INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is not a static, unchanging stage of life like a lump of granite that can be understood thoroughly by examining it in its apparent form alone. An adolescent is a dynamic evolving organism at a particular stage of development. Understanding the adolescent involves not only knowing what the adolescent is like right now, but how he came to be like that. Malm and Jamison (1952) view adolescence as social, emotional and intellectually matured transition to adulthood. According to Hurlock, (1955) adolescence is a traveller who has left the place and has not reached the next. It is intermission between the earlier freedom and subsequent responsibilities and commitments, as last hesitation before making serious commitments concerning work and love.

The essence of an adolescent is growth and in this sense adolescent represents a period of intensive growth change in nearly all aspects of his physical, mental and emotional life. The growth achieved, the experience gained, responsibilities felt and relationship developed at this stage describe the complete future of an individual. It is a crucial stage.

Horrocks (1957) explains that adolescence is both a way of life and span of time in physical and psychological development of the individual. It represents a period of growth and change in nearly all aspects of a child's life. It is a time of new experience and responsibilities.

McCandle, (1961) expresses that adolescence (unlike puberty) for both boys and girls is a physcho-socially defined period of time following

16
puberty and extending to the time of reaching independence. McHedless uses the term self governance meaning complete personal autonomy, both subjective and objective in nature. It is an era of growth from childhood to adulthood, not a point in time. It has no precisely identifiable point of beginning or ending emerging gradually as it does from childhood, first one aspect then another and merging imperceptibly into adulthood.

According to Reddy (1966) and Hurlock (1967) "Adolescence is an age of transition leading to growth and maturity in all the important aspects of one's personality".

Physically, adolescence can be defined that span of a young person's life between the obvious onset of puberty and completion of bone growth. (Konopke, 1973). Adams (1977) too views adolescence as physical maturation. But there are individual differences. The onset of puberty marks the beginning of adolescence, some are early maturers and some are late.

Scarborough, (1981) defines adolescence as the period on to the onset of growth and hormonal changes leading to sexual maturity.

There is no general consensus regarding the span of adolescence. This period according to Osterrich, (cited in Lloyd’s, 1985) can be classified broadly into three categories related to the levels of maturity, namely, early adolescence from twelve to fourteen years, middle adolescence from fourteen to seventeen and late adolescence from seventeen to twenty one years. According to Davis (1985), adolescence which is the development period between childhood and adulthood extends from 12-13 to early 20’s.
During early years the problems centre around physical appearance, health and physical development, school work, relationship with members of their families, peers of both sexes, the choice of vocation, money and personal adjustment. Contrary wise, mid or older adolescence is concerned with the problems relating to his college grades and how to study effectively; selecting a carrier, the training needed and opportunity available, the social, personal and recreational problems relating to shyness, feeling of inferiority, social sensitivity, making friends and lacking leadership ability etc.; family problems centred on the parental discord, conflicts, differences and clash of opinions; money matters and living conditions etc. (Reddy, 1966; Seth, 1970; Sarojni, 1971; Smith, 1975; Sidana, 1977; Goswami, 1980; Venkata, 1981; Brown and Armstrong, 1982; Lafaente, 1987 and Sharma, 1988).

Adolescence is a difficult period for the youth because adults are reluctant to give him the independence he needs and carves for.

Hall (1904), Freud (1946) and Sullivan (1953) envision the period of adolescence as uneven and variable, proceeding by leaps and bounds during certain phases of life, while slackening and tapering off during other phases. All three view this period as a particularly stormy and tempestuous phase of life in contrast to the supposedly quiescent period of childhood that precedes it.

According to Erikson (1968) “Adolescence has unlimited capacities and enthusiasm that is rudderless, turbulent and emotionally overconfident with strange difference from children and adults. For Havinghurst (1972) adolescence is unfolding of the personality, but demands mastery of various
skills, knowledge and attitudes such as accepting one’s physique and learning to cope with a masculine or feminine role, new relationship with age mates of both sexes, emotional independence from parents and other adults, achieving assurance of economic independence, selecting and preparing for a vocation, developing intellectual skills and concepts for carrying out the general civic responsibility of an adult citizen, desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour, preparing for marriage and family responsibilities, cultivating values in harmony with a scholastic and scientific world picture.

The problems presented by their demands are intensified by the rapid uneven biological growth and physiological changes that occur during adolescence. The changing proportion of the body tends to cause poor coordination. Maturing of the endocrine system sharpens sexual interest enduring the adolescents with reproductive capability. By way of primary and secondary sex characteristics adolescent must learn to adopt to these biological changes with a relatively short time. However, society strongly discourages, if not prohibits, the enactment of these capabilities, insisting on postponement.

