



A Comparative study on the attitude of Students, Teachers and Community members towards Sex Education at Secondary School level in Mizoram.

Dr. Donna Lalnunfeli¹, Prof.H.Malsawmi²

Assistant Professor¹, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, Aizawl.

Professor & Head², Dept. of Education, Mizoram University.

Abstract: The study was conducted to compare the attitude of secondary school students, teachers and community members towards sex education. Stratified random sampling method was adopted by selecting 400 secondary school students, teachers and community members respectively. Attitude Scale towards sex education developed and standardized by the researchers was used for collection of data. Analyses were done by testing the hypotheses to find out the significant difference in which it was found that there was no significant difference between the attitude of the students and community members. But significant difference was found between the attitude of students and teachers and teachers and community members.

Keywords: Sex education, Attitude, secondary school students, teachers, community

I. Introduction:

Sex is a universal phenomenon that is present in all organisms. In essence, the word 'Sex' means being male or female, differences in body structure between the two and a strong basic human drive with its emotion of love and tenderness. Sex education is instruction on issues relating to human sexuality, including human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual activity, reproductive health, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibilities, abstinence, and birth control. Sex education is also understood as all educational measures which, in any way, help young people prepare to meet the problems of life that have their centre in the sex instinct and incidentally come in some form into the sex of every normal human being.

SIECUS (2001) defined sex education as a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values. It encompasses sexual development, sexual and reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles.

II. Rationale of the study:

Sex education is a controversial issue in the Indian society where sex and its related topics are still taboo subjects. Indian society is very much backward to realize the importance of sex education. Since the majorities of the people reside in the rural area and are ignorant and illiterate, it is very difficult to teach and enlighten the public in this area. Mahajan & Sharma (2005) in their study also found that parents were

generally uncomfortable in talking to their children about human sexuality and mothers were reluctant to talk about sex education to their daughter as they found it embarrassing to discuss these issues.

The need of Sex Education in the educational process is unquestionable. Sex Education is the inculcation of the correct moral attitudes towards sex. It means all the educational measures, which prepare young people to meet the problems of life centers around the sex instinct. If the growing children are not taught to understand the problems of life related to sex education, they will pick up unwholesome information from the street corner, gutter and the polluted lips of vulgar language. Finally, this type of unhealthy sex knowledge will lead to erratic forms of social indiscipline. Therefore, the present study is taken up to find out the real attitude of secondary school students, teachers and community members towards the introduction of sex education at the secondary school level.

III. Objectives of the study:

1. To find out the attitude of secondary school students towards sex education in Mizoram.
2. To find out the attitude of secondary school ~~students~~ teachers towards sex education in Mizoram.
3. To find out the attitude of community members towards sex education in Mizoram.
4. To compare the attitude of secondary school students and teachers towards sex education.
5. To compare the attitude of secondary school students and community members towards sex education.
6. To compare the attitude of secondary school teachers and community members towards sex education.

IV. Hypotheses of the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students and teachers towards sex education.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students and community members towards sex education.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers and community members towards sex education.

V. Methodology and Procedure:

Method of the study:

For the present study, Descriptive Survey Method is employed by the researchers.

Population of the study:

Population of the study includes all secondary school students, teachers and community members having secondary school going children from the eight district of Mizoram.

Sample of the study:

The sample of the present study consists of 400 secondary school students (200 male and 200 female), 400 secondary school teachers (200 male and 200 female) and 400 community members (200 male and 200 female) having secondary school going children who were selected through Stratified Random Sampling.

Tools and techniques used for data collection:

Attitude Scale towards Sex Education developed and standardized by the researchers was used for collection of data.

Analysis of data:

The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as – mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics such as; test of significant difference between two groups Means (t-test).

VI. Result and Interpretation:

Objective No.1: To find out the attitude of secondary school students towards sex education in Mizoram.

Table - 1 shows the number and percentages of all student respondent's attitude towards sex education.

Table - 1
Attitude of all Students towards Sex Education

Students Respondents	Positive Attitude	%	Moderate Attitude	%	Negative Attitude	%
All Samples (N=400)	152	38.00%	90	22.50%	158	39.50%

Table - 1 reveals that among the 400 student respondents, 38% have positive attitude, 22.50% have moderate attitude and 39.50% have negative attitude towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram. The above table also indicates that majority of the student respondents have negative attitude towards sex education.

Discussion: The reason why more number of Mizo students' attitude towards sex education is negative seems to be due to the mind-set of the Mizo's from their forefathers. Sex and its related topics are considered taboo and this attitude seems to pass on to the next generations. The other reason could be that the students do not receive proper awareness from their parents as even the attitude of community (parents' attitude) is also negative towards sex education.

Objective No.2: To find out the attitude of secondary school teachers towards sex education in Mizoram.

The following table - 2 shows the number and percentages of all teacher respondent's attitude towards sex education under different categories.

Table - 2

Attitude of all Teachers towards Sex Education

Teacher respondents	Positive Attitude	%	Moderate Attitude	%	Negative Attitude	%
All Samples (N=400)	178	44.50%	127	31.75%	95	23.75%

A glance at the Table - 2 highlights that out of the 400 teachers, 44.50% have positive attitude towards sex education, 31.75% have moderate attitude and 23.75% have negative attitude towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram. This indicates that the general trend of attitude towards sex education among the teachers are all positive.

