

Sexuality: Perception and Behaviour of Adolescents

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Abstract

Sexuality - a very sensitive issue in Indian society is never discussed with the adolescents openly neither at home nor at the educational institutions because of taboo attached with the same. Therefore, adolescents become more curious about sexuality. The broad objective of the study was to understand the perception and behaviour of adolescent boys and girls about sexuality. This is a part of intervention study sponsored by the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi. During the baseline study, data were collected from a group of 864 adolescents, 480 from class IX and 384 from class XI. Afterwards inputs were given to adolescent boys and girls following classroom lecture approach on the basis of modules developed. This apart, leaflets were also distributed among the adolescents on the issue. After two rounds of the intervention end line data were collected from a group of 777 adolescents, 401 from class IX students and 376 from class IX students, using the same questionnaire. Majority of them, irrespective of gender and class, felt that sexual act should happen only after marriage. On the contrary, a large number of boys and girls were of the opinion i.e., only when consented mutually, only when matured enough and when involved in a love affair. Regarding pre-marital sex, most of the adolescent boys and girls (ranging from 31.0 to 66.0%) stated that it is risky while the second highest category with minor variations stated that it is bad or immoral while a good number of them especially boys stated that it is alright or moral. About 1.0 – 9.0% adolescent boys and girls reported having intimate relationship/sexual intercourse mostly during 13 – 16 years age. In case of 8.0 – 44.0% adolescents who reported having sexual intercourse, it happened within the same gender. Prevalence of sexual abuse and/or harassment among adolescent boys and girls was ranging from 1.0 – 11.0%. The perpetrators included unknown person, own relative/intimate relatives, friend, a person whom they liked and others. Mostly opposite gender forced sexually in case of girls while in case of boys gender of same sex mostly forced sexually. Regarding legal age of marriage for boys more than 60.0% boys and girls (ranging from 61.0% to 94.0%) were of the opinion that boys should marry after 21 years of age. The knowledge level has increased significantly among both boys and girls after the intervention programme. Regarding legal age of marriage for girls, similar picture was found. In general, intervention was found to be effective in disseminating knowledge among adolescent.

Violence Against Children in Agartala, Tripura

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Abstract

The objective of the study was two-fold. First, to understand the nature of violence experienced by the children. Second, to understand the perception of parents and teachers about corporal punishment and child rights. A group of 320 adolescent children were covered in the study from eight randomly selected English and Bengali medium schools in Agartala, Tripura. For understanding the knowledge and perception of parents and teachers about the issue, 45 teachers and 35 parents were selected following incidental sampling technique. Two semi-structured questionnaires were used for collection of data. About one-fifth of the children in Agartala, Tripura reported to be the victim of psychological violence. Out of a total of 35 reported psychologically abused children, more than one-third (21.9%) experienced the same almost regularly, i.e. once or twice a week, while about 41.8% experienced the same occasionally i.e. once a month. Although boys were reported more to be psychologically abused, statistically gender-wise no significant difference was found. Regarding the type of psychological violence, calling names, saying mean things, cursing and humiliating the children in front of others were among most prevalent ones. Threatening to abandon, bullying and teasing were some of the other forms of psychological violence experienced by a small number of children. More than one in four children did experience physical violence. Here also 24.4% of the male children and 19.4% of the female children were found to be more victim of physical violence. So far as frequency of physical violence is concerned, about one-fourth (25.7%) experienced the same regularly i.e., once or twice a week, while about half (47.1%) of them experienced the same occasionally i.e. once a month. Male children were mostly beaten up by belt, stick or other object, female children were mostly pushed (46.2%), grabbed (41.9%) and kicked (54.8%) in addition to other painful punishment received by both male and female children. Regretfully, 20.0% of the female children experienced sexual violence regularly, mostly in the hands of relatives and teachers. About one-third of the teachers did apply corporal punishment almost regularly while about one-tenth parents did so on regular basis. As compared to parents, less number of teachers felt that corporal punishment should be banned. There is a clear indication of intergenerational transmission of corporal punishment. Although all of the parents and teachers were unanimous about some of the basic rights of the children like health care, education, recreation, and protection from work that threatens his/her health, education and development, a large of them had reservation about expression of views and opinions and joining and/or formation of an association.