The marked changes that come with puberty make the adolescent act different, look different and feel different than he ever was before. His attitude towards other people, towards life and towards himself changes. He is not only perplexing to other people, but perplexing to himself. He is seeking answers to the question, ’Who am I?’ (Mussen, Conger, Kagan, and Huston, 1990).

The adolescent has an ambiguous position in society. He is approaching adulthood. His body has adult contours and adult sexual characteristics. He
looks like an adult but he is most often treated like a child. Adolescence is an interesting period to the teacher and exciting period to the individual who is in the midst of it. Almost all societies past and present, sophisticated or primitive have regarded adolescence as a critical phase of growth and have shown atleast a degree of anxiety about how to keep the vitality of youth within bounds and direct it towards taking up the responsibilities of adult life. Social expectations about the adolescent vary from culture to culture and adolescents mirror these expectations in the attitude they adopt and the way they behave. (Tobin-richard, Boxer and Petersen, 1983; Blyth, Simmons and Zakin 1985; Richards, Boxer, Petersen and Albercht, 1990).

Adolescents have been called as aged ‘terrible teens’. According to Good (1959) adolescence is a twilight zone in which society does not accord them full adult responsibility and roles. Consequently they become much more sensitive to the social demands of their peers.

Earlier Bios (1941) had stated turmoil during adolescence is a profound reorganization of the emotional life which takes place during early adolescence proper, with attendant and well recognized states of chaos. Josselyn (1952), Jacobson(1961), Geleerd(1961), Laufer(1966) and Deutsch(1967) also corroborate the view of Bloss.

Erikson (1968) interprets the stresses and strains of adolescents as effects of repressive cultural custom and conventions. Nothing ‘new’ develops in these years, except that development becomes very rapid.

Gradually, scientific researches have bought together evidence to disapprove these earlier points of view. Bandwa(1964), Oldham(1976),
Adelson(1979), Bleich(1980) and Offer, Ostrov and Howard(1984) agree that earlier stresses and strains are the result of restrictions imposed by the culture on its adolescent member.

To refer to certain aspects of adolescence as 'problems' is of course tempting, since it seems plausible. But one aspect of adolescence is the moratorium on identity stabilization and on decision making concerning a lifetime occupation. The adolescent has the opportunity to wait and grow, can make the best of a variety of experiments in life-style and education, and has a chance to develop unique independent and integrated identities.

To conclude, adolescence is a period of growth accompanied by challenges, ultimately passing through which the adolescent moves toward self awareness and maturity. It is a period of physical, mental, social, emotional and moral development during which a young person must establish a sense of individual identity and feelings of self-worth which include alteration of his or her body image adaptation to more mature intellectual abilities, adjustment to society’s demands for behavioural maturity, internalizing a personal value system and preparing for adult roles.

THEORETICAL VIEWS OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical position allows a professional or a researcher to organize a broad range of information and to use the information effectively for decision making and problem solving concerning adolescents. There are a number of major organised comprehensive theories of adolescence. Some of the theories were formulated purely as theories of adolescence while
others are overall theories of human behaviour in which adolescence has been considered as an aspect of the larger theory.

There are three primary theoretical approaches to the study of adolescence that dominate writing in the area. The first, and the one with the longest continuous history, is the psychoanalytic view. The second dominant theme in the study of psychology of adolescence is a behavioural view. Behavioural models draw on the early writing of psychologists such as Thorndike (1904), Watson (1920), and Skinner (1938). Writers with a behavioural focus operate under a presumption that behaviour is learnt and thus may be explained and predicted by an understanding of the stimuli that lead to the response. The third view, is the cognitive development view. The cognitive development position draws mainly on the writing of Piaget (1932) but also builds on the writings of Werner (1958), Lawrence Kholberg (1958) and others. From a cognitive development view one focuses on changes over development through the life span. (Ingersoll, 1989).

**Psychoanalytic Viewpoints**: In classic psychoanalytic theory (Freud, 1952, 1953), adolescence is dominated by a renewed struggle to control sexual impulses. At puberty the young person starts to move towards adult genital sexuality.

Freud, (1952, 53), in his psychoanalytic theory discussed the development through five stages—oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital. Of these, genital stage marks the advent of puberty and entrance into adolescence and then into adult genital sexuality. There is rapid increase in the output of sexual hormones. Increasingly, sexual drives are redirected away from parents
and towards other members of the opposite sex. Freud believed that Oedipus and Electra complexes occur with hormonal changes during adolescence. At puberty the young person starts to move toward adult genital sexuality.

Similar views were given by Anna Freud, (1966) who described adolescence as a period of critical development with adolescents having increased sexual drives. In her writings (especially 1966), Anna Freud describes the functions of defence mechanisms in the organisation of a strong or weak personality. During early adolescence, young people use defences such as regression in which they resort to behaviours that were acceptable when they were younger but that are no longer appropriate. In late adolescence, adolescents try to justify gratification of their sexual drives through arguments for free love and new marital life styles.

