

Attitude of Teachers towards Adolescence Education

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence education in secondary stage has been received an increased attention and scholarly debates since students experience a high volume of biological and mental siftment at this stage. Teachers are the most important guides to cope them with their changes; thus, a positive attitude of teacher is an essential. With an elicit cross examining process in connection to teachers' gender, localization, faculty and qualification was considered for practice on the institutionalisation of Adolescence Education in secondary schools at Orissa, India. A total number of 300 secondary school teachers were chosen as subjects of the study by using stratified random sampling procedure. The results of the study determined that male teachers have positive attitude towards Adolescence Education as compared to their science counterparts, whereas male teachers have favourable attitude toward the subject and urban teachers demonstrate their superiority over their rural teachers in their attitude.

Keywords: Adolescence Education, secondary school teachers, attitude

INTRODUCTION

There are around 1 billion adolescents in the world belonging to age group 10-19 years of which 85 percent live in developing countries. India has a large adolescent population of over 190 million, who desperately need some sort of counselling to handle age-related problems and issues (Jena & Brahma, 2002). Because of the expansion of the educational

opportunities, the number of boys and girls getting education is significantly increasing. It has contributed to the rise in the average age of marriage. On the other hand, because of improvements in nutrition and health care, the age of the onset of puberty is advancing as a consequence of which, young people now have a longer interval between the onset of sexual maturity and marriage, increasing the possibility of their engagement in premarital sexual relations. Lack of knowledge, skills and access to contraception, as well as vulnerability to sexual abuse has put adolescents at a high risk of unwanted

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pregnancy. In this context, the need for educational intervention at the school stage is strongly felt. The aim is to provide scientific knowledge to adolescents about various aspects of the process of growing up with particular reference to the reproductive health needs and thus enable them to cope with different problems. In this context, three major interrelated areas; namely, the process of Growing Up, STD, HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse have been identified to constitute the core components of Adolescence Education. Thus, Adolescence Education may be understood as education to provide learners opportunities to have access to authentic information and knowledge about the process of growing up, as well as about HIV/AIDS and drug abuse (Paul, 2008). Its aim is to inculcate in them rational and responsible attitude towards sex and sexuality including HIV/AIDS and vulnerability through drug abuse (Pettifor *et al.*, 2007).

The teachers are the main instruments of change. In fact, they are the most important determinants of success of any educational programme. In a large educational system such as ours, we cannot simply overlook the role of teacher in an area like Adolescence Education. The teacher can play his/her role both in curricular and co-curricular activities. For example, while conducting various co-curricular activities like question-box activities, group discussions, role plays, debates, essay and quiz competitions, components of Adolescence Education can be transmitted (Orji *et al.*, 2003). The experience and expertise of the teacher can be utilised very well in organising ancillary

activities relating to Adolescence Education. Similarly, the teacher can be equally effective in counselling the adolescents, not only for their good communication skills but also for the acceptability of their suggestions. However, for the above things, the teacher must possess positive attitude towards Adolescence Education. Here, the researchers have made an attempt to learn or identify the attitude of teachers towards Adolescence Education in relation to their gender (men, women), faculty (science and arts), area (urban and rural), and qualification (graduation and post-graduation), as well as a cross examination of the above variables.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were asked for the study:

1. Is there any difference of men and women teachers in their attitudes towards Adolescence Education?
2. Is there any difference of rural and urban teachers in their attitudes towards Adolescence Education?
3. Is there any difference of science and arts teachers in their attitudes towards Adolescence Education?
4. Is there any variation in the attitude of teachers towards Adolescence Education attributable to their qualification?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramachandran (1974) conducted a study on knowledge and attitude of teachers towards population education, and it was revealed that sex education in the context

of population education is necessary to eliminate some misconceptions about reproduction. Rao (1976), in his study on the awareness of teachers on population problems and their reaction to the introduction of population education in schools, reported that the teachers favoured the teaching of sex education in schools. Meanwhile, Salkar (1974) carried out a study of the population awareness of teachers with a view to incorporating inclusion of population education in schools curriculum. The study revealed that teachers were in favour of providing sex education in school curriculum as a part of population education.

