CHAPTER - 7

OPINION OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND ADOLESCENTS TOWARDS IMPARTING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that the school equips adolescents with the knowledge, skills and inculcates in them positive attitude to face the rigors of the world, the role of family is crucial in the total personality development. Parents are primary educators and play a critical role in shaping the individuality of the adolescents. In India the issues related to reproductive health have been carefully kept out of the education process within the family. It is felt essential for the parents to appreciate the urgency of imparting reproductive health education to their growing up children. Parents have to recognize that adolescence is a period of rapid growth and development. They should respect the identity and the right to privacy of adolescents. The behaviour of parents has a powerful influence on adolescents. Parents can very effectively influence the process of growth of their adolescents if they, establish a close relationship with them. The adolescents need to be assured that they can talk with their parents on all the issues including those relating to their process of growing up. Parents are particularly expected to share the knowledge about the physical, emotional and social growth and developmental changes taking place during puberty with their growing up adolescents. It may not be possible, and even necessary for every parent to go into the details. But it is certainly expected of them that they should provide at least the essential knowledge to their adolescent children at the appropriate time.

It is very well noted that for any educational innovation the teacher occupies a pivotal role. Most of the elements of reproductive health education are sensitive, delicate and value laden. Interaction with adolescent students on these elements can be effective only when a holistic approach is adopted. The entire environment is to be made congenial to impart knowledge in these elements to adolescent students. The first and foremost requirement for the teachers is to be convinced about not only the need but also the urgency of imparting reproductive health education to adolescent students. So
far, we have been teaching adolescent students almost everything about human body and mind except the process of growing up during adolescence. Once convinced, teachers have to equip themselves well for imparting reproductive health education to students effectively. It is very natural that teachers, like any other groups of society are influenced by the cultural setting and have inhibitions regarding sex related matters. They have to be helped in getting rid of such inhibitions. Teachers will have to be resourceful so that they can handle sensitive topics with ease and care. It is also necessary, sometimes, for teachers to perform the functions of counselor. Since teachers are trusted by the students they can conveniently gain the confidence of students and ably act as counselors. The advice given by teachers is more acceptable to students. It is however, extremely important for teachers to be non-judgmental so that students are treated by them as individuals who need their compassion and care.

It is agreed upon that adolescence is a period of rapid change both physical and psychological. During this phase adolescents need right kind of education related to their growing up issues. Parents and teachers have a vital role in imparting reproductive health education. In this chapter the researcher has examined the opinion of the parents, teachers and adolescents on imparting reproductive health education among adolescents. Parents whose children were studying between class IX-XII in a co-educational government or private school In the National Capital Territory of Delhi and teachers teaching any of the classes between class IX-XII of a co-educational government or private school In the National Capital Territory of Delhi were selected for the study. Adolescent students both male and female studying between class IX-XII in a co-educational government or private school in the National Capital Territory of Delhi were selected for the study. Sample comprised of 10 parents and 10 teachers from each (four) selected school thus the total sample size is 40 parents and 40 teachers and total sample size of students is 320. It has been seen in the data gathered that the responses of parents, teachers and adolescents of government and private schools do not show much variations. Hence, the research findings are presented under the following themes and further sub-categorized in two or three sub-themes namely Parents’ Opinion, Teachers’ Opinion and Adolescents’ Opinion:
7.2 Adolescents have certain Reproductive Health needs with Regard to their Holistic Growth and Development

7.3 School has a Responsibility to help and guide the Students for their Holistic Growth and Development

7.4 Necessity to Impart Reproductive Health Education in Schools for Adolescents

7.5 An Appropriate Class from which Reproductive Health Education should be started

7.6 Reproductive Health Issues/Topics/areas can be included in Reproductive health Education

7.7 Appropriate Methods for Teaching or Discussing Reproductive Health issues with Adolescents

7.8 Appropriate source of Information for Adolescents to learn about Reproductive Health Issues

7.9 Reaction, when Adolescents ask information on Reproductive Health Issues

7.10 Need to make parents and Teachers aware of their Role as an Educator and effective Communicators to Adolescents

7.11 Comments and Suggestions on the Issues of Reproductive Health Education

The data under some of the themes was gathered with the parents and teachers and not with the students as per the requirement of the study. Hence some of the themes reflected the opinion of parents and teachers only.

7.2 ADOLESCENTS HAVE CERTAIN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NEEDS WITH REGARD TO THEIR HOLISTIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is a period of growth and development from the onset of puberty to maturity (Bancroft and Reinisch, 1990). Adolescence is a critical phase during which significant personality reorganization occurs. The suddenness and rapid pace, with which the changes take place in the body and mind of adolescents, generate a number of problems and special reproductive needs which adolescents find difficult to understand on their own.
Parents’ Opinion

It is significant to note that all the respondents (40/40) accepted that the adolescents have certain reproductive health needs. Parents reflected on the fact that adolescents should be aware of personal hygiene, changes they are undergoing in adolescence, balanced diet and right guidance on various issues. It was also observed in the statements given by parents that adolescents are not getting information and those who received it may not be correct all the time. Parents were also concerned about the subject that they can not deal with all the issues of reproductive health. Specifically they pointed out that:

- Adolescents need to know about personal hygiene, guidance on health problems, they eat junk food so making them understand about balanced diet, deal with their anxiety they feel because of physical changes and besides this need is of moral education and healthy parent child relationship.
- Knowledge and guidance on biological changes and related information about menstrual cycle.
- Right guidance at right time.(6 out of 40 respondents)
- As they grow because of the changes they become frustrated, feel irritated on little issues, they behave negatively with parents. So there is a need to guide them to take care of their psychological needs.
- Adolescents get knowledge from their mother but not complete as mothers are also not much aware. Boys should also know as the time changing.(3/40 respondents)
- They should be aware of right and wrong.

