



Original Research Article

## High School Teachers' Opinion about Sex Education for Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers play vital role in the teaching setup as they play unique role in molding the personality of the students during their formative period of school life which will intern effect the future generation in their overall development. Sex education for adolescents in schools is a debatable issue in Indian social setup due to peculiar social cultural and religious factors the term "sex education" itself is a taboo in our society, the reasons are why to impart such information Which pollute the young minds and deviate them from studies, talking to child or adolescent about sex is a taboo in home, school and even in community. Term 'Sex Education', also known as sexuality education or sex and relationships education, is widely used to depict education about reproductive system, sexual interaction and other facets of human sexual behavior. It is the procedure of gaining knowledge and developing mind-set as well as ideas about sex, sexual identity, human relations, closeness, gender roles, contraception methods and prevention of HIV/AIDS/STD while children reach teenage level, lack of sex education may lead the way to their unusual behavior. If not corrected at the exact time, it may generate problems of immature misbehaviors in these children's life.

**Key words:** Teachers, Adolescents, Sex education, High school

### INTRODUCTION

Approximately 80% of world's children live in developing countries, their well being as adults depends heavily on the education they receive<sup>[1]</sup> The developing country like India has to opt for education as one of the most important and useful tool to achieve National development. India adopted the National policy for children in Aug 1974, The policy declares, It shall be the policy of the state to provide adequate services to children both before & after birth & through the period of growth ,to ensure their full physical, mental & social

development and recognized children as the 'Nations Supremely important asset'<sup>[2]</sup> School education is a complex process and many multidimensional factors influences the teaching process School education has been described as a "Social Vaccine" and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool<sup>[3]</sup> Teachers play vital role in the teaching set ups as they play unique role in molding the personality of the students during their formative period of school life which will intern effect the future generation in their overall development.

Peculiar socio cultural milieu of our country is due to many complex social cultural religious backgrounds. We are hesitant in promoting many healthy, need based rational programs for instant sex education, the term "sex education" itself is a taboo in our society, the reasons are why to impart such information Which pollute the young minds and deviate them from studies, talking to child or adolescent about sex is a taboo in home, school and even in community. Sex education may encourage child or adolescent to indulge in malpractice if explained in a immature age are some comments we come across Awareness of sex is the most significant factor necessary to lead a secure life. Usual educational practices are very simple to learn, but we cannot consider sex education on the same line. It comprises of physiological, psychological and social issues, especially when we think of including it as a part of academic syllabus. As these complications occur, a question may arise in the mind of people about the need for sex education providing to the children.

While children reach teenage level, lack of sex education may lead the way to their unusual behavior. If not corrected at the exact time, it may generate problems of immature misbehaviors in these children's life.

The term 'Sex Education', also known as sexuality education or sex and relationships education, is widely used to depict education about reproductive system, sexual interaction and other facets of human sexual behavior. It is the procedure of gaining knowledge and developing mind-set as well as ideas about sex, sexual identity, human relations, closeness, gender roles, contraception methods and prevention of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD). It is also an effective way to respect one's partner, wife, husband and also a means to

admire sexual preferences. The misinterpretation of the people that are generally kept under the wraps should be cleared and they should be convinced about the need for sex education in this rapidly changing era. It is important that youth should be familiar with the purpose of providing education in order to develop an open and healthy approach towards sex and sexuality in order to assist them to make well-thought judgments.<sup>[4]</sup>

In India, one of the most-debated matters is whether sex education is essential or not. But people have to bear in mind that the lack of knowledge among the teenagers (mostly the youth of 16 to 19 years age group) and their participation in sex in a primitive mode, considering it as an act without any accountability, has spoiled their life badly. The outcome was some off-putting incidents such as unwanted pregnancies, abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, psychological pressures, strain, agony, negligence from families, loss of social respect and absolute failure in the studies. The decision taken by the government and non-governmental organizations to provide sex education created a sensation in the nation. The parents were separated in different opinions supporting and opposing sex education. One group of people argued that there is no place for sex education in Indian customs as well as traditions and our cultural values are good enough. Some believe that the sex education may distort the psyche of kids and also consider that AIDS is a different problem and sex is dissimilar. Hence, they argue that there is no necessity for sex education in schools and that it is a normal procedure that can be learnt through personal experiences. But specialists stress that parents must realize their children's problems during their growing stage. Parents should begin sex education from sanitation education and liberally talk about their youth issues and

prepare the growing teenagers to handle these problems efficiently and protect themselves through sex education.

***"Sex education does not mean you are encouraging sex which is how it's interpreted. It is an insurance for your child. It will protect your child."*** says Renuka Chowdhury, Minister of State for Women and Child Development. Educators mention that the human anatomy and reproductive systems were already being taught at the school stages. In addition to this, sex education provides knowledge to youngsters in order to release themselves from sexual coercion and will assist them to find answers within the structure of present society.

**Sex Education – It's High Time to be Open!** In India, instead of being open about sex related issues, most of the people would prefer younger generation not to be familiar with these matters.

We were told not to discuss these topics in school and even at home. So far as girls are concerned, the custom in our country is to keep them vigilant through warnings such as "Be alert", "See how you're sitting", "Is this the way to walk?", "Behave yourself", "Cover up yourself", "Don't be so shameless"- this list will be never-ending! By being warned, girls are supposed to gain knowledge on how to protect them without even knowing how or from what. As an outcome, they grow by being embarrassed, perplexed, uneducated about themselves as well as their bodies and are also rendered far more defenseless. In this era of the knowledge economy and globalization, we cannot think that public access to information on any topic; including topics relating to sex can be prohibited. Earlier generations of women and men did not have such awareness, so why does this age group need to be educated about these issues?

