Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Men are disturbed not by things but by views they take of them.

- EPICURUS

Maladjustment and its causes

Everyday one meets persons who are disturbed about themselves, about their family, about others and about the world around them. They express their reactions in different types of behaviour through overall depressions, worrying, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, etc. Some show inner or outer aggression, fear or complete withdrawal, which in turn develop high blood pressure, heart attack, peptic ulcers, arthritis or nervous breakdown. Some even go to the extent of committing suicide.

The cause of all the unhappiness and suffering have something to do with one's upbringing or an event in life which is generated by his physical or social state and condition. It is surprising that the actual event does not disturb or upset the person, but his emotional feelings aroused by the event or his opinions or beliefs or unhappiness in his does it. In other words, his reactions to the situation cause disturbance in him. That is why an accident involving deaths of people does not cause any disturbance in a policeman, but the relatives of the dead get a big shock.

The knowledge or lack of knowledge or information plays an important part in moulding or changing a person's views or opinions about a thing. Proper information can change one's state of anxiety and guilt. Here is an example to explain this phenomenon.
The daughter of an army Subedar developed secondary sex characteristics on reaching menarche. Her cheerful and talkative disposition slowly changed into gloom and she often developed stomachache, giddiness, nausea etc. Her mother advised her to go to the hospital and get medicine. When she went there some elder ladies who were waiting there for their turn, saw her and passed judgment about her condition. Some said it was due to conception. Since the girl did not know how conception takes place, she believed that they said and came back without consulting the doctor. She remained very upset and guilt conscious and passed through almost agony for a long time, although there were no signs of pregnancy in her. At the end she came to know the facts about human reproduction and since she did not pass through any sexual contact, she got relieved of her anxiety and fear.

Another girl of sixteen was once kissed by her cousin. She thought that kissing causes conception. She told her mother that she had become pregnant. The mother hurriedly took her to a gynecologist who after examining her said that she was still virgin and had perhaps a wrong notion of conceiving. Many such examples can be quoted, as ignorance about sex matters prevails vastly in young children, especially girls of upper society. Wrong attitudes toward sex and sexuality are nurtured by young men and women for lack of correct knowledge of human reproduction.

Scope of human sexuality

Human sex knowledge does not simply include anatomy and physiology of sex organs, but should rather include all emotional feelings, attitudes and mores of society in it. Male sex role and female sex role are also different. The female has not only to participate in the sex act but has also not conceive,
develop the child in her womb for nine months with mixed pleasure and pain, to pass through labour pain at the time of delivery, to give birth to the child and then to rear him or her for a long time, depending on the conventions of the society. The male role also involves a lot more than courting and being active in the sex act. He also passes through fear and guilt about masturbation, nocturnal discharge, his responsibility for conception of his partner and then taking care of spouse and family. Thus the knowledge of sexuality does not simply mean the physical side of sex, but it also includes attitudes, feelings and adjustment with persons of his or her own sex and the opposite sex.

According to Kohlberg, a child's gender plays an important role in psychological and social development throughout his or her entire life span. Before school age, most children recognize their own sexual identity and develop their own concepts of male and female beings. Since biological and social differences exist between the role of the two sexes, many behavioural sex-differences are produced due to the interaction of the two.

Elazar Maccoby states —

.... The sex-typed attributes of personality and temperament are the product of weaving of differential social demands within certain biological determinants that help produce or augment differential cultural demands upon the two sexes. The biological underpinnings set model tendencies for cultural demands and set limits to the range of variation of these demands from one cultural setting to another. Still within these limits, considerable variation does occur between families, between cultures and in the nature of behaviour that a social group shares as types as 'feminine' or 'masculine'.

Biological consideration of sex and sexuality

Human development begins with conception when the female reproductive cell, the ovum and its male counterpart, the spermatagon join to produce...
the zygote of the fertilized egg in the fallopian tube of the woman. The fertilized egg then gets implanted on the wall of the uterus and cell division goes on taking place. Each cell of the two partners consists of twenty-three pairs of chromosomes, twenty-two of which, the autosomes, are common to both sexes and one of which, the sex chromosome differs sharply in the male and the female. During the embryo period of two to eight weeks after implantation, cellular differentiation occurs. By the end of two months, the embryo is about one inch long and resembles a human being. From the time it is two months old the developing organism is referred to as the fetus. Especially during this period but throughout pregnancy, the development of the child can be adversely affected by poor maternal nutrition and by infection and drug transmitted by the mother. Birth of the child occurs approximately 270 days after conception and begins with lightening the change of the fetus to a head-down position of the neonate culminating in birth through the process of labour.