It was noted that parents talked about the rights of adolescents, decision making was also given importance. Parents also highlighted the fact that there is a need to keep an eye on adolescents’ activities by saying that:

- Adolescents need special care. There is a need to handle their issues carefully like how they look at mirror, what they watch in T.V., what knowledge/information they are receiving from the T. V., their peer group
activities, what they are talking over phone/issues of their conversation with friends, their body language/gestures. (4/40)

- Parents should attend regular Parent Teacher Meeting (P.T.M.) so that they can watch the activities of adolescents not only related to studies but the behaviour of the child with the teachers, girls/boys, address each and every report given by the teacher. (4/40)

- There is a gap between the age of parents and children, adolescents need some privacy. They have some existence in world, right to say yes or no, we should respect them, and they should be well informed on reproductive health issues.

- Right direction and guidance with regards to their decision making on reproductive health matters should be given importance. (8/40)

**Teachers’ Opinion**

Findings of the study revealed that the teachers’ also agreed on the fact that adolescents have certain reproductive health needs with regards to their holistic growth and development. There was only one teacher who felt that there is no specific reproductive health need of adolescents for their growth and development, and adolescents did not require any special attention. While other respondents (39/40) of the study articulated that adolescents reproductive health needs ranged from good health, right information, quality literature on reproductive health issues, friendly environment, family support and care, healthy peer interaction etc… The respondents of the study said that:

- Parents have a vital role in socialization-adolescents need parental affection, interaction, and time. They definitely need guidance on good and bad touch. (5/40)

- Nutrition is a vital need, adolescents eat more fast food, they like coke (cold drink) instead of milk. They are not physically strong. Adolescents need good health, environment, diet, and most important is literature. (12/40)

- Adolescents experience physiological changes so need to give knowledge according to that age. They feel hesitated and insulted if something happen wrong in the class. “agar menses class me start ho jaate hain aur dress par stain lag jaate hain, toh girls bahut hi insulted feel karti hain” (if the menses
starts in the class and got stains on the uniform, girls feel insulted). There is a
need to tell them in advance by parents and teachers.

- Adolescents are in confused state of mind. They want to be treated as adults,
whereas, it is required that they learn to adjust with their age. They are in the
phase where they need to adjust with their growing age. They have identity and
role confusion.(9/40)

- Education and guidance need to be imparted to both boys and girls on the
physical changes they are undergoing.

- Most of them are anemic, so need to know about nutrition, need for balanced
diet, health related problems, and counseling.

Teachers emphasized on the point that media hampers the growth of the adolescents.
They watch T. V. a lot which affects their growth. They know each and everything
which they should not, it ultimately hampers their growth. Some teachers also added
that a component of moral education may be added in the reproductive health
education module. They said:

- Adolescents’ cultural development is needed. There is a need to give them
proper socialization, moral education. If we (teachers) will speak on it
(reproductive health issues), they start laughing so, need a school counselor.

- In government schools many of the students are from slums. During physical
changes they use abusive language. They write and paint dirty messages on the
walls “students school ke corridor, washroom me bahut he vulgar pictures
banate hain” (Students draw vulgar pictures in the corridor and washroom of
the school). If we hide things, their level of curiosity will get increased and it
will affect their emotional, mental and educational development. Hence there is
a need to give them some moral education too.

- They need to understand society and social relationships. As the adolescents
are not knowledgeable so, need to tell them everything in proper detail. There is
need to tell them with the help of examples, tell them about the reproductive
health diseases.
With the words of caution teachers said that:

- There is need to give adolescents right information at right age and in right content. (5/40)

### 7.3 SCHOOL HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP AND GUIDE THE STUDENTS FOR THEIR HOLISTIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

#### Parents' Opinion

All the parents (40/40) opined that school has a responsibility to help and guide the students for their holistic growth and development. Parents conveyed that though it is a responsibility of school but teachers has so much to do. Besides this there are the parents who considered that parents and teachers have equal responsibility. Few parents felt that the parents have prime responsibility. The below statements given by the parents reflect their opinion:

- Teachers can make adolescents understand well, we (parents) can not. They follow the teacher as a role model. Students respect teacher more than parents and easily accept whatever teacher says. (4/40)

- Everything related to education, they are getting from school so it is good if this education should be given by them

- Maximum time students spend is in school but parents and teachers have equal responsibility. (2/40)

- Certain schools have taken the responsibility. They are providing the counseling but they are burdened with other assignments.

- School has a secondary responsibility. The family has a prime responsibility to help and guide their children. With girls it is a responsibility of mother and with boys its father. (3/40)

Peer Group role was emphasized and Media role was also discussed by parents. Some parents stressed on the duties of the teachers, and they feel even parents also need reproductive health education:
• School deals with the same age group children so, peer group discussions are healthy. The way of thinking becomes almost same as they get same answer of their queries. (7/40)

• Media is giving half information so they need complete and right information.

• School should give the right report of the students to parents, exact status of the behaviour – what the child is doing. Parent teacher interaction is needed. Parent should be aware of their rights to get complete information regarding the child’s performance.

• It is good if school takes responsibility. Educate parents too on reproductive health issues. (10/40)

**Teachers’ Opinion**

Two teachers were not in favour that school has responsibility to help and guide students for their growth and development. Some of the teachers were in favour to certain extent but not much, it was conveyed by the teachers that its one extra responsibility and they feel overburdened. Teachers cited that:

• No, it is not school’s responsibility. Teachers already have so much to do. They learn on their own.

