

PARENTAL ROLE IN IMPARTING SEX EDUCATION TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN NOIDA



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Abstract:

Sex education is information about sex beliefs and attitudes. Sex education helps us to understand the concepts of sexual identity, sexual relationship, intimacy and consequences of poor knowledge of sexuality. Parents are the first teachers to children; their primary duty is to socialize and maintain healthy communication. Adolescent is the crucial age and if proper guidance and knowledge are not provided it could lead to negative consequences. The present study focuses on the role of parents in providing sex education to adolescent girls in Noida. The objectives of the study are to understand the role of parents in providing sex education, to understand the importance of sex education among adolescent girls and to identify the consequences among adolescent in the lack of sex education. The data is collected using self made questionnaires for adolescent girls and parents (interviewed separately) with 60 sample size (30 adolescent girls and 30 parents) in Noida. The data collected is computed in excel sheet with tables and diagrams.

Keywords: *Adolescent girls, Adolescent problems, Importance of sex education, Parents, Sex education*

Sex education is information about sex beliefs and attitudes. Sex education helps us to understand the concepts of sexual identity, sexual relationship, intimacy as well as the consequences of poor knowledge of sexuality. The main objective of sex education is to aware children, adolescence and young people about their sexuality and sexual roles and responsibilities. In Indian society sex is considered as a very sensitive subject to discuss openly among family members or within society. The United Nations define adolescents as individuals being 10-19 years

old.¹ Adolescent is the crucial age and if proper guidance and knowledge are not provided it could lead to negative consequences. According to Adolescence Education Programme 2010 (NCERT) adolescence is popularly understood as a phase in the teenage years of the life of a human being. It is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood: its distinctiveness is reflected in rapid

¹ UNICEF (2011), "The State of the World's Children – Adolescence: An age of opportunity", New York. P. 16. Retrieved from: http://www.unicef.org/sowc2011/pdfs/SOWC-2011-Main-Report_EN_02092011.pdf



biological, cognitive and socio-emotional changes.

Role of parents in imparting sex education to adolescent girls: Parents are the first and primary source of knowledge to their children; their primary duty is to rear and socialize them. The main element of parent-adolescent relationship should be based on healthy communication. Parents, likely the most consistent influence in children's lives, are in a unique position to influence young people's health and personal development, and their transition to sexual life (World Health Organization, 2007). In India, notwithstanding the recognition in policies and programmes of the need to actively engage parents in enabling adolescents to make safe and healthy transitions to adulthood (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2006), evidence about parent-child interaction and communication, particularly with regard to sensitive matters such as the physical changes associated with puberty, sex, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections/ HIV is sparse².

Negative consequences of poor sex knowledge: Sex education is important for each and every adolescent without proper knowledge on sex education adolescent girls can witness a number of problems which could harm their self-confidence. There is ample number of researches which shows the consequences of poor sex knowledge. The negative consequences in the lack of sex education among adolescent girls are as follows:

- **Risk of teen pregnancy/ child pregnancy:** If the proper guidance is not provided to adolescent girls at the right time it may result into teen pregnancy. During adolescent stage physical attraction towards opposite

sex is normal and due to which they may develop unhealthy physical relationships. Their regular sexual activeness can lead to the negative impact of unwanted pregnancy and risk of HIV/ AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD).

- **Child abandonment:** Researches has shown that unwanted pregnancy during adolescent period and before marriage is one of the major causes of child abandonment. Out of the societal pressure and lack of parental support these adolescent girls abandoned their new born babies which may lead to baby death and if the child survives he/she has to go through severe trauma of being rejected from the biological mother. Getnet Tedele had conducted a study in 2000 in Ethopihia. In the study "Child Abandonment: Five dramatic cases of mothers in Addis Ababa (Ethopihia)"; in the study he described five case studies of the mothers who abandoned their new born babies which resulted to the death of infants. The study was based on the direct interviews with the mothers who were in prison. The result of the study shown that young people are more likely to get involved in premarital sex and other risky behavior which exposes the possibility of future child abandonment.
- **Poor health condition:** Adolescent girls can confront diseases such as Sexually Transmitted Disease and also the risk HIV/AIDS in the absence of knowledge on sex related doubts. Also teen pregnancy can negatively impact the health of the girl who gives birth at the young age and it would further affect the baby's health.
- **Poor academic performance:** In the lack of sex education an adolescent girl can suffer shame at school and college which would hamper her

² M. Svodziva, F.Kurete, L. Ndlovu (2016). Parental Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions towards Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health in Bulawayo. International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education Vol. 3 (4) PP 62-71



education and academic performance.

- **Emotional distress:** Due to lack of sex education an adolescent girl can indulge into unaccepted social behaviors and can face psychological and emotional effects like feeling of shame, shock, confusion, fear, guilt, grief, distrust, loneliness, anger, lack of confidence, attachment difficulties, poor peer relation, self-injurious behaviors (e.g. suicide attempts).
- **Social un-acceptance:** Adolescents who are sexually active and become pregnant they face rejection and are highly unaccepted by the society. Their parents and families also don't support them because of the societal pressure. In Indian society pre marital sex is not acceptable.
- **Economical issues:** Also the teen suffers economically due to lack of support from parents and society as a result they are not able to sustain.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are-

1. To understand the role of parents in providing sex education to their adolescent girls
2. To understand the importance of sex education among adolescent girls
3. To identify the consequences among adolescent girls in the lack of sex education.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research study is an attempt to examine the role of parents in providing sex education to their adolescent girls and to understand the importance of sex education for adolescence girls. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study.

The nature of the study is quantitative. The data is computed in excel sheet.

