



Research Article

Attitude of Students in Rural Secondary Schools Towards Sex Education in District Shimla of Himachal Pradesh based on Gender

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Keywords: sex education; secondary school; Shimla; Himachal Pradesh.

Abstract

This research seeks to examine the perspectives of high school students in the countryside of Shimla. Stratified random sampling method was employed to select a cohort of one hundred students from two rural educational institutions in the Shimla District: Government Senior Secondary School, Shoghi and Government Senior Secondary School Ghanahatti. Dr. Usha Mishra's standardized scale for assessing attitudes towards sex education was utilized for data collection. The t-test has applied to evaluate the significance of the differences among the various groups. The results indicated no notable difference in the attitudes of male and female pupils attending a rural secondary school in the Shimla District.

Introduction

Education is important in forming an individual's entire mindset; education can help a person improve their knowledge, views, and attitudes about a specific profession. Attitudes can learn or develop. They have influenced by the experiences of individuals. Attitudes influence and motivate a person's conduct in a given setting. It also encompasses an individual's hobbies, values, and social environment.

Lalnunfeli and Malsawmi (2015) define attitude as an emotional response to liking or hating an object or something that influences conduct. Sex is an essential part of life that exists in all aspects. When exposed to its surroundings, it develops a natural and well-established pattern of behaviour. The terms sex and sexuality are frequently misunderstood and misrepresented when addressing sexual behaviours as well as the physical

anatomy and function of the sex organs. As a result, sex reflects a man's greatest need or desire to connect emotionally, intellectually, and physically with his supposed partner in order to realize his identity. In contrast, sex education regarded as a contentious issue in terms of life philosophy. Sex education is the study of human development, including intimate relationships, sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexually transmitted infections, sexual activity, sexual orientation, gender identity, abstinence, contraception, and reproductive rights and responsibilities (Breuner and Mattson, 2016). According to WHO (2006), sexuality is an important component of human existence that includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction. Sexuality has experienced and expressed through thoughts, imaginations, wants, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, and relationships. While sexuality encompasses all of these characteristics, they have not always felt or expressed. Broadly range of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, ethical, legal, historical, religious, and spiritual elements influence the sexual behaviour of an individual. School-based sexuality education is vital to help young people build a solid foundation as they grow into healthy adults. For better understanding of secondary students' attitudes of sex education, research into their attitudes should conduct in rural secondary schools.

Review of Literature

Ng et al. (2024) emphasized the need of evaluating relevant literature; the studies conducted by fellow analysts investigated secondary school students' perceptions on sexuality and sexual health education in Hong Kong. Eight hundred and eighteen secondary school students took part in the study, filling out a questionnaire with questions about socioeconomic circumstances, sexual attitudes, and other measuring scales. The findings indicate that students were somewhat permissive toward sexual health initiatives. Gong (2022) discusses the current state of sexuality education among Thai secondary school students, including their attitudes on sexuality, hurdles to HIV prevention, and the real status of learning sexual health information.

Altekar et al. (2021) found significant gaps in knowledge and opinions on sex education among Kohlapur teenagers. As a result, adolescents need to be made more aware of the importance of sex education. McManus and Dhar (2018) conducted a cross-sectional study in South Delhi, India, to measure adolescent urban students' beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes regarding sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS, safer sex, and sexual education. Kumar et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional research of school aged adolescents in the Ambala District of Haryana, India. This study investigated the knowledge and attitudes of giving sex education among school-aged teens in both rural and urban areas of the Ambala District.

Joshi and Beura (2016) used a sample of 372 students from 62 schools in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand to assess teens' attitudes toward sex education. They discovered that the majority of teenagers had a moderate attitude toward sex education, and both male and female adolescents preferred frank discussions about sex and associated topics. After reviewing the aforementioned analyses, it is clear that sex education plays an important role in supporting an individual's overall well-being in all aspects of their personality, and educating adolescents about sex education can help them better understand sexual health and sex-related issues. However, the effort necessary to provide sex education does not appear to be at the level one might expect. In light of this context, it suggested that the present research to be carried out.

Significance of the Study

Sex education plays a crucial role in addressing sexual health, sex-related issues, and overall wellness, significantly influencing an individual's physical and psychological development. The contemporary environment that children grow up in saturation with sexual perceptions, heavily disseminated through various mass media including films, magazines, newspapers, radio, mobile devices, and advertisements, where they absorb incorrect or deceptive information that cultivates an unhealthy mindset. Young individuals keenly recognize the necessity for access to accurate information and support related to sex education, as their questions and curiosities have frequently overlooked or dismissed by adults, including parents and teachers, at times when they most require guidance. Consequently, this study is significant in exploring the views of adolescents regarding sex education in a rural secondary school within District Shimla.

