



Attitude of Higher Secondary School Teachers Towards the Implementation of Sex Education with reference to Gender and Locality

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<p>Received 20/06/2025</p> <p>Accepted 23/06/2025</p> <p>Published 09/07/2025</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>This study was conducted to compare the attitude of the higher secondary school teachers towards the implementation of sex education in schools in North 24 parganas district of West Bengal, India. Attitude Scale towards sex education developed and standardized by Usha Misra was used for collection of data. Analyses were done by testing the hypotheses. To study the significance difference between the various groups, t-test was applied. The result shows that there is no significance difference in the attitude of higher secondary school teachers towards the implementation of sex education in relation to their gender (i.e., male and female) and locality (i.e., rural and urban).</i></p> <p>Keywords: Attitude, Gender, Higher Secondary School Teachers, Locality, Sex Education</p>
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Introduction

Sex education is a crucial aspect of adolescent development, prompting healthy relationships and informed decision-making. Despite its importance, sex education remains a sensitive topic in many societies. The integration of sex education in school curriculum has been a topic of discussion globally, with proponents arguing that it promotes healthy relationships, reduces teenage pregnancies and prevents sexually transmitted infections (STIs). According to UNESCO (2019), effective sexual and reproductive health education adopts a comprehensive approach, a “curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality”. “Sex education, including its spiritual aspects, should be part of a broad health and moral education from kindergarten through grade twelve, ideally carried out harmoniously by parents and teachers” (Benjamin Spock).

We have a responsibility to protect children in this region. We know that they are entering puberty and adolescence earlier than before. And that the transition from childhood to adulthood

is getting longer. During this transition, girls and boys cannot be left alone to fend for themselves without the tools to make informed and safe choices.

Sex education empowers young people to make informed decisions about their bodies choices and futures. It promotes healthy relationships, consent and communication. Sex education fosters confidence and self awareness, enabling students to make choices that respect their boundaries and values. By providing students with accurate information and promoting healthy attitudes, sex education can empower them to make informed decisions and navigate relationships with confidence. Sex education can help students understand gender roles, social norms and the importance of equality and respect in relationships, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive society. “Since most sexual abuse begins well before puberty, preventive education, if it is to have any effect at all, should begin early in grade school”.

On the other side, the implementation of sex education in Indian schools at the higher secondary level has been shown to have numerous benefits. According to a study conducted by the Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME), sex education has been found to increase awareness about sexual health and reproductive rights, reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies, and improve the overall health and well-being of students (Srinivasan, 2020). Additionally, the inclusion of sex education in the curriculum has been shown to promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence. It also helps to break taboos and stigma surrounding discussions about sex, and empowers young people to make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health (Srinivasan, 2020).

Teachers play a crucial role in implementing sex education programs and their attitudes towards this subject can significantly impact its effectiveness. This topic explores the attitudes of teachers towards the implementation of sex education in schools, highlighting the challenges, benefits and strategies for successful integration. Teachers’ attitude towards sex education can either facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of the program. Teachers need to be confident and comfortable with the material to teach sex education effectively.

Review of Literature

Qasim (2013) revealed that there is significant difference in attitude of senior secondary school teachers of rural and urban areas towards sex education in favour of urban teachers. The study also revealed there is no difference in the attitude of senior secondary school teachers of government and private schools towards sex education.

Lalnunfeli (2019) found the largest percentage of teachers had positive attitude towards sex education. It also reveals that there is significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers towards sex education with reference to their gender. It also reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitude between rural and urban teachers towards sex education at the secondary level in Mizoram.

Fentahun and Alemseged (2012) found out that the majority of the students were Orthodox in religion and Amhara in ethnicity. Majority of the teachers were Orthodox in religion and Amhara in ethnicity. The teachers appeared to have a positive attitude towards the importance of school sex education. The parents concluded that the importance of school sex education is “unquestionable idea”. The students and teachers have positive attitude towards the content of the school sex education.

Iyekalo (2020) showed that there was no significant difference in respondents' views about the attitudes of secondary school teachers towards sex education based on gender and school type except on the bases of age. Also, the teachers should teach certain aspects of sexuality at schools that the students will be familiar with societal expectations of their future roles as Husband and wife.

Zhuravleva and Helmer (2022) revealed that all ten participants concluded that sex education is significant for all children as they mature and change. None of the participants in the study were of the view that sex education would increase children's interest in sexual intercourse and motivate them to initiate early sexual debut. The majority of the participants agreed that a sex education teacher does not necessarily need to be qualified teacher but, could be a psychologist.

Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the attitude of higher secondary school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school with reference to gender.
2. To compare the attitude of higher secondary school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school with reference to locality.