Purposive and snow ball sampling techniques were adopted to collect data. The total sample size is 60; out of which 30 adolescent girls and 30 parents both mother and father (parents as one unit) were interviewed. The sample universe is Noida. Adolescent girls were approached at their respective schools/ colleges in Noida to participate in the survey. Parents were interviewed at their residents in Noida to collect data.

The data is collected using structured interview schedule and interview method. The data is collected using two sets of questionnaires having closed ended questions. The questionnaires are-

- 1) Sex education survey for adolescent girls and,
- 2) Sex education survey for parents.

The topics which are covered on sex education in the questionnaire particularly focusing on- pre marital relationship, openness of adolescent girls with their parents, parental view on providing sex education to their adolescent girls, use of contraceptives in order to prevent teenage pregnancy and diseases and knowledge on consequences of poor sex knowledge.

III. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The present study is an attempt to understand the role of parents in providing sex education to their adolescent girls as well as to examine the views of adolescent girls on the same. The outcome of the study is categorized into two sections: findings from the parents of adolescent girls and findings from the adolescent girls.

Parents view towards imparting sex education to their adolescent girls:



40% parents who have adolescent girls from the age group of 13-15 years and 30% parents who have adolescent girls from the age group of 16-18 years participated actively in the survey.

All respondents (30) agree that their adolescent daughter share their problems regularly with them. They reported that their daughters do share issues related with their academics, friends and about their doubts on sex. All parents also agree that their daughters should share their sex related concerns with them. However 47% of parents reported that their daughters only share doubts related to physical changes with them. Their daughters do not discuss about their doubts on sex, sexual intimacy, sexual reproduction and contraceptives. They also reported that they have never initiated such talks with their adolescent daughters.

All parents do not agree with the idea of pre marital sex and they have never discussed with their daughters on this issue. However 30% parents reported that they have given the information on birth control/ contraceptives with their daughters when they asked so. 70% parents have never discussed or shared the information on birth control/ contraceptives with them. They believe that their daughters must be aware of it as they watch commercial advertisements in television but they have not spoken to their daughters openly on the matter.

70% of parents have never discussed about the risk of HIV/STD and pregnancy with their daughters. They reported that their daughters are attending schools/ colleges and they will learn about it from their teachers.

The majority 70% of parents reported that they have never discussed about abstinence (avoid sexual activities) with their daughters. Only 20% parents have shared the information with their adolescent daughters and rest 10% didn't answer.

Adolescent girls view on importance of sex education and their communication with their parents:

60% of adolescent girls are from the age group of 19 years and above and 20% from the age group of 16-18 years participated actively in the survey. Only 6.67% adolescent girls from the age group of 10-12 years and 13.33% from the age group of 13-15 years turned up for the interview. All respondents (30) are aware of sex. The majority 73.3% know about sex through their friends or through internet and only 16.7% know about sex through their parents. The source of getting information is not reliable and accurate.

The majority of adolescent girls 83.33% discuss their problems with their parents. 56.67% adolescent girls reported that the issues which they share with their parents are related to academics/ school and college.

60% of the adolescent girls agree that one should share sex related concerns with their parents and 40% were confused about sharing with the parents. However only 23.33% adolescent girls share their sex related concern with their parents. These girls reported that they are close to their mothers and never discuss about it with their fathers and brothers.

73.33% adolescent girls reported that they do not share their sex related issues and problems with their parents because they prefer to discuss with their friends/ siblings and they feel hesitated in sharing with their parents. The data shows the lack of communication between parents and adolescent girls over the issue.

Only 30% of the adolescent girls agree with the idea of pre-marital sex and 70% did not agree or denied to answer. Those who were agreed prefer use of condoms for safe sex and they learn about using condoms from their friends.



70% of adolescent girls have information about birth control/contraceptives. 50% of adolescent girls know the use of condoms/contraceptives as a means of reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and pregnancy and 50% of adolescent girls are not aware of it. The majority 56.67% of adolescent girls reported that their parents have never discussed about abstinence (avoid sexual activities) to avoid pregnancy and STD.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Sex education from parents and within the family environment is the need of the hour. The above mentioned data indicates that in spite of understanding the consequences of poor knowledge on sex related issues the majority of parents do not take initiative to talk to their adolescent girls. Similarly, in the case of adolescent girls, they prefer to talk to their friends and try to gather information from sources like books, movies and internet which are not dependable. This step may indulge them into risk. Adolescent girls also reported that they feel hesitated to discuss their concerns particularly related to sexual intimacy with their parents. They further shared that their parents are not open hence they have never shared such things with them. The healthy communication among parent-child is highly needed and should be initiated which is possible by creating a familiar environment at home. Parents should know the developmental changes during adolescent period. Educative programmes should be initiated by the government to teach parents about developmental issues and phases of their children. Parents should learn that discussion on sex will not lead their adolescent girls to involve in sexual activities. Parents who discuss about sex related doubts with their adolescence girls have suggested that all parents must discuss every issues including sex openly with their children, they should listen their problems and should earn the confidence of the child. They also suggested

sharing information with the boys as well. It was also found that parents consider that the major responsibility of providing sex education is of schools/ colleges and as a result they don't take initiative to talk to their adolescent girls. The results of the study indicating the role of the mother is paramount because mostly adolescent girls share these concerns with them and do not share such information with their fathers. Fathers should also initiate communication with their daughters on sex education. Sex education is not limited to discussion on physical changes and relationships which most of the parent-adolescent girls share with each others. Other issues like premarital sex, use of contraceptives/condoms, risk of HIV and STD etc should be discussed among them to help adolescence in building their self confidence and to remove their doubts related to their sexuality.

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