



IS THERE MORE TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION THAN AVOIDANCE OF HIV AND PREGNANCY?

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Abstract

Objectives

- To probe and locate the position of Sexuality Education in our Indian Education System.
- To explore what all is included in the curriculum, under Sexuality Education and how is this exceedingly important concept disseminated to the youth.
- An attempt to map the journey of sexuality as a human reality in Indian Education.

Method

Review of related literature covering up documents issued by NACO, NCERT and other leading agencies w.r.t. Sex Education or Sexuality Education or Adolescent Education.

Outcomes

The study clearly demonstrated the myopic vision of government and educational agencies w.r.t sexuality as major emphasis is on reproductive system, how to avoid adolescence pregnancy, facts about HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. A cursory mention of myths and misconceptions, gender roles, substance abuse and reproductive and sexual health can be found. A complete ignorance to sexual orientations and gender roles challenging heteronormativity, child sexual abuse, gender neutral rapes, and socio-emotional journey of an adolescent from childhood are clearly evident.

Implications

Suggestions and implications can be brought out for government, educational agencies, teachers and parents to give up instructional pedagogy and include many such unmentioned unheard voices.

Keywords: Sexuality Education, HIV/AIDS, Sexual health, Abuse.

Prevailing Nomenclatures Intertwining Education and Sexuality

There is a vast variety of nomenclatures used across the globe exemplifying the relationship between education and sexuality and hence linking the two together. Some of the most commonly used ones are Population Education, Sex Education, Family Life Education, Adolescence Education, Reproductive Health Education, AIDS Education, Abstinence Only Programme, Puberty Education etc. But the nomenclature that the authors of this article are working with is Sexuality Education.

The working definition of sexuality given by WHO (2006a) is:

‘...a central aspect of being human throughout life encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.’

After deep analysis of all the above mentioned nomenclatures, authors decided upon Sexuality Education due to the wide scope and areas covered under the term 'sexuality'. All other prevailing nomenclatures had myopic vision and were restricted to one or the other key themes, but did not cover the entire arena of Sexuality.

According to Lal (2014), ‘Sexuality Education is not about teaching children how to have sex or promote use of condoms among teenagers. It is about implementing a well-researched, age appropriate, culture sensitive, life skill based educational framework that will empower and enable our children to safeguard and defend themselves against sexual vices of the society and make informed judgment’(Lal, 2014).

Tracing the History of Sexuality Education in India

India pioneered the use of sexuality education through art and literature. About 2000 years ago, Vatsayayana wrote his research based treatise 'Kamasutra'. Its content is not merely 'sexuality' but philosophy and spirituality too. Kamasutra remained the basis of sex education till the Ritikala (1600 A.D. to 1850 A.D.) in Hindi Literature. In this period, a section of society was dominated by women who used to provide sex education. For centuries artists, have painted and sculpted