SCERT, Bihar (1996) conducted a study to assess the needs of adolescents, and it indicated that male teachers showed more positive attitudes as compared to female teachers. However, this study pointed out the need for increased interaction of students with teachers' parents or elders. Maheswari (1972), in his study of receptiveness of school teachers to population education, revealed that 83 per cent of the teachers agreed that anatomy and physiology of human reproduction should form parts of population education. However, they were against introducing sex education in schools. Gupte (1974) conducted a study on the attitude of teachers towards introducing sex education in schools, and it revealed that majority of the teachers opined in favour of the issue and wanted it to be taught by Biology teachers, while some teachers preferred doctors to teach them the subject. The study by Rao (1974) reported

that teachers favoured the introduction of Adolescence Education in schools. Moreover, the teachers indicated their preference of a scientific approach for the teaching of sex education and felt it to be very crucial for the development of balanced personality of the students. Rao (1976) conducted a similar study on attitude of teachers towards sex education. The findings of the study suggested that 90 percent of the teachers favoured the teaching of sex education in schools, and thus, corroborating the findings of Gupte (1974) and Rao (1974). The researchers suggested the teaching of anatomy and human reproduction, health hygiene and did not favour the teaching of contraception at school stage. Sex education, as reported by the teachers, is to be integrated with existing subject like biology.

SISE Punjab (1994) conducted a study of the attitudes of teachers towards introducing Adolescence Education. Majority of the teachers, particularly male teachers, showed a favourable attitude towards the introduction of Adolescence Education. The maximum number of teachers favoured the inclusion of contents related to AIDS, STDs, physical and physiological changes and sex roles on priority basis. The study recommended identifying the training needs of teachers and development of curriculum in adolescent education by Punjab school Education Board. Population Cell, Andhra Pradesh (1995), conducted an investigation into the introduction of Adolescence Education in school curriculum, where majority of the teachers favoured the

introduction of sex education as a part of the curriculum.

National Population Education Project (NCERT, 2001) conducted a study on sex education, which revealed that a majority of the teachers favoured the introduction of sex education in the lower classes or at the university stage. Some teachers opined that sex education should be taught in schools as a part of the population Education Programme. The teacher also felt that it could be effectively taught by them or by an expert or a doctor. In another study by NCERT (1996), it was found that Science teachers were more favourable towards Adolescence Education.

When studies by Gupte (1974), Rao(1) (1974), SISE, Punjab (1994), P.R.C. University, Kerala (1994), National Population Education Project, NCERT (1996) reported that teachers display positive attitudes towards Adolescence Education. However, studies by Maheswari (1972), and Dayal (1973) do not subscribe to such finding. Hence, teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education needs to be examined in relation to their gender, area, faculty and qualification, so as to understand the extent to which teachers' factor inhibits the introduction of Adolescence Education in schools. Taking in to consideration the above literature review, the researcher selected the methodology to be used and testified it and the findings according to his own study.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Adolescents live in developing countries accounts from more than one fifth of the

world population. India is considered as one of the largest country in terms of population and place, with 225 million adolescents, which is around 21.4% (or one-third) of the country's total population. Female adolescents comprise almost 47 per cent of the total population. The sex ratio in the 10–19 years is 882 females for 1000 males, lower than the overall sex ratio of 933, who desperately need some sort of counselling to handle age-related problems and issues (Jena & Brahma, 2002). Meanwhile, secondary education involved children aged 14-18 years, which included 88.5 million children according to the Census, 2001. However, enrolment figures showed that only 31 million of these children were attending schools in 2001-02, indicating that two-third of the population remained out of school. The ratio is 59% for males and 49% for females. In Orissa, the total number of adolescents in secondary schools are 3,33,027, out of the total population of 3,67,06,920. Due to the expansion of the educational opportunities, the number of boys and girls getting education is significantly increasing. It has contributed to the rise in the average age of marriage. On the other hand, because of the improvements in nutrition and health care, the age of the onset of puberty is advancing, and as a consequence of which young people now have a longer interval between the onset of sexual maturity and marriage, increasing the possibility of their engagement in premarital sexual relations. Lack of knowledge, skills, and access to contraception and vulnerability to sexual abuse put the adolescents at high a risk of unwanted pregnancy. World Health

Organisation (WHO) recognised that in the traditional society, many young people have greater risks of pregnancy-related disease and mortality. Young people face pressures towards premarital sexual activity at an early age and face the risk of unwanted pregnancies, hazards of abortion, sexually transmitted diseases and so on (UNAIDS, 2008). Many developing countries face these new realities by launching programmes for the youth with encouraging results. So far as India is concerned, nothing substantial seems to have been attempted to deal with the situation.

METHOD

Design

Descriptive survey method was used in the present study to collect information from a cross section of teachers. Thus, the study comprised dependent variable such as teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education and independent attribute variables such as teachers' subject (science, arts), gender, area and age. An attempt was also made to examine the functional relationship among these independent and dependent variables.

