SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The issues of sexual and reproductive health have remained a forbidden topic for a long time among the Mizo people due to the influence of cultural, religious and geographical factors in Mizoram. In spite of this, there is an urgent need to address sexuality among our youth due to various reasons—like teenage pregnancy, sex abuse and exploitation, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV etc. Yet, the implementation of comprehensive sex education in the schools continues to be a controversial issue. Hence, it would be pertinent to discover the attitude of the students, the teachers as well as the community towards sex education.

ATTITUDE:

Attitude can be said as a specific mental state. It is a viewpoint one holds towards a person, object, task or idea. It stimulates the behavior and performance of an individual. Attitude may be explained as a mental preparedness which provide stimulus for an individual in some directions. Attitude develops gradually as a result of individual’s experiences. The degree or strength of an individual’s attitude may vary from extremely positive to extremely negative.
MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDE

One of the important objectives of education is development of desirable attitude. Attitude plays an important role for success in different vocation. Attitude can be of three types i.e, positive, neutral and negative.

**Attitude Scales:** Attitude scales are most commonly used technique for measuring attitudes. They are means of measurement which measure various characteristics about a thing or principle. The scales are used for discovering the opinions and attitude of the individuals concerning different objects, problems and persons. Attitude scales reveal the reaction of the individual towards some particular things and from these reactions his attitude can be assumed. Thus attitude scales are self-report inventories designed to measure the extent to which an individual has favourable or unfavourable feelings towards some persons, objects, institutions or ideas. Two popular attitude scales are Likert scale and Thurstone scale.

**OPINIONNAIRE**

Opinion is what a person says on certain aspects of the issue under consideration. It is an outward expression of an attitude held by an individual. Attitudes of an individual can be inferred or estimated from his statements of opinions.
SEX EDUCATION

Sex is a universal phenomenon that is present in all organisms. Sex education is instruction on issues relating to human sexuality, including human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual activity, reproductive health, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibilities, abstinence, and birth control. Sex education is also understood as all educational measures which, in any way, help young people prepare to meet the problems of life that have their centre in the sex instinct and incidentally come in some form into the sex of every normal human being.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Every nation, society and community has to work towards promoting the health of its people. When children acquire knowledge, desirable attitudes, values and life skills, they benefit in a variety of ways. Sex Education is the inculcation of the correct moral attitudes towards sex. It means all the educational measures, which prepare young people to meet the problems of life centers around the sex instinct.

As there is no consensus regarding introduction of sex education in school and college syllabus in India, it would be very interesting to find out the real attitude of students, teachers and the community in Mizoram towards this program. Besides, no studies have ever been conducted in Mizoram to study the attitude of the Mizo’s towards sex education. Therefore, the present study has been taken up so as to facilitate the
curriculum framers in making decisions about inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum. Therefore, the problem for the present study has been stated as “Attitude of Students, Teachers and Community towards Sex Education at Secondary School Level in Mizoram”.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

1. To construct and standardize an attitude scale towards sex education at secondary school level.
2. To study the attitude of students, teachers, and community towards sex education at secondary school level.
3. To make gender wise comparison of the attitude of students, teachers and community towards sex education at secondary school level.
4. To make rural and urban comparison of the attitude of students, teachers and community towards sex education at secondary school level.
5. To compare the attitude of students, teachers and community towards sex education at secondary school level.
6. To study the opinions of students, teachers and community on different aspects of inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum.

**HYPOTHESES**

1. There are no significant gender differences in the attitude of students, teachers, community, urban and rural
respondents towards sex education at secondary school level.

2. There are no significant locale differences in the attitude of students, teachers, community, urban and rural respondents towards sex education at secondary school level.

3. There are no significant differences in the attitude of different groups of respondents towards sex education at secondary school level.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERM USED IN THE TITLE

1. **Attitude:** Attitude is a negative or positive feeling that an individual hold about objects, persons or ideas. Attitude towards sex education in the present study will be represented by the score which is obtained from the Attitude scale towards sex education developed by the investigator.

2. **Students:** The term ‘students’ in the present study refers to those students studying in different secondary schools of Mizoram.

3. **Teachers:** Teachers, in the present study, refers to the teachers of secondary schools in different parts of Mizoram.

4. **Community:** The term ‘community’ in the present study refers to the community members who have children studying at the secondary schools in Mizoram.

5. **Sex Education:** Sex education is education about all aspects of sexuality, including information about family planning, reproduction, plus information about all aspects
of one's sexuality including: body image, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, values, decision making, communication, dating, relationships, sexually transmitted infections and how to avoid them, and birth control methods.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The present study falls within the category of descriptive research with a composite characteristics of inter group comparison, as it involves survey and fact finding enquiry relating to attitudes of students, teachers and community towards sex education in Mizoram in relation to their gender and locality. Blends of both qualitative and quantitative analysis have been employed in the present investigation.

POPULATION

The population of the present study comprise of all the secondary school students, all secondary school teachers and all parents who have secondary school going children in the state of Mizoram.

