

## Need of Sex Education For Youth In India



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### ABSTRACT

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*Sex education relates human sexuality, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibility. Sex education stands for protection, presentation extension, improvement and development of the family based on accepted ethical ideas.*

### Meaning of sexuality

In Indian society sex is considered as a sensitive subject and public discussion on sexual matters is considered as a taboo. Human sexuality not has only biological, physical but emotional and spiritual aspects. The biological aspects refer to reproductive mechanism and basic biological drive libido explained by school of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud explained libido which exists in all species strongly influenced by hormonal levels. Physical or emotional aspects of refers to bond between individual through love, trust and caring. Spiritual aspect of sexuality of an individual or as a connection with others.

### Meaning of sex education

Burt defined sex education as the study of the characteristics of male and female. Such characteristics make up the person's sexuality. Sexuality is an important aspect of the life of a human being and almost all people, including children, want to know about it. Sex education stands for protection, presentation extension, improvement and development of the family based on accepted ethical ideas. Sex education is an instruction in various physiological, psychological and sociological aspects of sexual response and reproduction. Kearney also defined sex education as "involving a comprehensive course of action by the school, calculated to bring about the socially desirable attitudes, practices and personal conduct on the part of children and adults, that will best protect the individual as a human and the family as a social institution." Thus, sex education may also be described as "sexuality education", which means that it encompasses education about all aspects of sexuality, including information about family planning, reproduction (fertilization, conception and development of the embryo and fetus, through to childbirth), plus information about all aspects of one's sexuality. Rubin and Kindendall expressed that sex education is not merely a unit in reproduction and teaching how babies are conceived and born but it has a far richer scope and goal of helping the youngster incorporate sex most meaningfully into his present and future life, to provide him with some basic understanding on virtually every aspect of sex by the time he reaches full maturity.

### Need of sex education around the world

One in every fifth person on the globe is an adolescent, as they comprise 18 percent of world's population with 88 percent living in developing countries, particularly in the South Asia, the East Asia and the Pacific region. India has the largest adolescent population followed by China, United States of America, Indonesia and Pakistan. This indicate the considerable demographic and socioeconomic challenges, particularly for the developing countries like India, in terms of meeting the specific needs for improving the survival and general health conditions, nutritional status, and sexual and reproductive health of the adolescents.

However, the sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents and youth are poorly understood and grossly underappreciated owing to limitation of scientific evidence compounded with the unpreparedness of public health system. Adolescents and youth in India experience several negative sexual and reproductive health outcomes such as early and closely spaced pregnancy, unsafe abortions, STI, HIV/AIDS, and sexual violence at alarming scale. One in every five woman aged 15-19 years experience childbearing before 17 years of age that are often closely spaced; risk of maternal mortality among adolescent mothers was twice as high as compared to mothers aged 25-39 years.

### Major Objectives of sex education

The major objectives of Sex Education can be broadly described as follows:

- To develop emotionally stable children and adolescents who feel sufficiently secure and adequate to make decisions regarding their conduct without being carried away by their emotions.

- To provide sound knowledge of physical aspects of sex behaviour along with psychological and socio logical aspects, so that sexual experience will be viewed as a part of the total personality of the individual.
- To develop attitudes to ensure that young people and adults will determine their sexual and other behaviour by considering its long range effects on their own personal development, the good of other individuals, and welfare of society as a whole.
- To include social and moral behaviour, proper attitudes and values towards sex, love, family life and inter personal relations in the society
- The problem of over-population demands family life education, including family planning as a priority, as many of the young people are about to be married and should be aware of the responsibilities they have.

#### **Aims of sex education**

Sex education refers to a broad programme designed to impart knowledge and training regarding values, attitudes and practices affecting family relationships. It aims to develop the qualities and attitudes on which successful family life depends. The real purpose behind sex education is the transfiguration of a male child into manhood and of a female child into womanhood. The education that provides knowledge on physical, social, moral, behavioural and psychological changes and developments during puberty is termed as Adolescent Family Life Education. It teaches the adolescents about the role of boys and girls in family and society, responsibility and attitude of boys and girls towards each other within social context. Many psychologists believe that sex education begins at an early age and continues throughout the life of an individual. The purpose of sex education should be to facilitate the best possible integration between the physical, emotional and mental aspects of the personality and the best possible assimilation between the individuals and the groups. Sex education also provides information about conception, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. It is a continuous process of developing attitudes, values and understanding regarding all situations and relationships in which people play roles as males or females.

#### **Need of sex education in India**

A study on child abuse in India, conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, reports that 53 percent of boys and 47 percent of girls surveyed faced some form of sexual abuse. Young population need to be aware about their sexual rights and empower them to protect themselves from any undesired act of violence, sexual abuse and molestation. India's National Population Policy also reiterates the need for educating adolescents about the risks of unprotected sex. Provision of family life education results into multiple benefits to the adolescent including delayed initiation of sexual activity, reduction in unplanned and early pregnancies and their associated complications, fewer unwanted children, reduced risks of sexual abuse, greater completion of education and later marriages, reduced recourse to abortion and the consequences of unsafe abortion, curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV.