Among those psychoanalytically oriented writers who are currently popular is Erikson. He, especially in his works—Identity and the Life Cycle (1959) and Identity, Youth and Crisis (1968)—shifts the focus of development from a set of psycho-sexual stages to a set of eight psychosocial stages: trust vs mistrust, autonomy vs shame, initiative vs guilt, industry vs inferiority, identity vs role confusion, intimacy vs isolation, generativity vs stagnation and ego integrity vs despair. At each stage of life from infancy to old age, the individual must work through a critical set of problems. He opines that failure to resolve conflicts adequately at one stage of development interferes with adjustment at the next and successive stages of life.

The fifth stage identity versus role confusion corresponds to adolescence. During this period, adolescents develop a need for freedom,
authority and confirm highly to the authority of peer group. In late adolescence, adolescents must establish a sense of intimacy with another person. Beyond the immediate sexual intimacy which Erikson sees as essential to a relationship, there is a more general level of intimacy in which the individual’s sense of identity becomes fused with the identity of another person. Close personal relationships with people of both sexes lead to general feeling of acceptability in society. (Ingersoll, 1989).

**Behavioural Viewpoints:** In the traditional behavioural view, an individual’s behaviour is seen as a result of learning. The primary architect of behaviourism was Skinner, (1938). His research refined the earlier work of such notable individuals as Thorndike, (1904) and Watson, (1920). Skinner set the stage for subsequent refinements of behaviourism for social learning theorists (Dollar & Miller, 1950; Bandura, 1977).

In social learning theory of personality, the main thrust is on the cultural variations among adolescents, usually during puberty. Mead, (1928) emphasised that adolescents in some cultures are care free and sexual constraints are few so they do not experience same sexual anxieties that western teenagers feel. In cultural theory also the emphasis is on transition to adulthood.

Lewin, (1935, 1939, 1942, 1954) studied the changes in adolescent development and behaviour over a period of time. He sees the social relationships of adolescence as one of the crucial aspects of the period. It is an ambiguous period for the adolescent; neither a child nor an adult, he carries on social transactions including relations with members of the same
and the opposite sex in both worlds, but actually belongs to neither. There are many changes in adolescence but it is difficult for the adolescent to attain a sense of stability and certainty.

Behavioural theorists believe that the learning experiences that occur during the course of adolescence are the sources of developmental change. Thus by modifying existing learning opportunities or by creating new ones, the course of an individual’s development can be changed (Serfert and Hoffnung, 1991).

**Cognitive Viewpoints**: Cognitive development theorists draw mainly on the writing of the late Jean Piaget, (1967) and his followers who propose that, beginning in infancy, the human being progresses through a regular series of patterns of thinking and problem solving. Of primary concern is the shift that Piaget refers to as concrete operational thought to formal operational thought. According to cognitive developmental theory, adolescence is dominated by a radical shift in one’s ability to think and to solve problems. In the words of Werner, (1979): “Whenever development occurs, it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack of differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation, articulation and hierarchical integration”. As adolescents mature cognitively their view of themselves and their relationship to and with their world change qualitatively and quantitatively.

Because of their newfound ability to consider what might be, adolescents, especially late adolescents, are often highly idealistic. They are likely to see a utopian, idealized world as a real possibility and feel frustrated that others, especially adults, do not see the world in a similar
fashion. At early adolescence the adolescent’s views are rigid, concrete and egocentric. In late adolescence, their views are more flexible with refined differentiation among & within concepts.

Havinghurst, (1948, 1972) has characterised adolescence by a set of developmental tasks that must be completed in preparation for adulthood. Adult physical and sexual status and mature sexual relationships are the important ones listed by him. He stresses that adolescents must develop stable and productive peer relationships including heterosexual relationships because early heterosexual friendships set the stage for later intimate and mature relationships (Ingersoll, 1989).

An overview of these theories leads to the identification of following significant features of adolescent sexual development. All theorists recognise:

1. Adolescence is a unique and specific phase in human development that begins with the physical change of puberty.
2. Development of adolescent self is very much related to and influenced by individual’s physical development during this time.
3. Most of the development changes follow a common thread. There is a shift from rather undifferentiated selfcentred view of one’s world to a more complex and highly abstract view of the world.
4. Sexual behaviour is influenced by multiplicity of socio-cultural factors which are likely to operate differently in rural and urban area.
5. The adolescent must learn to manage his/her own sexuality. As adolescents move from early to late adolescence with their increased physical and sexual maturity, they need to incorporate into their personal
identity a set of attitudes as well as a set of values about their own sexual behaviour (Ingersoll, 1989).