Objectives

1. To examine the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education.
2. To compare the attitude of male and female rural secondary school students concerning sex education.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be no significant difference in the attitude of rural secondary school male and female students towards sex education.

Delimitations of the Study

- 1)The study was delimited to the District Shimla of Himachal Pradesh exclusively.
- 2)The research focused on 2 Government schools and 100 Government secondary school students in District Shimla.

Methodology

The researcher utilized the t-test to evaluate the hypothesis for this study, employing a descriptive survey method for data collection. A stratified random sampling technique was

implemented to ensure the selection of a representative sample. The essential data was obtained using the standardized Attitude Scale for Sex Education (2008) developed by Dr. (Smt.) Usha Mishra. The sample consisted of 100 secondary school students, who were selected from two schools in District Shimla: Government Senior Secondary School, Ghanahatti, and Government Senior Secondary School, Shoghi. This methodological approach facilitated a comprehensive examination of the students' attitudes toward sex education, allowing for meaningful analysis and interpretation of the results.

Results and Discussions

The distribution of sample according to the gender has presented in Table 1. Data shown in the Table 1 shows that 25 each of samples of male and female were undertaken for the study. Out of 100 samples, 50 (male & female) were taken from Government Senior Secondary School, Ganhatti and same number of samples from Government Senior Secondary School, Shoghi.

Our study was based on the evaluation of two parameters (i) Attitude of Rural Secondary School Students Towards Sex Education and (ii) Comparison of attitude of Male and Female Rural Secondary School Students towards Sex Education

(i) To Study the Attitude of Rural Secondary School Students Towards Sex Education

Table 2 summarizes the attitudes of pupils at a rural secondary school concerning sex education. The results

show that the students had a generally positive perception. Specifically, 22% of students have a very positive view about sex education, demonstrating substantial support for its value and relevance. The majority, 66%, have a positive attitude toward sex education, implying that they are somewhat less enthusiastic than those who have a very positive opinion. Meanwhile, 12% of students had a moderate attitude, indicating a neutral or less noticeable level of support.

(ii) To Compare the Attitude of Male and Female Rural Secondary School Students towards Sex Education

The Table 3 presents a comparison of attitudes towards sex education between male and female rural secondary school students. For male students, the mean score is 112.64 with a standard deviation of 12.543, while for female students; the mean score is 111.00 with a standard deviation of 8.9533. The mean difference (M.D.) between male and female students is 1.64, with a standard error of the mean of 0.75. The calculated t-value is 2.179, and the degrees of freedom (df) for this analysis is 98.

At a 0.01 significance level, the critical t-value is 1.66. Since the calculated t-value of 0.75 is less than the critical value, we accept the null hypothesis, indicating no statistically significant difference in attitudes towards sex education between male and female students.

Table 1: Description of Sample According to Gender

Rural Secondary Schools		Rural Students		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Government Senior Secondary School, Ganhatti	25	25	50
2	Government Senior Secondary School, Shoghi	25	25	50
	Total	50	50	100

Table 2: Percentage of Attitude of Students of Rural Secondary School towards Sex Education

Students Respondents	Very High Attitude	High Attitude	Moderate Attitude
All sample (100)	22%	66%	12%

Table 3: Mean, S.D. and t-value of Male and Female Students of Rural Secondary School Students towards Sex Education

Category	Number of Students	Mean	S.D.	M.D.	Standard Error of the Mean	t-value	NS
Male	50	112.64	12.543	1.64	2.179	0.75	NS
Female	50	111.00	8.9533				

Note: t -value at 0.01 significance level with df= 98 is 1.66

Findings of the Study

1. Study indicates that the general trends of attitude towards sex education among the students of rural secondary school students are mainly positive with high index value.
2. Male and female students of rural secondary school students do not differ significantly for attitude towards sex education with respect to their gender

Educational Implications

1. Rural secondary school students generally have a positive attitude towards sex education, indicating that comprehensive programs could be effective.
2. Attitudes are similar among male and female students, so sex education programs should be inclusive and sensitive to all genders.
3. Programs should cover a broad range of topics such as sexual health, relationships, consent, and emotional well-being to meet student needs and interests.
4. Teachers need professional development to handle sensitive topics with empathy and create a supportive learning environment.
5. Involving parents and the community can improve the effectiveness of sex education. Schools should offer workshops or informational sessions for parents.
6. Regular assessments should conduct to identify and address misconceptions or gaps in students' knowledge about sex education.
7. Schools should promote open and respectful communication about sex and sexuality to help students understand and develop healthy attitudes.

By focusing on these areas schools can enhance sex education programs and support students' overall well-being.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest with the present publication.

Authors' Contribution

Both authors contributed equally at all stages of research and manuscript preparation. Final form of manuscript was approved by both authors.

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