Methodology of the Study

Research Method

Descriptive survey method was used to describe the characteristics, behaviors or conditions of a group or phenomenon at a specific point in time. It uses surveys, questionnaires or interviews to collect data without manipulating any variables. The goal is to provide a detailed and accurate portrayal of what exists or occurs, often answering questions like "What is happening?" or "What are the characteristics of this group?"

Variables

There are many ways of classifying variables but in educational research the most common method of classification are as follows:

Independent variable

In this research work the independent variable is 'teachers' attitude'.

Dependent variable

In this research work the dependent variable is 'implementation of sex education'.

Population and sample

In this study, higher secondary school teachers of North 24 Parganas is the population.

A sample of 45 higher secondary school teachers were selected for the study. The sampling technique involves selecting ten higher secondary schools of rural areas and ten higher secondary schools of urban areas within the district.

Sampling allows researchers to gather data from a smaller, more manageable group. A sample is a selected group of individuals from the population, chosen to represent. Here's the sampling has been done randomly from the rural and urban areas of North 24 Parganas.

The researcher adopted stratified random probability sampling for the purpose of the present study. The population higher secondary school teachers are divided into subgroups based on gender and locality of the teachers.

Then, a random sample is drawn from each subgroup, ensuring the sample accurately

reflects the proportions of these groups in the larger population.

Tools and techniques for data collection

The researcher has chosen a structured questionnaire as a primary tool for data collection. The questionnaire designed to find the attitude of higher secondary school teachers towards implementation of sex education. The Attitude Scale towards Sex Education (ASTSE) developed by Usha Mishra is used.

The item analysis was conducted using the t-test method.

The responses of the students are reported in the form of five-point Likert scale, which are 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree, 3) Disagree, 4) Strongly disagree, 5) Not decided.

Using established tools will ensure that the research is based on instruments that have already been tested for validity and reliability. It further provides a standardized way of collecting data by reducing the potential for bias and increasing the objectivity of the research. Technique: The questionnaire is administered to the students in their respective schools. The researcher will ensure that the teachers understand the purpose of the study and the instructions for completing the questionnaire.

Result and Discussion

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female H.S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school

Table 1: Difference in the attitude of male and female H. S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school

Male H. S. School Teachers			Female H. S. School Teachers			MD	df	SE _D	t-value	Significance
n ₁	Mean	SD	n ₂	Mean	SD					
16	118.50	12.06	29	122.59	9.42	4.09	43	3.24	1.26*	Not Sig. at 0.05 level

*t-criterion value at 0.01 level is 2.02 for df43.

Interpretation: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female H. S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school as the t-value of 1.26 is less than the t-criterion value of 2.02 at 0.05 levels for df43. Hence the null hypothesis **Ho1** is accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban H.S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school

Table 2: Difference in the attitude of rural and urban H. S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school

Rural H. S. School Teachers			Urban H. S. School Teachers			MD	df	SE _D	t-value	Significance
n ₁	Mean	SD	n ₂	Mean	SD					
17	123.29	13.45	28	119.82	8.20	3.47	43	3.22	1.08*	Not Sig. at 0.05 level

*t-criterion value at 0.05 level is 2.02 for df43.

Interpretation: There is no significant difference in the attitude of rural and urban H. S. school teachers towards implementation of sex education in school as the t-value of 1.08 is less than the t-criterion value of 2.02 at 0.05 levels for df 43. Hence the null hypothesis H_0 is accepted.

Conclusion

India's approach to sex education in schools is guided by various factors, including cultural and social norms. Some of the states in India have implemented comprehensive sexuality education programs, where others have resisted or watered down these initiatives. Some High courts, such as the Madras, Delhi and Meghalaya High Courts have highlighted the need to reconsider the age of consent and implement comprehensive sex education. UNESCO highlights the need for capacity-building of teachers and involving parents and caregivers in sex education, regarding their health and well-being.

To find the answer to the question related to the implementation of sex education; we must say that it is the year 2025 and sex education is still not mandatorily as part of the school curriculum in India specially in several state, whereas prostitution is legal in India after the verdict of the honourable supreme court of India (Rajagopal, 2022), but sex education is still not fully implemented by the government or judiciary in schools. On the other side, the implementation of sex education in Indian schools at the higher secondary level has been shown to have numerous benefits. Additionally, the inclusion of sex education in the curriculum has been shown to promote gender equality and combat gender-based violence. The gender and Social sexualisation of children are significantly shaped by the attitudes and support of parents, teachers and other stakeholders. As we all know that, school is the second home for the children and students are quite a bit friendlier with the teachers in school. So these individuals, specially teachers, play a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of Sex Education programs. In our country, sex education is still not discussed very openly. There's lot of taboos, social prejudices exist everywhere. The sooner this will come as a curriculum in our education system it will be much more impactful for our students. The number of research in this content is very less compare to other countries. So, this research will have a significant impact on whole education system.

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