• Not much, everything is there in the books so no extra information is needed. Whatever is there in the syllabus is enough. If school sees something wrong then prevent the same.

• School has a great responsibility, but time constraints are there. We have continuous classes. Teacher has to deal with 40-50 students. Every teacher is overburdened to complete the syllabus. If some students need the help and guidance we provide otherwise we would not. (12/40)

Teachers stressed on the role of the parents and specifically mother. They felt that family has a primary responsibility. Media’s role was also highlighted by the teachers:

• Teachers’ responsibility is to certain level, Parents should be much more responsible. Every child has a different psychology some feel “ohhhh kya bata rahe hein”. 

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• Most important is mother’s role. First its mother’s responsibility, we are second educator. (5/40)

• Media is telling why we (teachers) can not.(2/40)

• Media is playing a great role so, school’s role is marginal.(2/40)

Most of the teachers were in favour (13/40) and cited that its teachers’ responsibility but somehow they have not taken, teachers are role model, school has a great impact on adolescents etc.:

• To great extent-students are from poor family background, uneducated parents. So, teacher has a responsibility to help and guide them.

• Teachers play a vital role in motivating the students towards right direction. Adolescents consider teachers as role model. Adolescents can not speak to their parents, they can speak to teachers freely.

• Definitely school has a great impact on personality of the students. School can give reproductive health education in a balanced way. Students would not feel misguided or confused. Teachers and counselors should help and guide the students.

• Teachers’ role is very important. There are contents on reproductive health education in Biology chapters which needs to explain with elaboration. Cite examples so that students get answer without asking the questions which will reduce their level of anxiety.

With a word of caution, teachers cited that:

• School should have proper environment, staff, facilities, and time. Special counselor should be there.

• It (reproductive health education) should be provided by using proper method of education.

• Teachers’ role in moral education is very necessary. Through inculcating good moral values, the adolescents can be helped in distinguishing between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’.
7.4 NECESSITY TO IMPART REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Parents’ Opinion

Parents were interviewed to know their opinion on the necessity to impart reproductive health education in schools for adolescents.

![Pie chart showing opinion of parents](image)

Figure 7.1: Opinion of Parents on the Necessity to Impart Reproductive Health Education in Schools (N=40)

Figure 7.1 reflects that except one (3%) parent, all were in favour of imparting reproductive health education in school. The reason cited was:

- It is not the responsibility of schools. The responsibility goes to the parents. It is good if school provides but it is not their responsibility. Primary responsibility is of the parents

Other parents opined that like other subjects reproductive health education should also be given by school teachers. Parents also mentioned that school is the best place because adolescents learn in a better way in their peer group. Few parents stressed on the point that school counselor or expert can take sessions and parents and teachers
should be a part of the same. They also emphasized on the role of school, as messages from media some times are not appropriate. Parents cited that:

- Teachers teach students on various issues and it will be effective if they take the responsibility to teach and guide students on reproductive health issues.
- At certain age adolescents require reproductive health education. It is not necessary they get the same from family atmosphere. But school definitely can provide the same as the students are of same age group in the class and equally need the education on reproductive health issues.
- Some issues can not be discussed with the child by the parents. School can call counselor, psychologist for taking sessions. Both parents and teachers should coordinate with each other, understand that they have mutual responsibility to give information to the child.
- In contemporary scenario if the adolescents are not aware of reproductive health issues, they feel scared “ek Hawwa si lagati hai” (It seems like an issue). As parents we do not know the limit to tell them, whether to tell openly or not. We can not speak to them – a hesitation is there that how to communicate. Parents need not to speak on such issues because of respect “aankho ki sharam honi chayiye”. It is necessary to provide reproductive health education in schools.
- In today’s time adolescents can get into wrong company. T.V. advertisement give generalized information so, they need to be made aware of right information at right age. What they watch through T.V., cinema, and internet, need right direction on that.

**Teachers’ Opinion**

Teachers have a pivotal role in imparting reproductive health education to adolescents. Hence, the teachers were asked to give their opinion on the same. Teachers’ responses on the same are reflected in the figure 7.2.
It has been noted that six (15%) of the teachers do not think important to impart reproductive health education in schools. They cited different reasons like instead of providing reproductive health education in schools provide quality literature on it, students will misinterpret the information given by the teacher and promiscuity will get increased, they learn through their own experiences, the content is there in science books so no need to tell about it separately, statements of teachers are given below:

- No, do not give in co-education school. There is no comfortable environment, girls will feel shy, students will misinterpret, if they will get open and do experiment. If reproductive health education be given everything will get destroyed, “Chingari ko havwa doge toh aag to bhadkegi”

- No it is not necessary. They learn through their own experiences. If we will become more open they could take liberty and do experiment for example, Condom – they could feel of experimenting. “condom use karo, toh kya saare galat kam karo?”. Tell them at right time, keep it as secret. Now T.V. advertisements telling about it openly, children are becoming forward. We should tell them in limits.
The teachers who felt that it is necessary to impart reproductive health education, they opined that imparting reproductive health education help adolescents to get right information and they will not feel misguided, misinformed. Teachers also stressed on appointing a counselor for imparting reproductive health education. Some teachers were in favour that reproductive health education should be provided as like other subject or as a part of Science/Home Science subject. Few teachers also said that school is best as there are same age group adolescents. Media has a vital role to play was realized by few teachers.

