Chapter - IV

A STUDY OF SEX-EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS

Introductory

Most school children acquire more sexual myth than knowledge from their social environment. If sex-education is given too late, these myths from folklore and wrong knowledge, already acquired, act as a block to further learning. Sex becomes 'taboo' for our schools. Most of the adult and parent population oppose it for the fear of immorality, but these opponents of sex-education, have not suggested anything which will change this situation.

The most frequent criticism of relevant sex-education programmes, is that, enough weightage is not given to moral aspects. But, the sexual and ethical codes are changing quite rapidly and inflexible moral standard would not be of help to young ones and they would not find it acceptable.

Besides value-orientation, sex-education can cover many things - anything from a forty five minutes talk to an elaborate course on health education and biology. It can cut right across the age spectrum from primary school to college level. Most often, it is a lecture given to a large class, half of whom think that they know it already. Sometimes it has been given by nervous school teachers.

It was found that many well meaning but misinformed writers spread wrong notions about celibacy, masturbation, menstruation, nocturnal emission, pregnancy and childbirth, etc., through their books of advice, to adolescents.
The reader of such literature begins to fear from all sexual matters and is likely to become impotent and so refuse to marry, at the same time these ideas, myth and misconceptions are passed on to the younger generation, inadvertently by them.

The present investigator, therefore, tried to study the various types of programmes of sex-education prevalent in different schools in India. The responses that she received were very poor as a large majority of the schools did not have a regular programme of sex-education. Some schools did have it, but they did not want to tell anything about it, as they felt it to be a confidential matter. They hold an opinion that some parents would object to this and it would spoil the reputation of the school.

Survey of sex-education in India

For the survey of sex-education programmes, the investigator prepared a few questions which could give answers to the following queries. The question sheet is given in Appendix. (1)

The questions were based on the following points:

1. Types of programmes
2. Age of students
3. Contents of programmes
4. Nature of the group of students
5. The agent who imparts sex-education
6. Method of imparting sex-education
7. Types of teaching aids used for imparting sex-education.

Most of the schools either did not reply or said that they did not have any formal or informal programme of sex-education. Only a few Convent Schools...
replied in affirmative and even some of them were not willing to disclose any details. Ironical though it is, two convent schools in Ahmedabad City did not allow the investigator to observe their programmes including film and slide show. The probable reason for avoiding the investigator to probe into sex-education programme is fear of social rejection of the school personnel and authority.

Observations

A few schools impart sex-education under the name of 'Family-life Education' or 'Moral Education'.

The following observations were made during the survey:

1. Many schools impart sex-education under the heading of 'Moral Education' or 'Family life Education'. Nine schools out of eighteen impart moral education from primary level and one school started it from high school and the rest did not have any set criteria for imparting sex-education.

2. Sex-education programme was optional in two schools, depending on the willingness of the parents to allow their daughters to participate in it. It was surprising that many learned and high placed parents did not want their daughters to be subjected to any type of matter which was connected with sex or sex-education. They felt that it was their personal matter and the school should not indulge in such a type of immoral programmes.

Schools which responded back for sex-education programmes, only eighteen gave details of their programmes. Their responses are given in Table 4.

None of the schools imparts sex-education regularly with a formal syllabus. Two schools impart only informal and regular programme whereas six
Details of sex-education programme and its frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Details of Sex-education programme</th>
<th>% Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>TYPE OF PROGRAMME</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) Formal and regular</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Informal and regular</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Formal and irregular</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Informal and irregular</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) English</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Hindi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Gujarati</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(d) Mixed Languages</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>CRITERIA FOR SEX-EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Age-wise gradation of course</td>
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<td>(b) Grade-wise courses</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Any other (ad-hoc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>CONTENTS OF SYLLABUS FOR SEX-EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Sex anatomy</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Sex physiology</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Sex hygiene</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Sex morals</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Preparation for marriage</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(f) Preparation for family life</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(g) Family planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(h) Pregnancy &amp; childbirth</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(i) Abortion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(j) Pre- and post-natal care</td>
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<td>(k) Behaviour adjustment</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(l) Answering questions of children about sex</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Details of sex-education programme</td>
<td>% Frequency</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td><strong>POPULATION FOR SEX-EDUCATION PROGRAMME</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) In mixed groups of boys and girls</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Separate groups of boys and girls</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) For sometime in mixed groups and then separately</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
<td><strong>TEACHING AIDS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) Black board</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Charts</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) Models</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>(d) Film slides or strips</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(e) Movie films</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(f) Books or magazines</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td><strong>PERSON WHO IMPARTS SEX-EDUCATION</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) Any teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Biology teacher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) School nurse or doctor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(d) A visiting specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td><strong>METHODS OF TEACHING</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(a) Through verbal description</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) Through question-answer</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(c) The teacher first finds out wrong concepts of pupils and tries to correct then</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(d) Through free discussion among teachers and students</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Any other (exhibition of anatomical sex organs by medical students in a school)</td>
<td>2</td>
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schools impart both ways, informal and regular as well as formal and irregular, while only two schools gave sex-education occasionally in an informal and in an irregular way.

