

Opinion of parents regarding the need to provide sex education to adolescents of Mehsana city

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The present study was conducted to find out parent's opinion regarding need for providing sex education to adolescents. The sample of the study comprised 120 parents of Mehsana city, whose children were 13 to 16 yrs. This study was carried out in the Mehsana city of Gujarat State. The sample selected was purposive in nature and selected randomly. The interview method was used as effective tool for collection of data. Mean score, Arithmetic mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis.

Key Words : Opinion, Sex education, Adolescent, Parents

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of human sexuality is a broad one, embracing all aspects of human being that affect their gender – specific and specifically sexually behaviour. Not only human being's anatomy and physiology, but their thoughts, feeling, attitude and behaviours, sexual maturation and reproduction, sexual identities, sexual drives and response cycle, relationship dynamics, sexual life styles, sexual health and disease and sexual dysfunction's. The scientific discipline of human sexuality is interdisciplinary in nature with roots in psychology,

biology, Medical Science, health education, and counseling. College students are sensitive about their need for adequate information and their newly achieved status as young adult (Caron and Bertran, 1988). Sex education does not mean permissiveness or promiscuity. It is a healthy guidance which helps your child in avoiding adverse consequences later in life. The main purpose of sex education is to help young people to understand what masculinity is to boys and men, femininity to girls and women and relationship to each other. They are a capacity to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behaviour in accordance with a social and personal ethics, freedom from fear, shame, guilt, false beliefs and other psychological factors inhibiting sexual response and impairing sexual relationship, to provide knowledge about sexuality transmitted disease.

Many adults are uncomfortable with adolescent (Gordon, 1981). They object to providing teenagers with explicit sexual information in school courses for moral reasons, for fear that these courses will teach values that differ from family systems and because they think that

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the schools are undermining parental authority. They also content that giving teenagers information about sexual behaviour and birth control only increases their curiosity and lead to earlier sexual activity. In fact, exposure to this kind of information may actually delay sexual experimentation (Zelnik and Kim, 1982). Most adults favor sexual education in schools and only a few prohibit their teenage children from taking these courses (Wattleton, 1987). Parents feel embarrassed and helpless when the children show interest in the sexual functions. Few adolescents feel that sex information in which they received from their parents was adequate. The first question on sex come as at 2 to 3 year, the Child's asks its first sexual question at an early stage and expects a literal, plan answer. By answering it plainly all awkwardness can be avoided. But parents dread direct answers. They look forward with error to the additional question, which so they imagine will immediately ensure. In reality this is not the case. One simple and accurate person satisfies the child. Parents should recognize that healthy development of children requires them to accept the sexual feelings, sexual behaviour and sexual curiosity of young children (Panthanki, 1997). Therefore the present paper attempts to study opinion of parents regarding the need for provide sex education to adolescent.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in the Mehsana city of Gujarat state, Mehsana. The total samples of present study was comprised of 120 parents (*i.e.* 120 mothers and 120 fathers = 240), whose children were 13 to 16 yrs old. The students vary in age 13 to 16 years were selected from 8th std and 10th std and 12th std's classes. From each class five girls and five boys are selected randomly. In the present study, the opinion of parents about sex education to adolescent was selected as a dependent variable. Measurement of opinion index of parents about sex education. To measure the opinion of parents a tool (questionnaire) was developed with the help of relevant literature and discussion with staff members of Smt. A S Chaudhary Mahila Arts and Home Science college and other experts in the field, scoring was done by giving weightage to each statement. The respondents were distributed on the basis of their opinion regarding three different categories of opinion level as low, medium and high. The interview schedule was used for collection of

data The data were collected by personal interview techniques for 120 father and 120 mother (total–240 parents) from Mehsana city. Simple comparisons were made on the basis of frequencies and percentages. Mean score, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

In the present paper results emerged out from the analysis of the data of the present investigation. The data have been organized and analyzed by taking into account the objectives of the study.

This section deals with the general investigation of the respondents like age, education, occupation, types of family, marriage age and respondents own sexual knowledge during adolescent.

Table 1 the group of parents were presented in Table 1 which indicates that mean age of father and mother were 42.9 years and 40.4 years, respectively. The social status of any family is depends upon the level of education in certain aspects. Table 1 shows that literacy percentage among father and mother were almost hearer to same. Majority of respondent's occupation were engaged in business (52.5%) and mother as house wives (78.3%) However, 35.8 per cent father and 18.4 per cent mother were either teacher. It is evident from Table 1 that about 56.7 per cent of the parents lived in joint family, followed by nuclear family (43.3%). The frequency distribution of age of parents during marriage indicates that 65.4 per cent parents got married during 16.20 years of age and 25.9 per cent mother and 31.7 per cent got married during 16.20 years of age.

It is apparent from the Table 2 that majority of father had average (38.3%) and good (35.0%) knowledge about sexuality, while mothers had either good (33.3%) knowledge or poor (35.0%). The frequency distribution about the status of knowledge pertaining to the subject indicated that 30.8 per cent parents had poor knowledge about sexuality nearly one third of the parents had average or good knowledge about sexuality. It could be concluded that majority of father had average knowledge while mother had poor knowledge about sexuality.

Table 3 the observations recorded through the questionnaires were revealed that almost one fourth parents were observed that they have some fear about to discussing the sexuality. May be due to poor knowledge

or might have some family tradition.

Data presented in Table 4 shows that majority of parents (39.6%) suggested that sex education should be provided to adolescent during 16 to 18 years of age. However, 44.2 per cent fathers gave their same opinion but 41.7 per cent mothers support the idea that more than 18 years of age was optimum for the same. About one fourth of the father and mother suggested that the sex education should be provided to teenagers before 16 years of age. It might be due to the marriage is solemnized

quiet early. It can be concluded that majority of mother (76.7%) and father (74.2%) gave the opinion of providing the sex education either during adolescent or adult.