- Guidance is needed. For example, a student of sixth class in our school caught with a nude photograph from a newspaper. School has created an issue while it should have been taken casually. Such students belong to poor socio economic background where there is one room, parents are making love in front of them. There is an urgent need to impart reproductive health education in schools.

- Students have misconceptions so there is a need to deal with that. Knowledge is needed. Boys write abusive language at walls. So school should educate them for creating proper environment.

- Sometimes they commit some mistake. If they are aware, they will not do so. School can impart reproductive health education as one of the subject.

- There is a need to have counselors in the schools who could speak to adolescents comfortably without hesitation.

- There are chapters related to reproductive health in the syllabus. Each and everything should be told to students. It is not a matter of “shame or pride”, should not feel awkward. So impart proper knowledge which will take them to the right direction.

- Adolescence is the age of physical and psychological changes, attraction towards opposite gender is very high for example, girls say “boys toh chedenge hi”. So they need guidance. Impact in the same age group is much better then dealing separately with adolescents.

- Today’s generation has become mature at early age because of media influence so they need to know about precautions. For example, for unwanted pregnancy
emergency pills so they need to know about its side effects. There is need to deal with their curiosity through proper education. Chapters dealing with reproductive health issues in books should be dealt very carefully and properly.

One of the teachers felt that it is a joint responsibility of both parents and teachers and commented that:

- Make the adolescents understand about themselves. Identity crisis is there, they are not open to their parents. One needs to understand them. Teachers and parents should give proper time to them and help them in decision making. Stress overloading is there, so we need to deal with that.

**Adolescents’ Opinion**

Both boys and girls (N=320) from private and government schools were interviewed to know about their opinion on the necessity to impart reproductive health education in schools.

![Figure 7.3: Opinion of the Adolescents on the Necessity to Impart Reproductive Health Education in Schools (N=320)](image-url)
Figure 7.3 reflected that 308 students (96%) felt that it is necessary to impart reproductive health education while 12 students (4%) were not in favour. Students cited various reasons in support of their opinion like:

- Need to make the young generation aware about reproductive health issues
- It helps adolescents to know the harmful effects of the unhealthy risky behaviour
- It will broaden our thinking and prevent us from teenage pregnancy, unprotected sex and RTI/STI/HIV/AIDS
- It will help in developing positive attitude towards reproductive health issues
- It will prevent adolescents from getting wrong information from other sources and prevent from committing mistakes. It helps in taking right decisions.
- One can not ask parents directly on each and every aspect of reproductive health issues

The students who do not feel the necessity to impart reproductive health education said that:

- Do not want to discuss as feel shy. It is a personal issue so need not to be discussed.
- There are many other elements such as T.V., internet, radio etc. by which a large number of people can get information

### 7.5 AN APPROPRIATE CLASS FROM WHICH REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION SHOULD BE STARTED

**Parents’ Opinion**

Parents were asked to give their opinion on the class from which reproductive health education can be imparted to the students. The responses received from parents were represented in the figure 7.4.
Note: one of the parents’ responses was not taken in this component as (s)he was against of imparting reproductive health education in school.

Figure 7.4: Opinion of Parents – An Appropriate Class from which Reproductive Health Education should be Started (N=39)

Teachers’ Opinion

Similar to parents’ findings the teachers also suggested that from sixth, eighth or ninth onwards reproductive health education can be started. Their preferences can be seen in the figure 7.5.

Note: Six of the respondents felt that it is not necessary to impart reproductive health education, hence their view on appropriate class for the same was not taken.

Figure 7.5: Opinion of Teachers – An Appropriate Class from which Reproductive Health Education should be Started (N=34)
Parents and teachers cited various reasons for initiating reproductive health education among adolescents from one particular class. Their responses were categorized according to the class they have suggested for starting the reproductive health education (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Reasons for Initiating Reproductive Health Education among Adolescents from One Particular Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Reasons cited by Parents</th>
<th>Reasons cited by Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>Adolescents experience physical changes, they have curiosity to know. If not dealt properly they will develop myths and misconceptions.</td>
<td>Attain maturity and can understand about reproductive system. Entering in adolescents-girls starts menstruating and boys starts masturbating so need information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>They attain maturity and can understand well. They are not much aware hence need reproductive health education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>They experience physical changes. They do experiments so need right kind of education. They should be aware of before the initiation of menstrual periods.</td>
<td>Reproductive developments starts from this age and changes are visible. Give them complete, proper age specific knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ninth</td>
<td>It is a puberty age and they experience changes so need knowledge. Need to initiate at this level and in eleventh-twelfth it should be in details.</td>
<td>Physical, mental, and social development start from this age. Knowingly or unknowingly they are observing things which enhance their curiosity to know about reproductive health issues. They are influence with peer group discussion. Need right education, else can be misled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From above it can be seen that though parents have their own views on the class from which reproductive health education should be started, but reason behind a particular class mentioned is almost similar that they attain maturity, physical changes, understand well etc… It can be noticed that parents cited that reproductive health education should be started from sixth, seventh, eighth or ninth, but by ninth it should be initiated. All the respondents cited that reproductive health education should be provided either from ninth or before that.
Teachers also felt the same ways as the parents that education on reproductive health issues should be started as and when students attain maturity, can understand properly. It can be sixth, eighth or ninth class.

*It is seen from the findings that both parents and teachers felt that either from ninth or before that adolescents should be given reproductive health education.*

### 7.6 Reproductive Health Issues/Topics/Areas Can Be Included in Reproductive Health Education

#### Parents’ Opinion

Parents were interviewed to suggest the topics, which can be included in reproductive health education. The responses came from the respondents are reflected in the figure 7.6.