The medium of instruction varies in different schools. Seven out of 10 schools impart sex-education in English language, 7 in Gujarati and 4 schools have not restricted themselves to any particular language to make their students understand content matter properly. Two schools use both English and Gujarati as medium of instruction, while 2 use English and any other language for students' benefit. All schools under study used grades as a criterion for imparting sex-education, but 2 schools have sex-education when students were observed under certain physical or mental constraints.

Except 2 schools, all schools impart knowledge of sex-anatomy and physiology. Only 4 schools are alert about hygiene part. Emphasis on sex-morals were laid by eleven schools. Preparation for marriage, family life and family planning were taken into consideration by 5 schools each. Knowledge about abortion was given by 3 schools, but one of them dealt with pre- and post-natal care. Behaviour adjustment was discussed by 9 schools and 7 schools gave due consideration and encouragement to answer the questions of children about sex.

Only 2 schools imparted sex-education in mixed groups. 8 schools imparted sex-education in separate groups of girls and boys and some imparted sex-education for some time in mixed groups and then separately.

Every school used black-board for teaching purpose. 8 schools used charts, 1 used models, 7 used film slides or strips in addition to the black-board. Movie films were shown by 1 school and 10 used books and magazines for this specific purpose.
In 11 schools, sex-education was imparted by biology teachers. Out of these 11 schools, 1 school had also taken the services of a visiting specialist. 2 schools were having school medical personnel to impart this education while 6 schools were totally dependent upon visiting specialists.

As far as methods of teaching were concerned, all preferred lecture methods. 18 schools used question method also. In 3 schools, teaching personnel tried to find out wrong concepts of pupils and tried to correct them. 4 schools authorities encouraged free discussion among students and teachers, while 2 schools used observation method and later when they found out students' misconceptions, they gave them counselling to remove their wrong notions.

The following types of programmes were found to be in existence in various schools.

**A full-fledged sex-education programme**

This included the details of the anatomy and physiology of sex-organs of male and female human beings, inculcation of right type of attitude towards sex and members of opposite sex, better adjustment with parents and peers, knowledge about dating, courtship and marriage, and duties towards husband, family and children.

This type of comprehensive programme also dealt with ethics and values as well as factual knowledge. Ethics, values and morality were imparted by school teachers. Female teachers taught girls and male teachers taught boys. Only a few topics were dealt by a common teacher in a mixed group. It was imparted in the church, school assembly, in social study class and in the sessions of moral and religious education.
Factual knowledge can be given usually by a doctor, especially by a gynaecologist or an expert experienced to administer such a programme.

Contents of sex-education programmes varied from school to school and mainly considered the following major points:

1. Understanding oneself
2. Teenage
3. Understanding others
4. Being a family member
5. Biological aspects of reproduction
6. Biological foundation of marriage and family life
7. Dating and courtship
8. Successful marriage and family life
9. Adjustment in home and social situations

Different types of teaching aids were used for sex-education programmes, such as blackboard, write-ups, models, posters, slides and films. These aids were mainly used for imparting factual knowledge.

In one of the convent schools in a city of Gujarat, an expert in the field of sex-education, had shown ninety two slides dealing with factual knowledge of sex, starting with body growth, adolescent physical development of boy and girl to child care through pregnancy and childbirth.

A film titled "Growing" with the courtesy of family planning department, was shown after the slide show. This particular school authority invited the investigator to see their programme which was imparted by two doctors, and an expert in this field.
Another convent school in Madin arranged a full programme for two days for students of Grade XI and XII. It was imparted by experts and doctors with the help of charts, diagrams and film strips. It was the best programme which the investigator could see. It included sex-knowledge, interpersonal relations as well as values and morality. It was as follows:

**SEMINAR ON SEX-EDUCATION FOR STANDARD XI & XII**

**Monday**
10.45 a.m. Introduction by a teacher
11.45 a.m. The Physiology of sex -
for boys - by a doctor
for girls - by a doctor
1.30 p.m. Questions and answers

- Prenatal care and allied problems for girls - by a doctor.
- U.B. related problems for boys - by another doctor.