Objective No.3: To find out the attitude of community members towards sex education in Mizoram.

The following table - 3 shows the number and percentages of all Community respondent's attitude towards sex education.

Table - 3

Attitude of all Community respondents towards Sex Education

Community Respondents	Positive Attitude	%	Moderate Attitude	%	Negative Attitude	%
All Samples (N=400)	133	33.25%	85	21.25%	182	45.50%

As shown in Table - 3 the study reveals that out of the 400 community respondents in Mizoram, 33.25% have positive attitude, 21.25% have moderate attitude and 45.50% have negative attitude towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram. This illustrates that the majority of community members have negative attitude towards sex education at the secondary school level.

Discussion: An attitude, whether negative or positive, occurs because of some reasons. In the present study, the attitude of community (parents) respondents' towards sex education is negative. This could be because of the conservative attitude of the community members towards sex education. Many Mizo community members still consider that sex and its related topics is taboo subject and that discussing sexual matters in school will probably promote uncontrolled sexual practices and experimentation among adolescents. Therefore, this could be the reason why majority of parents do not feel it necessary to impart it in the schools.

Objective No.4: To compare the attitude of secondary school students and teachers towards sex education.

Hypothesis No.1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students and teachers towards sex education.

The following Table No – 4 shows the comparison in the attitude of students and teachers towards sex education.

Table - 4
Comparison of the attitude of Students and Teachers towards Sex Education

Category	Number	Mean	S.D	Mean Diff	Standard Error Diff	t-value
Students	400	100.2850	14.25418	3.09750	.89994	3.442**
Teachers	400	103.3825	10.98968			

** Significant at 0.01 level.

A perusal of the result vides Table No - 4 reveals that significant difference is found between the attitude of students and teachers towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram at 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, the hypothesis that assumes there is no significant difference in the attitude between students and teachers towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that the teachers have a more positive attitude towards sex education than the students.

Discussion: It is believed that teachers are well aware of the concept, need and importance of sex education as they are the ones who take responsibility in imparting sex education in the schools of Mizoram. Meanwhile, though students are curious about sex and its related issue, they do not want to appear curious out of bashfulness. Besides, it appears that students do not receive proper awareness from their parents as most parents felt uncomfortable to give sex education to their children. Some parents are ignorant about sex education; other parents think it is inappropriate to teach children about sex, while still others think it should be the parents' choice to inform their own child. Therefore, this could be the plausible explanation why teachers in the present study are found to possess a significantly higher attitude towards sex education as compared to the students.

Objective No.5: To compare the attitude of secondary school students and community members towards sex education.

Hypothesis No.2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school students and community members towards sex education.

The following Table No – 5 illustrates the comparison of the attitude of students and community towards sex education.

Table - 5

Comparison of the attitude of Students and Community towards Sex Education

Category	Number	Mean	S.D	Mean Diff	Standard Error Diff	t-value
Students	400	100.285	14.25418	1.7225	1.02528	1.680 _{ns}
Community	400	98.5625	14.74108			

Not significant.

Table No – 5 indicates that there is no significant difference in the attitude between students and community members towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram. Therefore, the null hypothesis which assumes there is no significant difference in the attitude towards sex education between the students and community at the secondary school level in Mizoram is accepted.

Discussion: In mizo society, sex and its related topics are still considered a taboo by many people and this attitude seems to pass on to the next generations. The reason why there is no significant difference between the attitude of students and community members could be to the mind-set of the Mizo's from their forefathers. The other reason could be that the students do not receive proper awareness from their parents as even the attitude of community (parents' attitude) is also negative towards sex education.

Objective No.6: To compare the attitude of secondary school teachers and community members towards sex education.

Hypothesis No.3: There is no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers and community members towards sex education.

Table No – 6 illustrates the comparison of the attitude of Teachers and Community towards Sex Education.

Table - 6

Comparison of the attitude of Teachers and Community towards Sex Education

Category	Number	Mean	S.D	Mean Diff	Standard Error Diff	t-value
Teachers	400	103.3825	10.98968	4.82	.91934	5.243**
Community	400	98.5625	14.74108			

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table No - 6 reveals that there is a significant difference between the attitude of teachers and community members towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram at 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, the hypothesis that assumes there is no significant difference in the attitude between teachers and community towards sex education at the secondary school level in Mizoram is rejected. Thus, it can be concluded that the teachers are more positive in their attitude towards sex education than the community members.

Discussion: Since it is mostly the teachers who takes responsibility in imparting sex education in Mizoram, teachers at the secondary schools are mostly well informed about the true characteristics of sex education and its importance for the adolescent students. They seem to know that sex education would prevent unwanted pregnancies, enhance healthy relationship between opposite sex, and prevent transmission of HIV infections and STDs. Most teachers recognize that it is essential to educate the students on the basic processes of human reproduction, therefore it is not without a reason that the present study also found that the attitude of teachers is more positive than the community members.

VII. CONCLUSION: Every nation, society and community has to work towards promoting the health of its people. When children acquire knowledge, desirable attitudes, values and life skills, they benefit in a variety of ways. These skills help children and adolescents to make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathise with others and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. In the present study, attitude of secondary school teachers is more positive than the students and community members towards sex education since teachers are mostly more well informed about the true characteristics of sex education and its importance for the adolescent students.

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