6. As individual moves from early to late adolescence hedonic, self-serving behaviour is replaced by mature, socially approved behaviour.

BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE – ITS PSYCHODYNAMICS AND FORMS

Sex is not solely a physical or biological urge. Social factors augment biological ones in producing sexual differentiation and standards. Psychological aspect of sexuality is equally important. Sexual behaviour varies according to sex and age, race, socio economic status, cultural background, religion and geographical variables. (Boxer and Petersen, 1986).

As a normal part of adolescent's attempts to clarify their sexual self-identity, many young adolescents report homosexual feelings or experiences. When they have erotic feelings towards the members of their own sex, it is known as homosexuality and the person possessing such feelings as a homosexual. It is not unusual for adolescent boys and girls to engage in group or mutual masturbation; such events are transitory and harmless.

The Heterosexual relationship follows a predictable pattern of development but its nature can vary from individual to individual. According to Elkind and Weiner, (1972) three factors contribute to the beginning of heterosexual interests (a) The hormonal changes that take place during puberty produce sexual feelings that motivate boys and girls to seek each other’s company (b) Adolescents view heterosexual relationship as an aspect of being grown up and therefore value them (c) Parents expect adolescents to be interested in the opposite sex.
Feinstein and Ardon (1973) have proposed a four stage theory to explain adolescents' heterosexual behaviour, namely, Stage I Sexual awakening (13-15 years): which is characterised by friendship with erotic trends, dating invitations for movies and parties, public acknowledgement of boy friend, kissing and making up, girls may be able to attract older boys, experiencing insecurity by late maturing boys; Stage II Practicing (14-17 years) characterised by many short term relationships accompanied by emotional intensity, irregular dating in group/individual; Stage III: Acceptance of Sexual Role (16-19) characteristic of experimentation with various dating styles, involvement in long term dating and more comfort in heterosexual relationships and Stage IV Development of Permanent Choice (18-25) which is characteristic of choice of a more permanent love object, trust in each other, giving up of alternative date and mate choices and living together or marriage.

General forms of behavioural manifestations: When the adolescent directs his attachment towards a member of the opposite sex with whom he has had personal contact, it is referred to as a "crush", which normally takes place between the ages of twelve to fifteen years (Ross, 1958). Crushes are universal among girls but less common among boys. (Blyth, Hill and Thiel, 1982; McCabe and Collins, 1983; Sharbany, Gershoni and Hoffman 1981 and Steinberg, 1988). Girls develop earlier than boys and thus have an earlier need for some outlet. Typically, there is little physical contact in crush behaviour. The presence of the loved one generally satisfies the adolescent. Crushes are usually of temporary nature, and are forgotten when new interests are found.
**Hero worshipping** involves affection for a slightly older person who may not necessarily come in personal contact with the adolescent and the adolescent may know him slightly. Adolescent attempts to imitate the clothes, mannerisms and behaviour of the loved one and act in a manner that he believes the loved one would approve. Hero worshipping is more common in boys just as crushes are more common in girls. (Staton, 1963)

The adolescent attitude towards the loved one is characteristically shy and self-conscious; therefore, his behaviour is often labelled "mooning". The popular name for this phase of heterosexual love is "calf love". Children usually hero-worship a member of the family - a parent, sibling or a relative - athletes and national heroes. Hero worshipping has a positive effect on the adolescent in the sense that it boosts his achievement and success, demarcates the goals for his life and serves as a form of identification, thus freeing him from any feelings of inadequacy (Breckenridge and Vicent, 1943; Fleege, 1945). However, it may affect him negatively if the heroes are ill chosen (Fleege, 1945).

Unlike hero worshipping, in **Puppy Love** the adolescent transfers his affection from older members of the opposite sex to those of approximately the same age. As girls mature earlier than boys, this phase of heterosexual development appears earlier among girls. Interest in boys may be seen at the ages of 14 or 15 years in girls, while among boys, this emerges in the age of 16 or 17 (Furfey, 1926 and Sullivan, 1953).

At this age, boys and girls go around in crowds in which the different members pair off. It gives the adolescents a feeling of security. Both boys
and girls at this age seem to lack individuality. The end is generally occasioned by quarrel or disillusionment caused by the mismatch of the qualities of loved one and the adolescent's ideals. Though shortlived, intense affairs and conversations help adolescents learn to appraise members of the opposite sex and become more selective.

**Dating** means that the boy and girl go out together to engage in some planned activity. Dating is the traditional vehicle for fostering individual heterosexual relationships, (Serfort and Hoffnung, 1991).

Skipper and Nass (1966) believe that dating is purposive behaviour oriented toward fulfilling four functions. Dating as recreation, as socialization, as status achievement and as courtship. Today dating is viewed more as a social experience and as an outlet for heterosexual interests. (Rogers, 1969 and Smith 1975).