3.00 p.m. Film show on sex (Cot. released)
3.30 p.m. Slide show on sex for girls - Teenage problems.
Importance and need for boys - by a teacher.

**Tuesday**
11.00 a.m. The psychology of two sexes (for both boys & girls)
- by a teacher.
12.00 noon The family, maturity and growth - by Fr. Principal.
1.30 p.m. Slides on sex for boys and family planning for girls
- by a female teacher.
3.30 p.m. Sexual problems; the sense of sin and the notion of morality - by a teacher.

Only a few schools evaluated the outcome of their sex-education programmes. Schools run by convents evaluated their sex-education programmes periodically by a short inventory or questionnaire. Sex-knowledge is mainly left to be tested in the biology class.
Evaluation was done mainly around the following points:

1) Do you know yourself?
2) How successful are you?
3) Do you have self-confidence?
4) Are you optimistic?
5) Do you have will-power?
6) Are you attractive?
7) Are you really likeable?
8) Are people glad to know you?
9) Are you honest?
10) Are you good?
11) Are you a touchy sort?
12) Are you facing some problems?
13) Value survey
14) Partner risk or sharing trics
15) Choosing from alternatives
16) Choosing after considering consequences
17) Questions on social values

Moral Education Programme

In some convent schools, a moral education programme was given from the primary level. They used text books for this programme in addition to the usual sermons on morality. It included sex-knowledge programme in Grade 8. In this programme mainly education is imparted to develop certain values and right attitude towards life, family, society and humanity.

Teachers generally took an example from life situation and discussed with students in the class. For example, (1) to teach responsibilities in
married life, she said in the class, 'a boy of age 16 years from a Muslim family loves a girl of 14 years from a staunch Hindu family. They think that their parents will not agree to their marriage. what should those two persons do?'

To present an insight into family problems, "a girl has a problem because her mother does not allow her to wear different types of dresses".

To teach duty towards family members, "What does your mother do for your father?" or "What does your father do for you?", etc.

After presenting a problem in the class, students were told to react to it. Reactions of different students were written on the black-board and one by one each reaction was discussed and analysed to develop right attitudes. This whole educative process became quite interesting due to participation of students. Students also took keen interest because the problems touched them and their daily life. These were their own problems for which they were badly in need of solutions which could resolve their confusion and conflict and remove stress and strain from their mind.

Sex Education Programmes Consists of Only Sens-knowledge

(a) In some schools, at the end of the 8th standard, sens-knowledge was imparted with the help of a guest teacher or a doctor. Anatomy and physiology of the human reproductive system was the basic unit. The sex-educator then dealt with physical changes in adolescence, monarchy and nocturnal emission, masturbation, pregnancy, child-birth and family planning etc. The teachers dealt only with factual knowledge. These facts were explained with the help of diagrams, posters, slides, film strips and some time with the help of movie files of other audio-
visual nature. One school shows films on venereal and other diseases.

At the end of the session, the students were asked to put questions

if they had any doubts. This programme was generally for one day and

for a specific group of students. It has been held on the off day of

the school or after school hours. Students are also given books and

magazines to read for more information.

(b) The human reproduction system is a part of the syllabus of biology and

it has been divided for grade wise. In junior classes, only anatomy of

reproductive organs is taught. In higher grades, physiology of repro-

ductive organs, pregnancy, child-birth and family planning and devices

for population control have been taught. In grade XII, there has been

a full chapter consisting of family planning and contraceptives. Family

planning is also a part of population education.

As far as teaching methods were concerned, it varied from educator to

educator. The investigator tried to find out how biology teachers were teaching

this specific unit to the students. Teaching methods could have been divided

broadly into three categories. In the first category, teachers did not teach

this unit to the whole class and told students to learn it themselves. If the

teacher was going for a leave or he/she knew before hand that he/she was going
to be busy somewhere else, students were told to learn it themselves and to

answer the given questions. Alternatively, some teachers asked students to

mark some particular lines in the textbook which were the answers of the

questions given at the end of the chapter or unit.