SAMPLE

For the present study, the sample selected consist of 400 students, 400 teachers and 400 community members having secondary school children from all the eight districts of Mizoram.
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

In order to find out the attitude and opinion of students, teachers and community towards sex education, the investigator constructed an attitude scale towards sex education following Likert’s Method. The scale consists of 35 items in which 15 items were positive and 20 items were negative. The reliability and validity of the scale are .78 and .83 (Product Moment Correlation) respectively. Norms of the scale are presented in the form of Stanine grade.

Opinionnaire to study the opinion of the respondents on different aspects of inclusion of sex education in school was also constructed by the investigator. The Opinionnaire comprise of 10 questions consisting mainly of ticking preferences, 2 rating scale and one open ended question at the end. Content validity was established by giving the opinionnaire to seven (7) experts in the field.

NORMS AND INTERPRETATION OF ATTITUDE SCALE

Norms for interpreting the raw scores are prepared with the help of stanine grade. Accordingly, stanine 1, 2, 3 and 4 indicates negative attitude towards sex education, stanine 5 indicates moderate attitude towards sex education, and stanine 6, 7, 8 and 9 indicates positive attitude towards sex education.

The score range, stanine grade and interpretation of the score are given in the following Table.
Score Range, Stanine Grade and Interpretation of Attitude Scale towards Sex Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Stanine Grade</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>125 and above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Positive Attitude towards Sex Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>118-124</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>111-117</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>105-110</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98-104</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91-97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>84-90</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Negative Attitude towards Sex Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78-83</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>77 and below</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADMINISTRATION OF TOOLS AND COLLECTION OF DATA

Both the opinionnaire comprising of 10 questions and the Attitude Scale which consist of 35 statements was personally administered to all 400 students, 400 teachers and 400 community respondents by visiting schools and communities in all the eight districts of Mizoram. The purposes of the study as well as instructions for ticking the responses of their choice were clearly explained to them. The respondents were also told that there is no right or wrong response. They were given adequate time to ponder over all the statements to ensure a truthful response from them. They were assured that their responses shall be kept strictly confidential, and shall be used only for research purpose.
TABULATION OF DATA

The data collected from the 1200 students, teachers and community were scrutinized, classified and scored according to standard procedure. After scoring the responses of both the opinionnaire and attitude scale, they were tabulated. Each respondent was assigned a serial number in order of the variable being studied. The scores were then entered in the tabulation sheet in Excel and were subject to statistical treatment by employing the following statistical techniques for the analysis.

Descriptive statistics such as Measures of Central tendency, Percentages and stanine were employed to find out the nature of score distribution as well as for the purpose of analyzing the opinionnaire. The difference between the mean scores of the groups based upon the variable such as Attitude, gender and locale were tested for significance by applying the t-test.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The following were the major findings of the present study:

1. Nature and direction of Attitude

(a) Overall Attitude of the Respondents towards Sex Education.

(i) Majority of respondents have positive attitude.
(ii) There are more female respondents with positive attitude than the males. Majority of the male respondents have negative attitude whereas majority of the female respondents have positive attitude towards sex education.

(iii) Among the urban respondents, majority of them have positive attitude towards sex education while among the rural respondents the number of respondents who have positive and negative attitude are practically equal in number.

(b) **Attitude of the community respondents towards Sex Education**

(i) Majority of community respondents have negative attitude towards sex education.

(ii) Both majorities of the male and female community respondents have negative attitude towards sex education.

(iii) The attitude of both the urban and rural community respondents is negative.

(c) **Attitude of student’s Respondents towards Sex Education**

(i) Majority of student’s respondents have negative attitude towards sex education.

(ii) Majority of the female respondents have positive attitude whereas majority of the male attitude is negative towards sex education.

(iii) The attitude of the urban students is positive while the attitude of the rural respondents is negative.
(d) **Attitude of the teacher respondents towards sex education**

(i) Majority of teacher respondents have positive attitude towards sex education.

(ii) Both male and female teacher respondents have positive attitude towards sex education.

(iii) Urban and rural teacher respondents have positive attitude towards sex education.

2. **Significance of Difference in Attitude towards sex education**

(a) **In Relation to Gender**

(i) There exists a significant difference between the male and female respondents with regard to their attitude towards sex education. The difference is in favour of the female respondents at .01 level.

(ii) There exists a significant difference between the male and female teachers and the significant level is at .05 level towards the female respondents.

(iii) There is no significant difference between male and female students with regard to their attitude towards sex education.

(iv) Male and female community members differ significantly with regard to their attitude towards sex education. The difference is in favour of the female members at .05 level.

(v) There exists a significant difference in the attitude of urban male and urban female towards sex education.
The difference is in favour of the urban female at .01 level.

(vi) Rural male and rural female differ significantly with regard to their attitude towards sex education at .01 level of confidence. This is in favour of the rural female respondents

(b) **In Relation to Locale**

(i) There is no significant difference between urban and rural respondents with regard to their attitude towards sex education.

(ii) There is no significant difference between urban teachers and rural teachers with regard to their attitude towards sex education.

(iii) No significant difference is found between urban students and rural students in relation to their attitude towards sex education.