At the time of birth, the human neonate looks alike except the external sex-organ and the very first thing that is observed is the sex of the newly born child. The difference between a boy and a girl gets more pronounced with their growth and in the preadolescent stage, they develop secondary sex-characteristics. By the time, they attain the age of sixteen, a boy looks very different from a girl in even outside appearance.

Sex-role learning

The difference in behaviour of a boy and a girl is more learned than is innate. The emergence of the learning of these differences will depend on the child's ability to understand the concept of gender. Slaby and
Frey (1975) have suggested that the child's concept of gender, the cognitive underpinning of sex-role learning, develops in three ordered steps during the pre-school years.

1. **Gender identity** - The child recognizes that he or she is either male or female.

2. **Gender stability** - The child recognizes that boys invariably become men and girls become women.

3. **Gender consistency** - The child recognizes that the attribute of being either female or male will not change with changing situations and personal motivations.

Sex-role differentiation usually commences immediately after birth when the baby is named and goes to the nursery school. The infant observes other children of his sex and of the opposite sex and from the dress or hair, he recognizes the sex of the child. Sometimes the selection of playing material and recreational activities and association with the same sex playmates also strengthens the sex-role. Non-permissive parental reaction to deviant sex-role behaviour plays an important part in the fixation of the sex-role. The sex-role is further strengthened by the imitation of father or mother and by the encouragement received from other members of the society or family.

When the child proceeds from the balwadi to the primary school and from the primary school to the lower secondary or middle school, the sex-type becomes permanently fixed and attitudes toward one's own sex and toward
the opposite sex are learnt from the family, the peers and the society at large. Although sexuality remains latent during later childhood, the child does have preference for his own sex-companions and he prefers to play with them rather than with persons of the opposite sex. During pre-adolescence, the child becomes very conscious of his own sex and sex-role as determined by his society. When the girl experiences menarche and the boy his first nocturnal emission, she or he is first frightened by the body changes, but slowly accepts them as necessary for her or his sex-role.

In the middle or high school, the two sexes are separated in the seating arrangement by the teacher and the pupils prefer to move about in the company of one's own sex-companions. They learn many healthy and even unhealthy attitudes to the two sexes. They like to read love stories and sex love films and in their day-dreaming fix up some love-object and prefer to fall in love. Some actually do so at the risk of scolding from the parents, teachers and the society.

In adolescence, the boy or the girl inherits many attitudes, either learnt from the family or society or from books or films. All these attitudes are not always healthy. Many boys and girls learn from their peers right or wrong attitudes toward the two sexes and sexual practices, like masturbation, pre-marital sexuality, homosexuality and married person's relations. Because of wrong information, many adolescents either fall prey to the advances of some elderly person in the family or neighbourhood or develop guilt feelings about their habits of masturbation or pornographic reading. It is therefore very necessary that before they form stable attitudes about sexuality, they should be given the correct information about sexuality and human reproduction.
Social and cultural aspects of human sexual behaviour

All societies have faced the problem of reconciling the need for controlling sex with that of allowing it in combination of cultural taboos, permission and injunction. Prohibitory regulations curb socially more disruptive forms of sexual competition. Permissive regulations allow at least the minimum impulse-gratification, very commonly, moreover, sexual behaviour is controlled by obligatory regulations where it appears to subserve the interest of the society directly.

Sex and sexual behaviour are affected by the society in at least three ways. The first in the manner in which individual parents consciously and unconsciously teach their children about sex, the second is through legislation and the third through general public opinion.

The task of the family is to socialise the child to fit into the society, but as far as sex is concerned, this is almost always in the direction of excessive suppression of sexuality in the Indian society. Thus the influence exerted by the parents tends to modify and perhaps inhibit the spontaneous and rather harmless sexuality of the child. Children should be protected against both excessive suppression or excessive stimulation of their sexual interest so that they can develop a balanced personality.

There is always a debate going on between the suppressors of sexuality and the militant pro-sex extremists, but the case for a rational approach to sex is probably gaining ground, although slowly, because the largely unconscious anti-sexual attitude induced in childhood and reactions against them change only slowly through generations. Most parents who may have acquired
some sexual idiosyncrasies still tend to rear their children more in accordance with their own early sexual training and its restrictions than in accordance with their own actual practices. The attitude of parents and society is greatly affected by religion, social values and legislation.