Dating serves an important role in the process of developing sexual relationships with others. It serves as a mechanism for assessing one's physical and social attractiveness to members of opposite sex. It provides feedback to one's ability to communicate, to listen and to share feelings. According to Grinder (1966) some major incentives for dating are sexual gratification, independence, status seeking, and participated eagerness. Attributes as academic excellence, popularity, excellence in dance and music and fashionable dress sense also enhance one's dating status. (Welster, Aronson, Abrahams and Rottman, 1966).

After a period characterized by trial and error dating, adolescents select one person whose attraction for them is greater than others. This is the
“going steady stage”. Intimacy begins to be important in heterosexual relationships during late adolescence. “Going steady” at first occurs mainly because of group pressure or for social approval and prestige. Later, one becomes more 'choosy' about falling in love and going steady as it is a possible preliminary to marriage (Punke, 1944; Hollingshead, 1949; Ellis, 1950; Mead, 1970).

In large cities, going steady generally comes earlier for all social groups than is true of small towns or rural areas (Hollingshead, 1949; Smith, 1956). The age for going steady in both boys and girls is almost the same (Lowrie, 1961). Going steady does not involve plans for the future or a commitment to marry. It does sanction advanced forms of sexual behaviour. (Spanier, 1976)

Psychodynamics of male and female: Nature designed (and virtually every culture in history has fostered the predilection) the male to be the aggressive party in sexual activities. Not only does the anatomical structure of the male and female render this technically essential; characteristics of the secondary sex organs of the female, such as the sensitivity of her breast to sexual stimulation, adapt her to be the receiver, the more passive partner, in preliminary sex play. Male is capable of achieving sexual stimulation through looking at and caressing the female, the female on the other hand, more readily achieves sexual stimulation through being caressed. To the average male his sexual contacts, even his sexual relations are comparatively impersonal matters. He can be sexually stimulated by the sight of a girl who is comparatively or completely stranger to him. (Staton, 1963).
According to Sorensen (1973), Scales (1977) and Hass (1979) most girls feel that a romantic involvement is a necessary component of sexual activity while only a minority of boys would agree with romantic requirement of sexual relations. The present study was restricted to important parameters of sexual behaviour—namely, pubertal changes, sex awareness.

**Pubertal Changes**: Puberty is often considered to be the biological event that marks the beginning of adolescence (Petersen & Taylor, 1980). With the onset of puberty secondary sex characteristics (body hair, breast development for girls, facial hair for boys, mature genitalia in both sexes) emerge, culminating in the attainment of adult reproductive and sexual capacity. The sexual potential of adolescents is readily apparent to others, signalled by increasingly mature physical stature. Thus, adolescent sexuality has become an important issue to parents, teachers, and others who are involved in the lives of adolescents. The visible manifestations of puberty, that is, the physical changes, have been most discussed in the literature by Tanner, (1962, 1974). The earlier onset of puberty in girls means that the prepubertal, or childhood, growth period is curtailed sooner than it is in boys. This results in shorter stature for girls by the conclusion of the growth spurt. At the conclusion of puberty, boys generally have greater strength and musculature. Body shape also changes during puberty, with girls developing broader hips and boys broader shoulders (Faust, 1977; Peterson, 1984).

For both boys and girls, the relations among the developmental sequences of the physical characteristics vary considerably from individual to individual. A major outcome of puberty is the biological ability to
reproduce. This reproductive capacity for girls is marked by menstrual period. For boys the capacity to reproduce is defined by the ability to produce sperm and ejaculate seminal fluid. Like other aspects of pubertal change, reproductive capacity also develops gradually. Research reveals young adolescents appear to feel somewhat less happy about themselves relative to older adolescents, (Simmons and Rosenberg, 1971). Similarly feelings about the pubertal changes differ for adolescent boys and girls, with girls seeming to feel less satisfied with their bodies at this stage of life (Petersen, 1989). A strong cultural pressure to be tall and slim may contribute to the finding that the heavier a girl is, or the heavier she thinks she is, the more dissatisfied she is with both her weight and figure (Faust, 1983; Simmons, Blyth and McKinney, 1983; Tobin-Richards et al., 1983).

**Sex Awareness**: It is widely accepted that adolescents get sexual knowledge from peers, parents, books and magazines. Most parents, regardless of their lifestyles, tend to hold more conservative views about adolescent sexual knowledge, (Jessor & Jessor, 1977; Shah & Zelnik, 1981). Adolescents remain ill informed about sex and its possible consequences. They develop feelings of guilt. The irony is that it is very often the parents who are unable to communicate about sex to their own children. (Soreson, 1973). It has been found that adolescents whose parents acted as the primary source of sex information were more likely to delay initiation into sexual activity, to use contraceptives effectively, and to express more positive feelings about their sexual relationships than their counterparts for whom the primary source of sexual information was either peers, siblings, books,
media, or magazines (Lewis, 1973; Spanier, 1976; Fox, 1979 and Kallen, Stephenson and Doughty, 1983).