(iv) There is no significant difference between urban community and rural community with regard to their attitude towards sex education.

(v) Urban Male and rural male attitude towards sex education do not differ significantly.

(vi) No significant difference was found between urban female and rural female in relation to their attitude towards sex education.
(c) *In relation to the attitude of students, teachers and community.*

(i) There exists a significant difference in the attitude towards sex education between students and teachers and the difference is in favour of the teachers at .01 level.

(ii) There exists a significant difference between community and teachers in their attitude towards sex education and the difference is in favour of the teachers at .01 level.

(iii) There is no significant difference between students and community with regard to their attitude towards sex education.

3. **Opinion of the Respondents on different aspect of inclusion of Sex Education in schools.**

(a) *Opinion of all respondents on the introduction of sex education in schools.*

It is found that majority of the respondents want to introduce sex education in the schools. The female respondents are more supportive towards introduction of sex education in schools than males. And also, there are more urban respondents than the rural respondents who are in support of introducing sex education in the schools.
(b) *Opinion of all respondents on the stage of implementation of Sex Education in school.*

It is also found that the most desired stage of implementing sex education by majority of the respondents is the middle school stage followed by the secondary stage of education which is again followed by the primary stage of education. The most undesirable stage of implementing sex education by all respondents is the university level.

(c) *Opinion of all respondents on the best method of imparting Sex Education in schools*

The finding also reveals that majority of respondents consider sex education through the school syllabus as the best method of imparting sex education in the schools while the least preferred method is imparting sex education through school assembly.

(d) *Opinion of all respondents on how sex education should be imparted in the schools.*

Findings reveal that majority of the respondents want to give sex education separately for boys and girls, while giving sex education to the students individually is the least preferred.
(e) **Opinion of all respondents on the medium of imparting sex education as a subject in the schools.**

The finding of the present study shows that majority of respondents prefer to offer sex education as a separate subject rather than through different subjects in the schools.

(f) **Preference of all respondents on their choice of service for imparting sex education.**

It has been found that parents are most preferred to take responsibility in imparting sex education while peers are the least preferred.

(g) **Opinion of all respondents on whether Mizo community are well informed on sex education.**

The finding of the study also reveals that majority of the respondents consider that the Mizo community do not receive proper information on sex education.

(h) **Preference of all respondents on the most appropriate place to impart sex education.**

Findings reveal that home is preferred by majority of respondents as the most appropriate place to impart sex education, while Sunday school halls are the least preferred.
(i) **Opinion of all respondents on the topics Sex Education should cover.**

The present study also finds that majority of the respondents consider topics such as HIV/AIDS education, sex abuse, pre-marital sex, physical development & puberty and teenage pregnancy as the most important area to be covered by sex education in the school. Myths & misconceptions topic is being selected by the lowest number of respondents to be included in sex education in the school.

(j) **Opinion of all respondents on the reason for imparting Sex Education in schools.**

The following points are finds to be the major causes as to why sex education should be imparted in the schools:

(i) To prevent the students from AIDS, STI's and other related diseases.
(ii) To prevent the students from sex abuse, sex exploitation and pre-marital sex.
(iii) Most parents hesitate to give sexual awareness to their children and many of them lack proper knowledge about sexual health and education. Therefore, it should be imparted in schools.
(iv) To guide the students in the right path and help them choose the right way of living for their future.
(v) To reduce early marriage, unwanted pregnancy and abortion.
(vi) Since most children attend schools every day, it is very much appropriate to impart sex education in schools.

(vii) Since most children have a tendency to obey their teachers rather than their parents, it is important to impart sex education in schools.

(viii) To help the students understand their physical development especially during adolescence period.

(ix) To teach the bad consequences of experiencing sex at an early age.

(x) For better community life, happy marriage and better social order.

(xi) As our environment is influenced by western culture especially on matters related to sex, through different media it is necessary to impart sex education in schools.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Government should more vigorously organize sensitization and awareness programme to the students, teachers and community in the form of seminar, media etc. about the importance and needs of sex education.

2. Concerned authority should introduce a more comprehensive sex education through the school syllabus starting from upper primary school stage.

3. Government should see that sex education be given separately for boys and girls and should also be imparted as a separate school subject.

4. Apart from introducing sex education in schools, Government should take the initiative of creating awareness
among parents about their responsibility in giving sex education at home.

5. Mizo community should be provided adequate information with issues related to sex education as majority of respondents feel that the general communities are not well informed.

6. Sex education in Mizoram should focus on issues like HIV/AIDS education, sex abuse, pre-marital sex, etc. as these are areas where the incidence of it is most widespread among the Mizo society.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1) A comparative study of the attitude of students, teachers and community towards sex education between two different states in the North East.

2) A study of sex related problems faced by high school students in Mizoram.

3) Parents’ involvement in imparting sex education in Mizoram: A critical study.

4) A study of the knowledge and awareness about sex related problems among sexual workers, and public drivers in Mizoram.

5) An investigation on the measures taken by the Mizoram State Aids Control Society (MSACS) towards Adolescent Education Programme.