![Reproductive Health Issues Suggested by Parents to be Included in Reproductive Health Education](image)

- **Female reproductive biology:** 39
- **Male reproductive biology:** 39
- **Menstrual periods:** 38
- **How pregnancy occurs:** 6
- **HIV/AIDS prevention:** 32
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections:** 33
- **Methods of Birth Control:** 33

Note: one of the parents’ responses was not taken in this component as (s)he was against imparting reproductive health education in school.

**Figure 7.6: Reproductive Health Issues Suggested by Parents to be Included in Reproductive Health Education (N=39)**

Parents were also asked to tell about other topics/issues which they feel should be addressed in reproductive health education module. They specifically mentioned the following:

- Social values to both girls and boys like family adjustment/family bonding/parent-child relationship, gender sensitization
- Sexual harassment, role of media, highlight the role of parents
Problems they can encounter related to sex relationships. In this age they have attraction towards opposite sex so need value education

Teachers’ Opinion

There were various topics suggested by the teachers, which can be included in reproductive health education. The responses from the respondents are reflected in the figure 7.7.

![Figure 7.7: Reproductive Health Issues Suggested by Teachers to be Included in Reproductive Health Education (N=34)](image)

Note: Six of the respondents felt that it is not necessary to impart reproductive health education, hence their view on appropriate class for the same was not taken.

When teachers were asked to mention some other topics they considered which can be a part of reproductive health education, they said that:

- Balanced diet, Telling the adolescents about the appropriate literature on reproductive health issues which can be accessed by them
- Provide moral education to prevent pregnancy and abortion.
- Need to conduct session on how to deal with mental and psychological stress. They are doing things repeatedly without knowing that what they are doing. It
affects their social relationships and develops psychological disorders so, need counselor for counseling.

- Conduct session on how to do upbringing of the child during and after the delivery.
- Need to promote religious thoughts, moral values. Tell them about hazards, perspective, and reasons of providing reproductive health education. Adolescents have analytical mind so, must tell the reason of providing such education.

Adolescents’ Opinion

Adolescents were interviewed to suggest the topics, which can be included in reproductive health education. The responses received from the respondents are reflected in the figure 7.8.

![Figure 7.8: Reproductive Health Issues as Suggested by Adolescents to be Included in Reproductive Health Education (N=320)](image)

It can be seen that respondents wanted that all the topics mentioned in the figure 7.8 should be included as part of reproductive health education.
7.7 APPROPRIATE METHODS FOR TEACHING OR DISCUSSING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES WITH ADOLESCENTS

Parents’ Opinion

Most of the parents have opined that one single method for imparting reproductive health education is not effective. All the methods are equally important. They may be use as per the requirement and needs of different group of adolescents. Discussion with adolescents on reproductive health issues was most preferred method of teaching in parents’ opinion. It has also been believed by parents that discussion should be used with other methods. Some parents preferred problem solving method in combination with other methods. The same opinion was reflected in the following statements made by the respondents:

- Discussion is very effective in a way, students can ask questions. Encourage them to ask questions. For example, one of the parents shared that during her school days a boy in her class was slapped by the biology teacher on asking a question about male reproductive organs. She felt that it was an inappropriate behaviour of the teacher.

- Lecture and discussion method will also prove effective. Do not make it a “Hawwa” (issue), take it easy in a natural way. If someone is feeling disturbed, we can provide counseling

- Use live experiences, discuss case studies. Talk to adolescents about good or bad touch.

- Use visual methods, documentary movies can be screened and then have discussions on it – it should be interesting, informative and should not be disgraceful (cheap).

- Provide counseling then discussion with each student about his/her problem. In other methods, can have experience sharing sessions like interaction with People Living with HIV/AIDS (P.L.H.A.).

- There is a need to hold discussion first and after that problem-solving method will be effective.
Teachers’ Opinion

Similar to parents’ opinion, Teachers also opined that all the methods of teaching should be utilized in the combination with each other. Few teachers felt that reproductive health education should be given in the same way as in other subjects:

- No need to use special methods. Teach in the same way as you are teaching other subjects, use the same methods. Give them complete knowledge, no need to adopt different method. They should not feel that something different/special is being taught. Encourage them to ask questions and discuss so that hesitation can be removed.

Discussion was considered most effective way to communicate with adolescents in combination with other methods. Teachers also opined that interactive educational activities can be conducted along with other methods. Counseling, problem solving and discussing with each students are some of the ways teachers felt can be used together. Teachers stressed on the fact that only lecture will not be effective. Below are the statements expressed by the teachers:

- Only use of Lecture method would not work, rest of the methods are good.

- Discussion is must, identify points and then discuss them. Conduct interactive education activities, share life experiences as students take interest in that. Use electronic media.

- General Discussion followed by providing individual attention to each student about his/her problems and then provide appropriate counseling.

- Lecture method is good followed by Discussion. Slide show and screen documentary movies and showing reproduction on animals not on human beings. For e.g., discovery channel-they show animals.

- Counseling is very important. Besides this problem solving method can be used and discussing with each student about his/her problem. Case studies from real life experiences can also be taken up as an example.
In addition teachers also talked about the methods which can be very effective like:

- Teachers can ask students to write their problems and give to the teacher, later the teacher will address the issues.
- Initiate a seminar so that they will learn besides the class room. Counseling is must. Session on reproductive health should be made compulsory in each school at least two periods every week with each class
- Discuss on curiosity. If someone is going wrong then use inquiry method. Show slides and CD and then ask questions. Use of audio-visual aids is very effective.