Sex and social classes

The difference in the sexual behaviour between classes within technologically developed societies are very marked. Civilizations are made up of close hierarchies and the different sub-groups normally develop their own value-systems. Most of the knowledge of sexual behaviour and attitudes of ancient cultures is that of the upper or the ruling class. The behaviour and feelings of slaves and lower classes of the society are seldom recorded. It is observed that lower socio-economic class was the most permissive one, perhaps because it was exploited by upper classes and because sex has always been one of the few pleasures of the poor and the oppressed.

The Kinsey studies in the U.S.A. showed considerable social class differences in sexuality in that country. The lower class was more tolerant of extramarital experiences. More recent studies have shown that the earlier class differences have rapidly broken down. Increased literacy and influence of mass media have made the populations more homogeneous in attitudes. One can find moreover, reversal of previous pattern; a lower class person on the way up the social ladder may be quite conservative in his view on sex, feeling that this may facilitate his upward mobility, whereas the person, secure in his or her social status, often feels that he or she can afford to flout convention. Actually, the most sexually liberated are those at the bottom, who have nothing to lose and those at the very top, who are beyond social retribution.
The great middle class remains the bastion of traditionalism and it is here that the double standard of morality is most prominent. The intellectualized liberalism of the upper class steps down only slowly and the pragmatic egalitarianism of the lower class does not penetrate far upward.

The old family pattern was inexorably disturbed by the rise of industrialization, because children were no longer kept at home to share the work and become economic assets, but left out in schools or non-family employments. The working wives are also on increase which gives them opportunity for greater association with people outside the home.

The society became increasingly nomadic with improved transportation and job opportunities. Cultural and ethical sub-groups that would have little contact with one another, were thrown together in schools, factories offices and in neighbourhoods.

Morality, values system and sexual attitudes and behaviour

All this vast uprooting and rearranging naturally altered sexual attitudes and behaviour. The individual no longer had the option of choosing to conform to or depart from a rather close-cut sexual moral code, but instead was faced with a multiplicity of choices of varying degrees of social acceptability. The major sexual changes are still in progress.

Moral concepts range from traditional repressive asceticism to sexual anarchy and they in turn determine a long continuum of values. Mass media like magazines, films and TV serials impress the young minds who slowly change their value system and consequent sexual attitudes and behaviour.
Schools play a major role in moulding and changing moral values and sexual attitudes of young boys and girls and so it is the duty of the teachers to properly instruct their pupils to change the sexual attitudes they might have somehow imbibed and form the correct ones. A well planned sex-education programme is therefore badly needed in our school.

The present experiment and statement of problem

In the present study, an attempt was made to study the sex-education programmes, if any, obtaining in various schools and their impact on the adjustment of girls.

First, a survey of literature on sex-education and allied issues was made to know different aspects of sex-education.

The need and importance of sex-education, its principal objectives, its outcomes - improvement of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour - agencies imparting sex-education, methods of imparting sex-education, etc.

Then a survey was made to know how many schools had any types of sex-education programme, how it was carried out and by whom. A questionnaire was therefore framed and sent out to many schools where some type of sex-education programme was administered (Appendix 1). It was also asked whether the school having such a programme could allow the researcher to visit the school to witness the on-going programme of sex-education. It was found that hardly any school besides the convent schools had any type of sex-education programme at all. Out of the schools that had some type of sex-education programme including the convent schools, very few were willing to permit the researcher to witness the programme or study the attitudes and adjustments of the pupils regarding sex-matters.
It was therefore decided to prepare a sex-education programme with charts of the anatomy of sex organs and administer it to girls of some schools to study the change in their adjustment. Since adjustment could also include attitudes, an opinionnaire, an adjustment inventory and a sex-knowledge test were prepared and tried out on a sample of girl students of the selected schools. These instruments were refined after the first tryout through item analysis. The final outcome of the three instruments were used in the experiment which was designed in three ways. In the first type, a quasi-experimental control group experimental group with pre-test and post-test design was planned. It was replicated in some other schools, with only experimental groups. In the second type only the post-test was administered, where some sort of sex-education programme had already been executed. The first design included a regular sex-education programme administered by the researcher herself with the help of charts, films on human reproduction and discussion for moulding correct attitudes toward sexuality.

Analysis of variance was used to find out whether the formal sex-education programme given by the researcher or the informal programme obtaining in the school had any effect on the knowledge, attitudes and adjustment of girls with respect to sex matters.

The results of the three designs were encouraging.
References