Paradoxically, Hass, (1979) and others have found that parents may appear "unapproachable" to their adolescents on matters concerning sexuality. Sexuality is a result of social, biological and cultural factors. It is regulated by sociocultural phenomena that helps give shape to the sexual experience of adolescents and may result in altered patterns of sexual development across different historical periods. Biological aspect of sexuality includes reproductive capacity. Psychological aspects of sexuality include motivation for sexual involvement, self-esteem and body image. Social dimensions include sociocultural mores and values in general, as well as parental constraints and the norms of peers in particular. (Petersen and Boxer, 1986).

Research has revealed that the average boys or girls brought up in "underprivileged" areas begin sexual activity earlier than those of middle and upper-class backgrounds. (Schneider and Lysgard, 1953). This may be explained by the generally lower educational level of parents in the lower socioeconomic areas, their preoccupation with earning a living and the resultant lessening of supervision of the activities of their children, the lesser amount of privacy under living conditions prevailing there, and consequent increased opportunity for children to observe each other and adults undressed or in suggestive moods and activities. Important factors are also the abundance of children commonly concentrated in the poorer areas of town, the paucity of recreational facilities, and the opportunities for boys and girls of early adolescent age to be seduced or otherwise initiated into sexual activities by older adolescent boys and girls.
BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX.

Every individual has a vast array of attitudes; some of these have been deliberately cultivated through the influence of home and school. Attitudes not only determine the conclusions one drives from the facts but also influence the very facts one is willing to accept. Attitudes have been defined in a number of different ways and each of the definition contains or emphasizes slightly different concept of an attitude.

As early as in 1930's, Allport (1935) defined attitude "as a mental and natural state of readiness organised through experience, expressing a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations considered socially significant in the individual society. Doop (1947), Newcomb (1953), Good (1959), Dreyer (1961) also more or less corroborate the view of Allport in defining attitudes as state of readiness.

Kretch (1962) and McDonald (1965) define attitudes in terms of disposition and are of the view that attitude can be constituted as varying in quality and intensity as a predisposition of an act in a positive or negative way towards persons, objects, ideas and events. Agreeing with this view, Back (1977) defines attitude as a predisposition towards any person, idea or object that contains cognitive, affective and behavioural components.

According to Wegner and Vallacher (1977) "An attitude is not a behaviour in any observable sense, it is an anticipation of behaviour". Worchel and Cooper (1976) too are of the opinion that an attitude is an expression of
the intensity, anticipation of behaviour and direction of effect towards a psychological object.

According to Judd et al. (1991) attitudes are lasting evaluations of various aspects of the social world. Fazio and Roskos (1994) view attitudes as associations between objects (virtually any aspect of social world) and evaluations of those objects. Whereas Wyer & Srull (1994) opine that attitudes function as cognitive frameworks that hold and organize information about specific concepts, situations or events. Taking a slightly broader view, Kraus (1995) suggests that attitudes are related to behaviour and can exert strong effects on behaviour.

An attitude is characterised by four criteria; firstly it must have definite orientation in the world of objects or values and in this respect differs from simple and conditioned reflexes; secondly, it must not be an altogether automatic and routine type of conduct but must display same tension, thirdly it varies in intensity sometimes being predominant and sometimes relatively ineffective; and fourthly it is rooted in experience and has a positive or negative value. Green (1954) mentions four dimensions of attitudes - favourableness, intensity, salience and generality, whereas Katz and Stothand (1959) conceive of attitudes as having effective cognitive and behavioural components. Laycock and Munro (1966) stress upon emotional intellectual and motivational components of attitudes. Schellenberg (1974) considers feelings, cognitive and action tendencies as three important components of attitudes.
More recently, Petkova, Ajzen and Driver (1995) have suggested four important components of attitudes as (a) Strength, that is how strong is the emotional reaction provoked by attitude object, (b) Importance, that is the extent to which an individual cares deeply about and is personally affected by the attitude, (c) Knowledge, that is how much an individual knows about the attitude object, (d) Accessibility, that is how easily the attitude comes to mind in various situations.

In the light of the above views an attitude may be described as enduring organization of evaluation, beliefs and an earned tendency to react favourably and unfavourably varying in degree to certain class or objects which determine the actual and potential responses of an individual. Attitudes tend to be definite and specific from the standpoint of the object to which they are attached. They differ, therefore from ideals which tend to be more conscious and somewhat more generalized, thus tolerance towards a certain minority group is an attitude, whereas tolerance as an abstract concept is an ideal.