Participants

The study was based on 300 secondary school teachers from all four regions of the state of Orissa (India), who had been selected by using the stratified random sampling procedure, where each revenue division of the State was considered as a stratum. Out of the number, 160 were men teachers and 140 were women teachers.

Materials

A three-point attitude scale on Adolescence Education, developed by Pandey *et al.* (NCERT) (2002) to measure attitude towards Adolescence Education, was administered on secondary school teachers. The scale contained 34 statements relating to different components of Adolescence Education, out of which 13 are positive statements and 21 are negative.

Data Collection and Interpretation techniques

The investigator met the Headmasters of the schools and explained them the importance of the study, particularly the importance of the data required for the study to be extended by the teachers. With the permission of the Headmasters, the awareness test and the attitude scale were administered on the selected teachers during their leisure periods. An appointment was fixed to administer the awareness test on students in consultation with the Headmasters. After collecting data in a phased manner, the researcher analyzed them through different statistical techniques. Three way ANOVA was also employed to examine the teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education in relation to their gender, area and faculty.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education in relation to gender, area and faculty

Three-way ANOVA was applied to examine the independent effects of gender, area and faculty and their interaction effects on the

teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education. The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 1.

The results reveal that the main effects of gender [F (1,292) = 81.907, $P < .01$], area [F (1, 292) = 25.671 $P > .01$] and faculty [F (1, 292) = 17.866 $P < .01$] are significant. However, the interaction effect (Gender x Area) [F, (1, 292) = 3.506 $P > .01$] was not found to be insignificant. Nonetheless, the interaction effect (Area x Faculty) [F, (1, 292) = 9.036 $P < .01$] and (Area x faculty) [F,(1,292)=4.476 $P < .01$] were found to be significant. In case of the combined effect (Gender x Area x Faculty) [P (1,292) = 17.944, $P < .01$], it was also found to be significant.

The results show that (i) Arts teachers have favourable attitude towards Adolescence Education compared to their Science counterparts; (ii) Male teachers have favourable attitude towards the subject compared to female teachers; (iii) Urban teachers demonstrate their superiority over rural teachers in their attitude towards Adolescence Education, and (iv) Arts female teachers have better attitude as compared to Science female teachers. Nonetheless, there is no marked difference between the Science and Arts male teachers.

Teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education in relation to gender, area and qualification

Three-way ANOVA was employed to examine the independent effect of gender, area and qualification, and their interaction effects on the attitude scores of teachers

towards Adolescence Education. The results of ANOVA are presented in Table 2.

The results reveal that when the main effects of gender [F (1,292) = 36.831, $P < .01$] and area [F (1, 292) = 13.567 $P > .01$] are significant, the independent effect of qualification [F (1, 292) = .029, $P > .01$] is not significant. In the case of interaction effects of (Gender x Area) [F, (1, 292) = 9.262 $P < .01$] and the combined effect (Gender x Area x Qualification) [F,(1,292) = 6.253 $P < .01$], however, they are found significant, whereas the interaction effects of (Gender x qualification) [F (1, 292) = .168 $P > .01$], (Area x qualification) [F (1,292) = .433 $P > .01$] are not significant.

The results imply that male teachers possess a positive attitude towards Adolescence Education compared to their female counterparts. Nevertheless, there is no marked difference in the attitude of graduate teachers and post graduate teachers. Meanwhile, the urban teachers display superior attitude towards Adolescence Education compared to their rural counterparts. There is a marked difference in the attitude of rural men teachers compared to rural women teachers. Urban male teachers possess better attitude towards Adolescence Education as compared to their female counterparts. However, such a marked difference is not evident in the rural and urban female teachers. In particular, rural female teachers possess slightly better attitude compared to urban female teachers. Furthermore, there is a marked difference in the attitude of urban and rural male teachers. The gender gap in the case of rural

teachers' attitude is not as prominent as the gender gap in the urban teachers' attitude. Although qualification, as an independent variable, does not contribute to the attitude of teachers' towards Adolescence Education, it does contribute significantly when combined with gender and area. In case of the rural area, graduate male teachers excel their post-graduate counterparts, and in the case of urban area, male teachers with post-graduate qualification excel their graduate counterparts.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education in relation to gender, area and faculty

While examining the attitude of teachers on Adolescence Education, it was found that Art teachers possess better attitude as compared to their Science teacher counterparts. This piece of finding although contradicts the study reported by Quan (2002) and SCERT, Bihar (1996), the better attitudinal disposition of Arts teachers