Adolescents’ Opinion

Students were asked to give priority (I, II, and III) to the appropriate method for learning about reproductive health issues. Figure 7.9 reflected various priority mentioned by the students.

* The total number of responses is more than the total number of respondents because of multiple responses

Figure 7.9: Opinion of the Adolescents on Appropriate Method for Learning about Reproductive Health Issues (N=320)
Students preferred the discussion method as the most appropriate and then lecture method. They cited that lecture method should be followed by some other method also like discussion, interactive activities, slide presentation or case examples etc…

7.8 APPROPRIATE SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR ADOLESCENTS TO LEARN ABOUT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES

Parents, teachers and adolescent students were asked to give their opinion on the appropriate source of information from where the adolescents can learn about reproductive health issues.

Parents’ Opinion

The below given figure (7.10) reflects the parents’ opinion on the appropriate source of information for adolescents to learn about reproductive health issues.

Parents cited various reasons in support of their opinion which are presented in the table 7.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Reasons in support cited by the parents</th>
<th>Reasons cited by parents who do not support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents-Mother is cited as most important</td>
<td>As they spend maximum time with children. It is a good source. They should have friendly relationship without hesitation.</td>
<td>Parents can not explain properly as they have a limited knowledge. They should maintain a distance because there are certain moral values, so it is difficult for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Student and teachers can discuss its two-way method. Students believe more on whatever is told by teacher. Teachers can be more friendly with students. Students feel comfortable in sharing with teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School Counselor</td>
<td>Only the skilled person should provide reproductive health education. School counselors should compulsorily be appointed in all the schools. It is a very good source, counseling is essential.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Doctors can make students understand very well with scientific knowledge. They explain very nicely because of the clarity of concepts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Friends as they influence each other to a large extent</td>
<td>Friends have limited knowledge. Friends are immature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Siblings also have limited knowledge. They might have misconception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Books/Magazines/Newspaper</td>
<td>Should be selective as per the curriculum, every class has different curriculum. It is good to certain extent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T.V./Radio</td>
<td>T.V. information is enough. Lots of campaign comes so it is good. Like condom so it is a best medium.</td>
<td>One would not have a choice to choose the programs according to the age-group. Adolescents need guidance through one to one interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Source of Information</td>
<td>Reasons in support cited by the parents</td>
<td>Reasons cited by parents who do not support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Media is not appropriate as its one-way method. For e.g., I Pill, an emergency contraceptive pills, advertisement would not tell after effects of the pills. It should be banned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Internet is a major source—we can give informative mails to students through NGOs or institutions related with these issues. E-mail Id can be collected with the help of parents and teachers. It gives enough information.</td>
<td>Through internet they can access wrong information which could mislead. After enough maturity, they can use internet for such information. If school will give sufficient information, no need to approach other methods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teachers’ Opinion**

The below given figure (7.11) reflects the teachers’ opinion on the influential source of information for adolescents to learn about reproductive health issues.

![Figure 7.11: Opinion of Teachers on the Appropriate Source of Information for Adolescents to Learn about Reproductive Health Issues (N=34)]

N=34

Note: Six of the respondents felt that it is not necessary to impart reproductive health education, hence their view on appropriate class for the same was not taken.
Teachers cited various reasons in support of their opinion which are presented in the table 7.3

**Table 7.3: Appropriate Source of Information Suggested by Teachers to Impart Reproductive Health Education and the Reasons Cited in Support of their Opinion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Reasons Cited by the Teachers in support</th>
<th>Reasons cited by the teachers who do not support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Parents and children are in direct contact. They have an important role in socialization of their children.</td>
<td>They might feel hesitant. Would not have time so they can not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Teachers can be a significant source in providing information to adolescents as they have great impact on students’ life. Sometimes adolescents would not listen to parents, but listen carefully to teachers. They are the role model to students.</td>
<td>It is difficult for teachers. They have to be tough and strict, whereas for providing this type of education s/he needs to be polite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>School Counselor</td>
<td>Because adolescents are not in regular touch with them so they can share their feelings openly. Yes it is a must at least one counselors should be appointed in each school. Counselor is essential as they can understand the problems of students well and have more time as compare to teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>Doctors are better as they can explain well on biological issues. They can guide on the study material which students can access.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Most interactions happen in peer group “Dost ki baat pathar ki lakeer hai” so promote peer group education.</td>
<td>Friends share a lot but how much is correct, can not say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>Elder ones can give.</td>
<td>As like friends they will give incomplete knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Books/Magazines/Newspaper</td>
<td>Books are very effective source of information and both print and electronic media can be used for disseminating information among adolescents.</td>
<td>Some considered that the information from books can be misinterpreted, misunderstood by adolescents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>T.V./Radio</td>
<td>Should telecast programmes on particular day and time which we can show to girls and boys. For e.g., Programme like Pragya, Love guru. It is more effective.</td>
<td>The information received from T.V./radio can be misused by the adolescents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Lots of information is available.</td>
<td>Information can be misinterpreted, students misuse it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the teachers also highlighted that some special department can be formed specifically for this purpose. The respondent added that:

- Some special department should be there in the school to speak to adolescents on reproductive health issues.

Adolescents’ Opinion

Figure 7.12 reveals the opinion of adolescents on the appropriate source of information to learn about reproductive health issues.

Adolescent students reflected that the teachers would be most appropriate source of information followed by doctors, social workers, counselors, NGO representatives and nurses.