**Formation** of an attitude is a complex phenomenon. There are a number of approaches which are general conceptualizations and try to order and summarize a wide range of psychological phenomena and are of immense value in developing our understanding, prediction and control of the regulation of behaviour and concentration. Freedom, Carlsmith and Sears (1975) have categorised these into four major approaches representative of the current thinking among psychologists, viz (A) conditioning, reinforcement (B) incentives and conflicts (C) functionalising and (D) cognitive consistency. These four approaches represent different theoretical orientations and differ
primarily in the factors they emphasize when explaining attitude formation and change.

(A) The conditioning and reinforcement model involves predicting the relationship between a given independent variable and attitude change in terms of the known relationship of what independent variable of the persuasive material will be conducive to attitude change. Limitation also plays a part in the formation of attitudes and it may develop indirectly from an emotional association with another attitude.

(B) The second approach of incentive and conflict views attitudinal situation in terms of an acceptance-avoidance conflict. Individual has certain reason for accepting one position and other reasons for rejecting it or accepting the opposite position. According to incentive approach the relative strength of these incentives determines one's attitude.

(C) The functionalist approach envisages that attitudes are formed because they meet particular physiological needs and functions. Smith, Burner and White (1956), Katz and Stotland (1959) and Katz (1960) have identified four crucial functions (1) the instrumental, adjustive or utilitarian function (2) the ego defensive function (3) the value expressive function and (4) knowledge function.

(D) The fourth major framework within which attitudes have been studied is cognitive consistency theory. According to this approach, given consistency, people will have tendency to change towards consistency.
Although people need not be consistent in everything they say or do, contradictions produce conflict, tension and anxiety until there is resolution. Jones and Gerard (1967) stated that it would be a mistake to exaggerate the prevalence of internal consistancy in cognitive organisation.

Attitudes also formulate a part of the social learning theory. Baron and Byrne (1998) explained through social learning. This involves three basic forms of learning - classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and modelling. Recent evidence indicates that subliminal conditioning of attitude is also possible and plays a role in their development. Attitude can also be formed through social comparison - a process in which we compare ourselves with others in order to determine whether a view of social reality is correct or not correct. They have given recent evidence indicating that genetic factors, too, play a role in formation of attitude.

Attitudes towards objects, people, ideas, institutions etc including attitude towards sex are determined by host of factors. In the present study, investigation of adolescent boys and girls in urban and rural areas, factors affecting attitudes toward sex have been studied in relation to pubertal changes, and sex awareness like home environment, social environment, school, culture, media, personality and religion.

**Home environment** is simultaneously a base and springboard for the adolescents. The characteristics that complicate home life are those arising from the heightened sensitivity of adolescence, the tensions of self discovery during pubertal changes and struggle to achieve independence. These tensions
and sensitivity find an outlet in mother daughter or father-son relationship, Friedman (1969). The confusion caused by uncertainty about what is socially approved behaviour, gives an impression of the shapeless and perplexing pattern which society today offers to adolescents. As contacts with adult society widen, differences in manners and conventions seem more marked. The range of values present in society is both the product of changing values and source of further change. This leaves a gap in ideas between the generations. When the understanding is poor between adolescent and parents, a whole range of conflicts may develop quickly and tear the relationship to pieces and reduce adolescents to despair. (Sears 1970).

**School and teachers** exert a greater influence in shaping the attitudes of adolescents. School/college is the most important environment where adolescents learn much about sexual thinking, feeling and behaviour. In the same class, early maturing adolescents may become self-conscious and late maturing adolescents may become worried about their body changes. Through school activities like dancing, sports events, and parties adolescents have increased contact with opposite sex peers. They express their feelings to each other. Mixing of sexes provides opportunity to adolescents to be aware of their sexual identity.

**Social environment** is another important factor. Friends and associates exercise an increasing influence on the child as he grows older and extends his social contacts. Neighbours, friends of parents who visit home or who are visited, adults seen or heard of, or read about serve as models too.

The **mass media** right from advertisements to the popular literature are often calculated to erotic thoughts and desires. Advertising has become
sex oriented. Movies exhibit more nudity and eroticism and bookstalls are full of pornographic literature. These avenues of communication not only stimulate sexuality but also encourage illicit sexuality. (Kalra and Kalra, 1994)

Culture is communicated by media and popular culture is replete with sexual messages. Special television programmes focus on homosexuality, birth control, AIDS, abortion and various forms of hetero-sexual behaviour. Changing beliefs about women's roles and rights are well addressed by the media coverage, gender bias is openly shown in T.V. serials. All these influence a great deal in shaping the attitude of the adolescents towards sex.