TABLE 1

A Summary of ANOVA showing effects of gender, area and faculty on teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Gender	925.901	1	925.901	81.907	**
Area	290.194	1	290.194	25.671	**
Faculty	201.962	1	201.962	17.866	**
Gender x Area	39.634	1	39.634	3.506	B
Gender x Faculty	102.149		102.149	9.036	**
Area x Faculty	50.600	1	50.600	4.476	*
Gender x Area x Faculty	202.840	1	202.840	17.944	**
Within	3300.836	292	11.304	B	

(*: $P < 0.05$; **: $P < .01$)

TABLE 2

A summary of ANOVA showing the effects of gender, area and qualification on teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Gender	471.901	1	471.901	36.831	**
Area	173.829	1	173.829	13.567	**
Qualification	.375	1	.375	.024	C
Gender x Area	118.674	1	118.674	9.263	**
Gender x Qualification	2.157	1	2.157	.168	C
Area x Qualification	5.554	1	5.554	.433	C
Gender x Area x Qualification	80.121	1	80.121	6.253	*
Within	3741.286	292	12.813		

(* : $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$)

may be attributed to their greater level of awareness towards Adolescence Education.

Similarly, it was found that male teachers have positive attitude towards Adolescence Education as compared to female teachers. This finding is in line with the study reported by SISE Punjab (1994). The conservative background might have been inherent in the psyche of the female teachers to come up with better attitude.

While examining the area variation in teachers' awareness, it was found that urban teachers have better attitude towards Adolescence Education compared to their rural counterparts. In particular, Science male teachers showed better attitude in comparison to their Arts counterparts. Urban teachers were found to be better in terms of their attitude than their rural counterparts irrespective of their faculty (UNESCO, 2009). Hence, the female Science teachers' attitudinal disposition may be a cause of concern on the part of the educational planners to introduce Adolescence Education in school stage. With their background in Science, however, they can easily pick up the components of Adolescence Education with a bit of orientation and once they are oriented properly, they may change their attitude.

Teachers' attitude towards Adolescence Education in relation to gender, area and qualification

The results showing the attitudinal superiority of male teachers and urban teachers may be considered as a confirmation of the findings obtained earlier. Similarly, higher

qualification not contributing to teachers' attitude might have a close correspondence with the teachers' low level of knowledge of Adolescence Education (SCERT, Bihar, 1996). The gender gap in attitudinal disposition in the urban areas reiterates the poor plight of urban female teachers, which is not usable to be taken into consideration (Sabia, 2006). The better attitude of the male teachers might be considered as a pointer to transform the female teachers, whereby taking into consideration a marginal rise in the attitudinal status of rural women counterparts is rather unusual. This may be attributed to the variation in the lifestyles in the rural and urban areas. In the urban areas, women display casual attitude towards different problems of adolescents but in the rural areas, women normally employ a rather careful and cautious approach (Parmar *et al.*, 2009).

From the above discussion, it is concluded that Arts teachers have favourable attitude towards Adolescence Education as compared to their Science counterparts, whereas male teachers have favourable attitude towards the subject. Meanwhile, urban teachers demonstrate their superiority over the rural teachers in term of their attitude towards Adolescence Education.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Since the study sought to focus on teachers' attitude, an attempt was made to draw educational implications as teachers in general, and female teachers in particular, to be made conversant with the changes that occur in boys and girls during adolescence,

as well as the facts associated with the process of growing up, HIV/AIDS & drug abuse. Adolescents should have thorough knowledge on the process of growing up such as development of secondary sex characteristics due to hormonal changes, male and female body clocks, conception, menstruation, nocturnal emission, sexual health, psycho emotional changes (interest in body image, heterosexual attraction, self identity, etc.), and socio-cultural norms (abstinence, pre- and extra-marital relations etc.). They should also have proper knowledge of AIDS/STDs and their effects on human body and health, as well as ways and means to prevent them. Along with all these things, teachers should also be acquainted with the knowledge of drug abuse like the meaning and type of drug abuse, symptoms, consequences, ways of prevention, medical treatment, social problems of drug abuse, myths, misconceptions and says 'NO' to drugs.

Moreover, one of the striking features of Adolescence Education is its focus on the objectives relating to attitude and behaviour. Its immediate objectives are to inculcate positive attitude and develop rational behaviour among learners in respect of their most intimate aspects of life, i.e. sexual development in them. Schools and obviously teachers in schools are key factors with the potential to contribute substantially to the attainment of these objectives.

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