7.9 REACTION, WHEN ADOLESCENTS ASK INFORMATION ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES

Parents and teachers were interviewed to know how they react when adolescents ask information on reproductive health issues.
Parents’ Opinion

Most of the parents (31) felt that they will avoid talking to the adolescents if they ask information on reproductive health issues or else they will tell a little bit. This is very much reflected in the statements given by them:

- I try to avoid (Tal Matol karna) because of our relationship I do not want to get close to my children – a distance should be maintained in order to maintain a respect. When they get married and they ask something, I will definitely tell them.
- I will not be able to clarify easily. If it is urgently needed, I will try my level best.

There were parents (8) who responded that they will definitely address the issues ask by the adolescents. They cited that:

- If she asks something which is not appropriate to tell her at that time, I will explain her some information according to her level and then assure her that the more information will be given at a right time. I feel if I leave her queries unaddressed, she will explore through other sources which could lead to misconception.
- As a good parent, I make him/her understand/explain/clarify doubts. I will guide with a positive attitude.

Teachers’ Opinion

It is to be noted that most of the teachers felt that they will explain to the adolescents on reproductive health issues, if they ask. They expressed that it is necessary to deal with adolescents queries, if left unaddressed it will create curiosity and they can approach wrong source. They strongly felt that teachers should explain each and every detail. They supported their views by saying that:

- An adolescent will ask whenever s/he will face problem so, it is better to tell them.
- I will appreciate and motivate. It is better if s/he asking me. I will clear his/her doubts according to the age and level of understanding.
- I will tell them about positive thinking and give information.
• I will listen and then explain. As some students are not much aware and can commit something serious

There were few teachers who wanted to address the issues of adolescents but expressed that they can speak with specific gender, hesitation is there, etc… They cited that:

• It is difficult to express my views. If it is a boy I might tell in separate but if it is a girl I might not.

• I will react according to age group. Depends if the child is very young (small), I will not tell.

• Such issues are not open in society so some hesitation will be there, I will try to explain

7.10 NEED TO MAKE PARENTS AND TEACHERS AWARE OF THEIR ROLE AS AN EDUCATOR AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS TO ADOLESCENTS

Parents’ Opinion

Only two parents felt that there is no need to make parents and teachers aware of their role as an educator and the need to be effective communicators to adolescents. They cited that:

• No, parents are busy would not have time.

• Not needed for parents and teachers, as they are already trained.

Rest of the parents (37) strongly agreed that parents and teachers required to become an effective communicators to adolescents. They stressed that there is need to conduct training session with parents and teachers so that they can effectively deal with their adolescents on reproductive health issues. Parents also stressed on the point that parents and teachers should meet during PTM (Parent Teacher Meeting) and discuss on the matters related to reproductive health education. They conveyed that:
• Yes, it is definitely needed. The special department can hold session for parents and teachers. If parents and teachers are well informed they could help that department in disseminating information to students. Coordination between parents, teachers and special department is required to impart effective education among students.

• School should hold sessions for parents. We will definitely go for our child in school “"Agar school hame bulayega, hum turrant jayenge"”. School should be active to ensure parents’ involvement in school activities.

• Yes, it is needed. PTM (Parent Teacher Meeting) can train teachers and parents together. Adolescence is a sensitive age, need to handle properly. Adolescents are mentally confused so need counseling.

**Teachers’ Opinion**

Teachers considered that that there is need to make parents and teachers aware of their role as an educator and there is need to be effective communicators to adolescents. Although they felt that teachers are already trained so they would not require any training, parents might need that some. Most of the teachers shared that there is need to make parents and teachers aware of their role as an effective educator to the adolescents. They conveyed that communication skills are necessary, need to organize meetings and seminars, need to know how to respond and talk to adolescents. They quoted that:

• Teachers are already educated, they have studied all things in B. Ed.

• Yes, Yuva program has the provision for this. So teachers are already getting the training.

• Yes, coming to their level. A platform is needed to tell them the importance of reproductive health education in fact needs to tell both the parents.

• Yes, there are certain topics, even we are not aware. If a small child is asking something – how to answer, for e.g., pregnancy.
7.11 COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS ON THE ISSUES OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

Parents’ Responses

Parents were asked if they have any comment or suggestion on the issue of reproductive health education. All the parents gave their opinion and suggestions. They commented that reproductive health education should be given to both boys and girls, parents and teachers should help the students in decision making. One of the parents cited that:

- Reproductive health education should be given without creating much hype, we should accept its importance. For example if a girl has an affair with a boy, parents and teachers should take it casually, explain to both the adolescents about each and every aspect so that they can think in a healthy way and can make proper choices for their decision. Parents and teachers should respect the adolescents’ individuality, decisions, and activities. They should be watchful but in a way that child should not feel “meri Jasoosi ho rahi hai”. We should have some equal rules for children of both gender like when to come back home, should have a fair attitude for both the gender.

Most of the parents felt that schools should make reproductive health education mandatory. They said school is one place where students get same knowledge so the scope of misinterpretation is reduced. They also added that school should involve the parents too. They suggested that Parent Teacher Meeting (PTM) could be one platform where these issues can be discussed:

- Parents have different knowledge on reproductive health issues so they tell concept according to their knowledge with their children. Students discuss all the information received from parents and various sources in their peer group and they get confused and conceive wrong concepts. Teachers impart same knowledge to whole class so scope is not there to develop misconception.

- School should initiate to provide the reproductive health education to the students as the teachers are educated enough to explain properly. School should take initiative and involve the parents.
• If the school will provide the reproductive health education, it will help the parents. Children will not face any problem in schools, for e.g., teenage pregnancy and frequent abortions can be reduced. It is certainly for the betterment of the children, they have lots of myths and misconceptions.

