

CHAPTER: 02

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS, REGARDING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION IN SURAT CITY

¹Yogita Murde

¹Student, IIHMR University

²Dr. Gautam Sadhu

²Professor, IIHMR University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52458/9788196919580.2024.eb.ch-02>

Ch.Id:- IIHMR/GRF/EB/AHMHM/2024/Ch-02

INTRODUCTION

Approximately 21% of India's population falls within the 13-24 age group, with a concerning rise in early sexual initiation attributed to influential media and internet exposure. It is imperative to empower young people with accurate information and skills to make informed decisions. However, effectively conveying preventive messages to adolescents in India faces challenges such as cultural taboos, limited access to correct information, gender disparities, and practices like early marriage.

Adolescence is characterized by significant physical changes such as puberty, which involves the development of secondary sexual characteristics. These changes affect body image, self-esteem, and how adolescents perceive themselves in relation to societal standards. Establishing supportive environments within families, schools, and communities is vital for the proper development of young individuals. Healthcare for adolescents should address general health, reproductive disorders, and sexual and behavioral concerns.

The International Conference on Population and Development convened in Cairo in 1994, where it was determined that reproductive health programs should be thoughtfully designed to cater to the needs of both women and adolescents [1]. This marked a pivotal shift towards recognizing the importance of addressing the reproductive health concerns of young people. According to survey findings in 2002 focusing on "unmarried young Indians," there was a discernible rise in the inclination towards premarital sex among adolescents. Notably, approximately half of those aged 16-19 and 27% below the age of 15 reported engaging in premarital sexual activities [2]. In assessing the impact of sex education on the sexual behavior of young individuals, survey results underscore its positive effects. The findings indicate that sex education plays a crucial role in delaying the initiation of sexual activity among youngsters. Furthermore, for those who are already sexually active, it contributes

to the promotion of safe practices and increases awareness about various contraceptive methods to prevent unintended pregnancies [3]. These outcomes highlight the significance of comprehensive sex education in not only postponing sexual initiation but also in fostering responsible and informed sexual behavior among the youth.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What was the level of knowledge and attitude among adolescents in Surat city, Gujarat, regarding Family Life Education in schools?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the understanding of family life education among adolescents.
2. To gauge the perspectives of adolescents concerning family education within school settings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design in Surat, Gujarat, targeting ninth-grade adolescents in local schools. The study utilized multi-stage sampling, involving school identification, categorization by location, selection of schools with the highest ninth-grade population in each major direction, and the inclusion of all ninth-grade students from these schools. A total of 397 students from CBSE schools participated in the study. The data collection involved a school survey, employing a questionnaire schedule with 80 statements on adolescent knowledge and attitude drawn from existing Family Life Education (FLE) modules and other studies. Ninth-grade students were provided with instructions, and both adolescent and teacher questionnaire schedules were distributed, with collected schedules ensuring data completeness. SPSS software was employed for data analysis, encompassing entry, response coding, and cleaning, with the establishment and evaluation of new variables for knowledge and

attitude. Ethical considerations included obtaining written permissions from the District Education Officer and participants to ensure confidentiality. A pilot study involving 20 ninth-grade students contributed to refining the questionnaire based on feedback from students, teachers, and school principals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the surveyed group, 75% were male and 25% were female. Male adolescents have better knowledge of physical changes in boys, especially those with highly educated fathers, Gujarati speakers, and those with homemakers as mothers. Conversely, adolescents with highly educated parents are more knowledgeable about physical changes in girls. Male students, particularly those who speak English and have highly educated parents, surpass females in knowledge about sex, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STI symptoms. A significant percentage of both genders have high knowledge of sexual abuse, especially among English speakers and those with highly educated mothers. Regarding masturbation, 80% of males and 48% of females have high knowledge. Adolescents with highly educated parents are informed about menstruation, while females with highly educated mothers are knowledgeable about pregnancy. Conversely, knowledge is low among adolescents with illiterate or primary-educated mothers. Male adolescents aged 14-15, with highly educated parents, have a more favourable attitude towards learning about sex and sexuality. However, they show less favourable attitudes towards stigma related to HIV/AIDS and STI. Females display less inadequacy in knowledge about various topics, especially those with highly educated parents. A higher percentage of females (76%) and males (46%) have a more favourable attitude towards abstinence. Mothers with higher education levels influence a positive attitude towards abstinence. In the 14-15 age group, 44% of males and 31% of females have a favourable attitude towards learning about sex and sexuality. Overall, males show a more favourable attitude towards learning, peer pressure, and stigma

associated with HIV/AIDS and STI. Females demonstrate less favorable attitudes towards myths and misconceptions. Hindi and English-speaking adolescents, as well as those with middle and secondary educated mothers, also exhibit less favourable attitudes towards stereotypes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research aimed to assess the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents in Surat city, Gujarat, regarding Family Life Education (FLE) in schools. The study revealed noteworthy findings that shed light on the varied levels of awareness and perceptions among adolescents, particularly concerning topics such as physical changes, sex education, HIV/AIDS, and attitudes towards abstinence. The demographic breakdown highlighted gender disparities, with 75% male and 25% female respondents. Male adolescents exhibited better knowledge of certain aspects, such as physical changes in boys, while female adolescents demonstrated less inadequacy in knowledge about various topics, particularly those with highly educated parents. Positive effects were noted, with sex education contributing to responsible and informed sexual behaviour among the youth. However, challenges remain, including cultural taboos, limited access to correct information, and gender disparities, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

REFERENCES

1. Roseman, M. J., & Reichenbach, L. (2010). *International Conference on Population and Development at 15 years: achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights for all? American journal of public health*, 100(3), 403-406.
2. Eastin, Matthew S., Daugherty, Terry and Burns, Neal M. (2011). *Book of Research on Digital Media and Advertising* Page No 404. \
3. Kirby, D. B., Laris, B. A., & Roller, L. A. (2007). *Sex and HIV education programs: their impact on sexual behaviours of young people throughout the world. Journal of adolescent Health*, 40(3), 206-217.