India has become the second largest hub of HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world' All India Educational and Vocational Guidance Association, reported that 54 percent of males and 42 percent of females did not have adequate knowledge regarding matters of sex. About 30 percent of males and up to 10 percent of females are sexually active during adolescence before marriage, though social attitudes clearly favour cultural norms of premarital chastity. We are living in a complex world leading complicated lives. Internet is the greatest culprit which makes pornography easily accessible in recent times

Adolescence is an age of opportunity for children marked with a time of transition from childhood to adulthood; wherein young people experience substantial changes in their physiology after puberty, but do not instantaneously imbibe the various associated roles, privileges and responsibilities of adulthood. This crucial period in the lives of young people presents prospect to promote their development and equip them with appropriate knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and skills to help them successfully navigate through various stages of life, and realize the full development potential

Currently agencies imparting sex education in India In India, there are many programs promoting sex education including information on AIDS in schools as well public education and advertising. AIDS clinics providing information and assistance can be found in most cities and many small villages. India has a strong prevention program which goes hand in hand with care, support and treatment. We have been able to contain the epidemic with a prevalence of just 0.31%. We have also brought about a decline of 50% in new infections annually.

Some NGO are also working to impart sex education in schools to save child from sex abuse. Central

government and state government have also started some programmes for checking health of students under INDIRABALSAVASTHAYAYOJNA but in these programmes stressed are on physical health only. Strict rules have also been framed on child abuse but no work has been done to aware the child about their rights. The National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) are also working to impart sex education in curriculum under the name family life education (FLE).

#### **Controversy over sex education in India**

To generate awareness among adolescents the adolescent education programme in the school curriculum was promoted by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, which led to a major controversy in 2007. The ardent opponents argued for a ban on starting sex education in schools as it corrupts the youth and offend 'Indian values'. They claimed that it may lead to promiscuity, experimentation and irresponsible sexual behaviour. The critics also suggested that sex education may be indispensable in western countries, but not in India which has a rich cultural traditions and ethos. On the contrary, the proponents argued that conservative ideas have little place in a fast modernizing society like India, where attitudes towards sex education are changing rapidly. As fallout of this controversy, several Indian states including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Goa declared that the course content as suggested by MHRD was unacceptable and thus banned the programme.

Most political and religious leaders in India are unfortunately not in favour of sex education at school level. The Rajya Sabha of Indian Parliament constituted a committee to examine the implementation of the Adolescent Education Programme (AEP). The committee categorically opined against the implementation of sex education at school level, and felt that AEP may cause irreparable damage to the future of India by polluting the young and tender minds, and could invariably promote promiscuity. The report also took serious objections on the study materials and kits prepared for the implementation of the AEP in Indian schools. The report while denouncing the case for the implementation of any AEP at school level emphasized the need for appropriately passing on the message of no sex before marriage among adolescents and declaring it as immoral, unethical and unhealthy. In addition, students should be made aware of marriageable age which is 21 years in case of boys and 18 years in case of girls and any indulgence in sex outside the institution of marriage was against the social ethos.

There exists huge gap in appropriate understanding regarding various issues of family life/sex education and its effective implementation. Since there are supporters and opponents towards introducing sex education in Indian schools, it is most important to understand the perception and attitudes of youth on this controversial issue.

#### **Suggestions for implementation of sex education**

Adolescent life education program intend to ensure the rights of the large section of adolescents to develop them as healthy and responsible members of the family and society. Adolescents in all societies learn their responsibilities towards family by observing and following the behaviour of others. Due to rapid social changes occurring all over the world, the young generation is facing an enormous challenge in coping with the consequences of attrition in the traditional family system, social life, and values. Under this volatile environment, the family life education can help the adolescents to experience successful transition from childhood to adulthood.

Parents should provide sex education to their children in a friendly and informal atmosphere so that children may get rid of the idea that sex is dirty and be aware of their responsibilities. Therefore, it becomes apparent that sex education should not be only part of formal school curriculum but should also be equally augmented in the first place by parents at home to eliminate all the misconceptions, inhibitions and doubts of adolescents on various aspects of family and sex life.

In the era of globalization and modernization, there still exists socioeconomic divide in the knowledge, attitudes and perception of individuals in Indian society. The same holds true with regard to benefits of FLE. Whether it relates to the perceived importance of FLE, or actual prevalence of FLE among unmarried women in India, we found substantial differentials across socio-economic groups. This indicates that even after more than six decades of planned development efforts in India, large proportion of population living in rural areas, illiterate, marginalized social groups, continue to lag behind when it comes to the adoption of modern attitudes and healthy sexual behaviour. Hence, it is crucial for policy makers and program managers to take note of these socioeconomic hierarchies in Indian society, while designing and implementing any FLE program.

The outbreak of AIDS has given a new sense of urgency to sex education. Some international organizations such as Planned Parenthood consider that broad sex education programs have global benefits, such as controlling the risk of overpopulation and the advancement of women's rights. The use of mass media campaigns, however, has sometimes resulted in high levels of "awareness" coupled with essentially superficial knowledge of HIV transmission. Preventing access to pornographic movies or erratic contents on television shows is not prudent, but adding a single chapter to the school curriculum is relatively simple and practical. Mass media being highly influential has been part of both solution and of the problem in the area of sex and youth. It has been part of the solution because it has helped to bring sexual topics into discussions. Radio and television has been the medium in opening doors to the deliberations of several topics which were previously considered as taboo. Sexual education to youth helped them to develop critical thinking and insights on range of family life/sexual issues like premarital sex and pregnancy, abortion, teacher-student relationships and lesbianism.

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