It was observed that 75.0 per cent (Table 5) shows their interest of providing sex education to children and 25 per cent gave their opinion that it is not worthy while asking them about the way of providing sex education, the 51.7 per cent parents (Table 6) explained that, by providing the knowledge of anatomy and physiology of human body was the best way and 29.2 per cent preferred the way

Table 1: Background information of the respondents

Sr. No.	Variable	Father		Mother		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Age						
	Group-I (35 year)	11	9.1	35	29.2	46	19.2
	Group-II (36-45 year)	90	75	80	66.6	170	70.8
	Group-III (46 and above)	19	15.9	5	14.2	24	10
	Mean age in year	42.9	-	40.4	-	41.6	
2.	Education						
	School Primary level	69	57.5	80	66.7	149	62.1
	College V.G or Higher Education	51	42.5	40	33.3	91	37.9
3.	Occupation						
	Teacher	30	25	17	14.2	47	19.5
	Doctor	6	5	1	0.8	7	2.9
	Engineer	8	6.7	0	0	8	3.3
	Businessmen	63	52.5	3	2.5	66	27.5
	House wife	0	0	94	78.3	94	39.3
	Other service	13	10.8	5	4.2	18	7.5
4.	Types of family						
	Nuclear family	52	43.3	52	43.3	104	43.3
	Joint family	68	56.7	68	56.7	136	56.7
5.	Parents (Respondents) age at the time of marriage						
	Upto 15 year	4	3.3	10	8.3	14	5.8
	16 to 20 year	78	65	79	65.8	157	65.4
	Above 20 year	38	31.7	31	25.9	69	28.8

Table 2 : Knowledge of parents about sexuality

Sr. No.	Knowledge of parents	Number of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1.	Poor	32	26.7	42	35	74	30.8
2.	Average	46	38.3	38	31.7	84	35
3.	Good	42	35	40	33.3	82	34.2
	Total/over all	120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 3 : Difficulties of parents based on poor knowledge

Sr. No.	Effect of poor knowledge	Distribution of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	Shyness	20	16.8	23	19.2	43	17.9
2.	Confusion	38	31.6	40	33.4	78	32.5
3.	Fear	33	27.5	26	21.6	59	24.6
4.	Near face any problem	29	24.1	31	25.8	60	25
Total/over all:		120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 4 : Frequency distributions of parents advising age of children to provide sex education

Sr. No.	Age group	Number of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	Teenagers (upto 15 years)	31	25.8	28	23.3	59	24.6
2.	Adolescence (16- 18 year)	53	44.2	42	35	95	39.6
3.	Adult (>18 years)	36	30	50	41.7	86	35.8
Total/over all:		120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 5 : Opinion of parents regarding information providing to children on sex education

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	Yes	88	73.3	92	76.7	180	75
2.	No	32	26.7	28	23.3	60	25
Total/over all:		120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 6 : Frequency distribution of parents regarding way of sex education to children

Sr. No.	Methods of advising	Number of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	By open discussion	29	24.2	41	34.2	70	29.2
2.	By explaining anatomy and physiology	22	18.3	24	20	46	19.1
3.	Giving example of other adolescent	69	57.5	55	45.8	124	51.7
Total/over all:		120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 7 : Opinions of parents to introduction of sex education at school level

Sr. No.	Opinion of parents	Number of parents					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	Yes	71	59.2	76	63.4	147	61.3
2.	No	49	40.8	44	36.6	93	38.7
Total/over all:		120	100	120	100	240	100

Table 8 : Distributions of parents by their opinion index

Sr. No.	Category	Opinion Index					
		Father n=120		Mother n=120		Total n=240	
		Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%	Frequ.	%
1.	Low < 64.92	19	15.9	17	14.2	36	15
2.	Medium 64.92 to 78.56	79	65.7	82	68.4	161	67.1
3.	High \geq 78.56	22	18.4	21	17.4	43	17.9
	Total /over all	120	100	120	100	240	100

for providing sex education to adolescent by giving examples of same age of other adolescent.

Table 7 revealed that 61.3 per cent parents were in favour of sex education in the course – curricula of school going children, while 38.7 per cent were not agree. This shows that majority of parents were in favours of inclusion sex education in course. Hence, it can be concluded that sex education may be inclusive at school level to provide proper guidance to the adolescent which will be beneficial for the society as a whole.

The data presented in Table 8 reveals that 67 per cent of the parents had medium level of opinion, where as 17.8 per cent of the parents had high level of opinion, while only 15.0 per cent of the parents had low level of opinion about sex education to their adolescent.

Conclusion:

– Majority of parents acquired knowledge regarding sexuality between 15 to 20 years and had average and good knowledge.

– Majority of the parents 70.4 per cent were agreed with that the sex education should be included in school curriculum.

– Majority of parents (61.7%) gave their opinion that course curricula for boys and girls should be same, while 38/3 per cent of parents were not agreed.

– It can be concluded that the main objectives for providing sex education to adolescent was to increase the better understanding of love and life by removing misconception about sexuality.

– The result reveals that 67 per cent of the parents had medium opinions regarding need to provide sex education to adolescent 15 per cent parents had low and 17.9 per cent had high opinion to provide sex education.

– Thus, it could be concluded that majority of parents has good and better opinion regarding sex education.

– Education and family income were found to be positively and significantly related with parents opinion at 0.01 level of significance, where as, occupation of parents was found to be positively and significantly related with opinion of parents at 0.05 level of significance. It could be concluded that education family income and occupation were the important variables affecting the opinion of parents.

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