• There is a need of interaction between parents and teachers on this issue. Like PTM, Parents and teachers can meet regularly and strengthen the program on reproductive health education.

Parents were also of the opinion that school counselors should be appointed to provide reproductive health education and stressed that parents and teachers should also be involved in the same. They added that:

• Reproductive health education should be given as other subjects are taught in the school. Counselor should be appointed to take sessions in classes in a healthy environment.

• Doctors or some specialists should be invited sometimes to conduct special session for parents and teachers too. They should cite examples, conduct case discussions, discuss situation and how to handle those situations. These kind of workshops should become a regular feature in all the schools.

Parents also stressed on the point that reproductive health education should be given gradually and appropriately in a culture sensitive manner,

• It is necessary to provide reproductive health education but according to the prevailing cultural norms in the society. Adolescents will definitely take information on reproductive health issues whether from proper or improper sources so, it is better to give them information but gradually and appropriately like breakfast at morning, lunch at afternoon and dinner at night. First of all educate parents and teachers

• Right education at right age and give information slowly according to their age and class.

• Should give reproductive health education in a healthy manner. Give the information cautiously so that they would not take it negatively and misuse, and misinterpret. This age is sensitive so, needs right education at right time.
Parents raised a very important issue that the children from low socio-economic family, who are staying in one room need the reproductive health education, media’s crucial role was also emphasized by parents. They also added that component on moral values also required such education:

- Family atmosphere should be balanced, for e.g., in slums there is only one room, everything is happening in front of children. T.V. shows showing everything in detail which is not good. We should deal with it.
- Teachers’ should regularly interact with the students. But students do experiment so, it has negative impact too. Should stress on moral values – control and limits should be there.

**Teachers’ Responses**

Almost all the teachers commented and suggested on the issues of reproductive health education. Most of them said that there should be school counselor for providing such education.

- There is a need to appoint counselors in schools. Teachers are already overburdened. Students should be made aware that physical changes are natural biological process. They should not feel shy and discuss with ease with their parents. Adolescents should make themselves safe. Even if abuse takes place, they usually do not share with their parents. They get pregnant and abort the same with the help of their boyfriends without disclosing it to their parents. I-Pill is creating a major blunder. There should be a ban on T. V. advertisement like I-Pill. Earlier there was a fear of abortion among unmarried youth but now they have I-Pill. If you do a survey you will find maximum sell of I-pill is amongst adolescent unmarried girls. Students should know safety measures and after effects. If a student commits some mistakes, do not make him realize as s/he has done some sin. Ask them to learn from mistakes. Do not compel them to commit suicide. Parents’ education is very essential.

School counselor should give this education as teachers have less time available. Students will also feel comfortable with them.

- During reproductive health education, students should be informed about dangerous diseases, unwanted pregnancy, about simple medicines. There is a
need to appoint special counselors in all schools. Special needs of adolescents should be addressed at the school level. Proper funding is needed to run programs related to reproductive health education.

- There is a need to have school counselor so that they can deal with students’ feelings in each and every way. Teachers can not share on all the issues.

Like parents, teachers also stressed on the point that a component on moral values should be incorporated with reproductive health education program. They also added that it should be culture sensitive and given gradually in an appropriate way:

- Moral values should be given to students. They need to be told how to maintain healthy relationships.
- Start slowly and provide reproductive health education according to age. Gradually they can be imparted in depth reproductive health education.
- Stress should be laid on good manners as “manners make a man”. They should be taught how to behave in society.
- If we give them education on reproductive health issues, first we need to give education on moral values, social norms, social restrictions, and prevailing norms of Indian society. Purpose of reproductive health education should be made clear to the adolescents. We should tell them about right and wrong, advantages and disadvantages of reproductive health education. Simultaneously tell them about Indian culture.

Media’s significant role is cited by the teachers and suggested to have provision of telephonic counseling:

- Media’s role is very important. There is a need of availability of telephonic counseling.

Teachers also suggested to name the program as ‘healthy living’. They were also of the opinion that a regular monitoring is required. They cited that the motive of the reproductive health education is being disregarded by the people hence need to take action. Teachers cited that:

- The motive of this education is getting ignored by the people. They feel it is for the pleasure while it is not so. It is to prevent society from dangerous diseases. There is a need to correct the viewpoint of teachers and parents
• Name it as health issues for boys and girls or healthy living. Do not emphasize much on other issues just address it. Encourage students to ask questions. Put up a question box in schools and address later.

• There is a need to do monitoring and evaluation of the reproductive health education given to the students that how they are utilizing the information. Bring modification accordingly. It should not misguide them.

Teachers suggested that there is a need to work in coordination with parents, teachers and government. Teachers were also of the view that students should not be stopped to learn about reproductive health issues and cited that

• Teachers should not feel hesitant about reproductive health education. “It should flow as river flows, if we try to stop students learning about reproductive health education, it will not stop so, better to give a direction to the flow from the starting point itself”.

• Not only parents and teachers but government should assume responsibility. Like advertisements on HIV/AIDS, create awareness on reproductive health needs of the adolescents. There is a need to make adolescents responsible citizen of society.

7.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted that almost all the parents, teachers and adolescents opined that adolescents have physical, psychological and social needs associated with reproductive health issues which should be addressed properly. Most important is the right guidance at right time by the trained and skilled persons on all the growing up issues of the adolescents. The respondents have also added that a component on moral values should be incorporated with reproductive health education program. It should be culture sensitive and given gradually in an appropriate way. Respondents emphasized on the need to appoint school counselor. They stressed on the fact that the parents and teachers also have accountability.