Lief (1973) believes personality characteristics categorize adolescents on bipolar dimensions such as good or bad, ugly or handsome, outgoing or withdrawn. Adolescents may view themselves as sexy or non-sexy and it influences their attitude towards sex.

As a major social institution religion has wielded tremendous power and influence over the standards of conduct that guide sexual behaviour and this is reflected in the attitude of adolescents towards sex. By and large religion has been a significant contributor to negative attitude towards sexuality. Most attention has been given to sexuality in context of procreation. The joys and pleasures of responsible sexuality as well as the basic understanding of normal healthy process of sexual development from infancy to old age have been underestimated and all these influence adolescents in shaping their attitudes towards sex.
Attitudes are also affected by overall effects of industrialisation, urbanization, democratization of culture, the fading away of the influence of religion and the growing favour for scientific and rational criteria and approach.

The foregoing discussion of attitude formation and factors shaping it assumes importance and has a strong bearing on behavioural manifestations of sexual development during adolescence. In view of the above arguments and rationale, the present study entitled, "A STUDY OF BEHAVIOURAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AND URBAN ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS SEX" was undertaken.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study differences in behavioural manifestations vis-a-vis two parameters of sexual development namely (a) satisfaction with changes (b) sex awareness between adolescent boys and girls.

2. To study differences between early (15-16yr) and mid-adolescents (17-18 yrs) on (a) satisfaction with pubertal changes (b) sex awareness.

3. To study differences between urban and rural adolescents on (a) satisfaction with pubertal changes (b) sex awareness.

4. To examine the first order interactional effect of age x sex and age x area and sex x area on adolescents behavioural manifestations of
sexual development namely (a) satisfaction with pubertal changes (b) sex awareness.

5. To examine the second order interactional effect of sex x age x area on adolescents behavioural manifestations of sexual development namely (a) satisfaction with pubertal changes (b) sex awareness.

6. To establish relationship between various parameters of behavioural manifestations of sexual development on one side and adolescents attitude towards sex on the other side.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Behavioural manifestations of sexual development of adolescents present a problem of vast dimensions. Hence the study is limited in the following ways.

1. Considering the vastness of the subject, study of behavioural manifestations of sexual development of adolescents is restricted to only important dimensions of sexual development, namely: (a) pubertal changes (b) sex awareness (c) general behavioural manifestations.

2. The study has been limited to school going adolescents of 15 to 18 years drawn from class 10th through 12th.

3. Sample has been drawn from urban and rural areas of the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

4. On account of non-availability of standarized tools in this area, all the five tests have been locally developed out of which only one has been standarized.
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1. Adolescents: Adolescence has been operationally defined as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood passing through various types of developments. The duration of this period normally ranges from approximately 12+ years to 20 years. However, in view of the nature of the development under study, that is sexual development, the present study has been limited to only those adolescents who are in the age range of 15 years to 18 years and are studying in grades IX through XII. Further, in order to present an analytical picture of results, adolescents between the ages of 15-16 years have been grouped as early adolescents and those from 17-18 years have been grouped under mid adolescents. Thus pre adolescents (12 to 14 years) and late adolescents (18 to 20 years) do not fall within the scope of the present study.

2. Sexual development refers to development of primary and secondary sex characteristics leading to sexual maturity.

3. Behavioural manifestations. The term in the present study refers to behaviour which is manifested by the adolescents on account of sexual development during the adolescence. It includes (a) their adjustment or feeling of satisfaction with pubertal changes, that is, primary and secondary sex characteristics; (b) awareness of sex related matters such as knowledge of pregnancy, contraceptives, masturbation etc., and (c) general behavioural manifestations related to members of the opposite sex such as friendship, dating, crush and love relationship among adolescents.

4. Attitude towards sex - In the present study attitude towards sex has been defined as pre-disposition of an act in a positive or negative way.
towards persons, objects, ideas or events related to sexual matters such as homosexuality, heterosexuality, pregnancy, abortion, knowledge of contraceptives etc. It has been measured through scale which was standardised by the researcher in the present study.

ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Having presented the rationale for the present study and need for studying sexual behaviour of adolescents in the first chapter, the introduction and theoretical framework regarding the behavioural manifestations of sexual development and its relationship to attitude towards sex form the contents of chapter II. Chapter III is devoted to a review of related literature. Chapter IV and V deal with method and procedure and construction and standardisation of attitude towards sex scale respectively. The next two chapters VI and VII deal with analysis and discussion of results. Simultaneously, an attempt has been made to furnish a global picture of different types of enquiries. Summary and conclusions form the contents of the last chapter VIII, which gives the overall view of the whole research project. A bibliography and appendices will be attached at the end of the research report, as usual.