The reply to that question is so clear that it actually does not require an answer. Nowadays, girls have to be educated since they are more exposed to the outside world than their mothers. They are motivated to be out in the public places, even abroad. They are made to believe that they can do whatever thing they desire with their lives. Still they are unaware how to save them from abuses. These are the critical issues that youth can be educated in a clear and scientific manner from their schools. It is a truth of life that everybody has the right to know and be aware of.

Would it not be better to educate adolescents about these matters in an environment that supports them to raise questions and to clarify their doubts? How can such awareness be treated as obscene or against Indian values and traditions? <sup>[5]</sup>

Like all ideologies Sex education in school too has its own pros and Cons. <sup>[6]</sup> Sex education in schools has to be a well planned step taken by the government and private partners the curriculum has to be designed so that it is informative of important aspect of sexual activity which a child should know. We need specially trained teachers for this job. Imparting the education separately for boys and girls would be better and help keep a check on eroticism in young minds while educating them. It is a serious issue and the environment of teaching has to be such that it serves its purpose without making a Mockery of it. <sup>[7]</sup>

Present study intends to elicit the opinion of teachers working in high schools of socio economically backward district Bijapur of Karnataka state about sex education in schools for adolescents.

***Aims and Objectives:***

- To focus on the opinion of teachers about sex education in schools
- To know the relationship between gender and subject of teachers with

their opinion about sex education in schools.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: Bijapur District  
 Study design: Cross sectional  
 Study setting: High schools total 30 schools covered  
 Sample size: 162 teachers  
 Study period: Nov2010 to March 2011  
 Study technique: Questionnaire  
 Statistical analysis: Percentage and chi square

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Out of total 162 teachers 114[70%] were male and 48[30%] female. Teachers participated in the study 79[49%] were from rural schools and 83[51%] were from urban schools. Among 162 teachers language teachers were maximum i. e 61[38%] followed by science teachers 55[34%], e 27[17%]. Sports 13[8%] and Gk/Draw/comp were only 6[4%], 104[64%] were full time permanent teachers and 58[36%] were temporary/part time teachers.

**Table no. 1. Distribution of teachers according to type of school and opinion about sex education in schools.**

Type of school	Necessary NO %	Not necessary NO %	Not answered NO %	Total NO %
Govt school	16(53)	9(30)	5(17)	30(100)
Pri unaided	22(61)	9(25)	5(14)	36(100)
Pri aided	60(63)	32(33)	4(04)	96(100)
Total	96	50	14	162

$\chi^2=6.526$  P=0.163 No association found

Among the total 162 maximum were from private aided schools 96(59%) followed by 36(22%) private unaided school teachers and 30(19%) belonged to government schools ( $\chi^2=6,526$ ; P= 0.163). There is no association between type of school and opinion about sex education.

**Table no. 2. Medium of instruction of teachers and their opinion about sex education.**

Medium of Instruction	Necessary NO %	Not necessary NO %	Not answered NO %	Total
English	36(65)	16(29)	3(06)	55(100)
Kannada	46(71)	15(23)	4(06)	65(100)
Urdu	16(38)	19(45)	7(17)	42(100)
Total	98	50	14	162

$\chi^2=13.228$  P=0.01 Association found

It is found in this study that maximum teachers 65 (40%) were from Kannada medium schools followed by English medium 55 (34%) and Urdu medium teachers were 42(26%), 71% Kannada medium, 65% English medium and 38% Urdu medium school teachers were of the opinion that sex education is necessary in the schools ( $\chi^2=13.228$ ; P=0.01). There is association between medium of instruction of teachers and their opinion about sex education at schools.

**Table no. 3. Gender of teachers and their opinion about sex education.**

Gender	Necessary NO %	Not necessary NO %	Not answered NO %	Total NO %
Female	23(48)	17(35)	8(17)	48(100)
Male	75(66)	33(29)	6(05)	114(100)
Total	98(60)	50(31)	14(09)	162(100)

$\chi^2=7.324$  P=0.026 Association found

Among the 162 teachers 114 (70%) were male teachers and 48(30%) female teachers. 66% male teachers and 48 % female teachers have opined that sex education is necessary in schools.

( $\chi^2=7.324$ ;  $P=0.026$ ). Association is found between gender of teachers and their opinion about sex education.

**Table no. 4. Experience of teachers and their opinion about sex education.**

Experience in years	Necessary NO %	Not necessary NO %	Not answered NO %	Total NO %
1 -5	25(61)	12(29)	04(10)	41(100)
5 -10	17(55)	11(35)	03(10)	31(100)
10 -15	18(55)	11(33)	04(12)	33(100)
15 -20	12 (71)	04(24)	01(6)	17(100)
20 -25	08(53)	06(40)	01(07)	15(100)
25 -30	13(72)	04(22)	01(06)	18(100)
>30	05(71)	02(29)	---	07(100)
Total	98	50	14	162

$\chi^2=5.754$   $P=0.9280$  No association found

It is found that the highest percentage of teachers i.e 72% who had 25 to 30 yrs of experience felt the need of sex education at schools followed by 71% of teachers who had 15 to 20 yrs and those who had more than 30 years of experience ( $\chi^2=5.754$ ;  $P=0.9280$ ). No association was found between number of years of experience and their opinion about sex education.

## CONCLUSION

There is an utter need to focus more on the opinion of teachers on issue like sex education this aspect is one of the important component of adolescents' growth and development. Thus teachers along with their routine activities just by a simple change in their opinion and rational outlook can bring out proper action which can greatly contribute to the adolescents' health and complete wellbeing, prevention of many STD /HIV /AIDS and also renders reproductive health education. In this way teachers can contribute to the quality of life of adolescents which leads to national development.

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