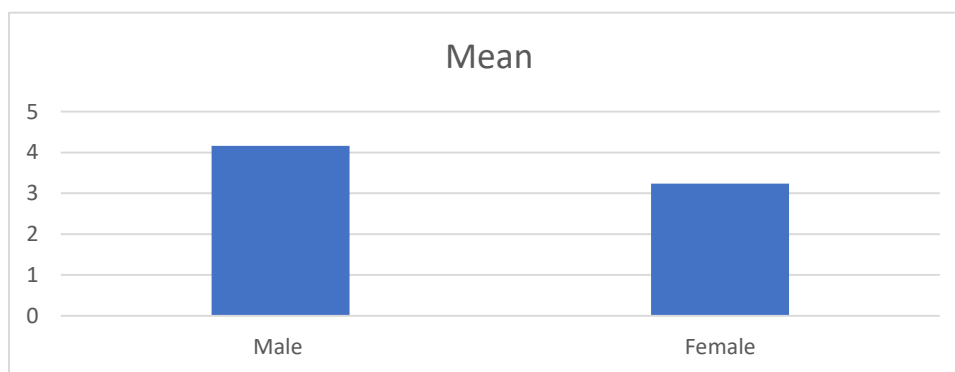


Figure 2: shows mean difference between male and female adolescent's sex myth.

Conclusions:

1. There is no significant relationship between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth among female adolescent.
2. There is significant negative relationship between Attitude Towards Sex Education and Sex Myth among male adolescent.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescent related to their Attitude Towards Sex Education.
4. There is significant difference between male and female adolescent related to their Sex Myth.

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