Teachers of this category have tried to ask minimum questions from this

unit in the Unit Test of the school examination.
Personality and cultural background of teachers were quite different because most of the teachers came from orthodox and traditional families, having comparatively less social exposure and had been brought up in small cities.

Second category of teachers are those who asked students to read aloud this specific unit in class. If any student asked that he was not able to understand or he/she needed further explanation, instead of explaining the facts, the teacher asked another student to read it again. Some teachers have gone for book reading in the class. When they came across the contents of the unit they read some particular words e.g. vagina, uterus, ovum, penis and menstruation, etc. at a very fast speed and in a low voice, so if they fear in their own consciousness that they have done a sin by pronouncing these words. When they drew diagrams on the black-board, they did not label different parts, and if time fell short for the particular school period, when they are teaching this unit, they told students to draw diagrams at home and find out answers themselves. Teachers in this category were nervous and anxious. They were obsessed by their personal reservations in the classroom. Sometimes, they developed wrong notions in the minds of children who ultimately thought the whole process of sex as dirty and shameful and not worthy to be talked in public. The investigator while studying these sex-education programmes in biology classes came across a teacher Mr. 'X' who was teaching in a Hindi medium school of Ahmedabad. He had 20 years teaching experience. He belonged to a staunch Brahmin family of Banaras in Uttar Pradesh. When Mr. X was asked how he was teaching human reproduction unit in the class, very proudly he told that he could teach anything and everything because he got an experience of 20 years. The investigator observed that he
was not giving any concrete reply to her questions. Then the investigator tried to find out the facts from his past and present students. The day when the investigator was trying to know the facts about teaching of Mr. X from his students for this specific unit, the students took her to their class room because only that day Mr. X had taught female reproductive organs. On the black-board of the class room a diagram of the cross section of uterus was drawn which was very shabby and the parts therein were unlabelled. The students were quite frustrated that day, because a mischievous student asked some question for which he could not get reply but scolding and unreasonable punishment. Mr. X told the student that he could go and ask his mother.

These types of teachers are a bundle of misconceptions and myths. They open a bud of curiosity in the pupils and are not able to satisfy it, hence opening the door of pornography, information from streets and dirty corners to poison the minds of the youth.

When enquired from the past students of Mr. X, one girl told the investigator that for the last three years, she was having an idea in her mind that the male sperm is one inch long and about one forth of an inch thick till she was taught again in Grade XII that it is too tiny to be visible. She recalls that Mr. X had drawn a very big diagram of the sperm occupying the whole black-board without telling its dimensions. The drawing was so big that if you reduce it even then the minimum size comes to approximately one inch long and one fourth of an inch thick.

The third category of teachers were quite frank and responsible in their discussion. They did not have any personal reservation. When they teach this
unit in the class, they are quite sober and cool without any excitement on
their part. They explained and drew proper diagrams. They replied the
questions of the students quite tactfully.

In the class of Mr. 'V', one IX grade student asked about homosexuality,
Mr. 'V' became little upset because discussion about homosexuality can lead
to rocks and this was not in their syllabus also. Mr. 'V' tactfully started
with anatomy, physiology and psychology of human sex-organs and behaviour. He
made it quite interesting with the help of relevant as well as irrelevant
examples to totally divert the attention of the students from homosexuality
to population growth and population dynamics.

Teachers in this category are well informed and tactful and they think
themselves a part of society. They know the present trend of the society.
They are confident and well-adjusted with their environment.

It is clearly perceptible from the survey that sex-education is being
 imparted in the schools without knowing that all what they are teaching is a
part of sex-education. Often it is not integrated and compact in itself.
Development of right attitudes towards sex is the most basic and urgent need
of the time. Parents and school authorities are not paying required attention
to it because they are unaware of it. Schools do not have counsellors, parents
are either over-busy, misinformed or quite orthodox to satisfy the curiosity
of the children in the changing society and teachers shun their responsibility,
thinking that it is a parental duty and it is not a part of the subject syllabus.
Once the investigator organized a debate on "Imparting sex-education may
lead to immorality" on behalf of Lioness Club. In this debate, it was gathered
that our young girls are in great need of correct knowledge and favourable
attitudes towards life and environment. The main obstacles in this are parents. Hence, sex-education programmes for parents are of paramount importance. Ironically, none of the parent-teacher meetings in any school discusses this topic.

It is an urgent need of the time to start a campaign for sex-education formally as well as informally when general diseases like AIDS are spreading widely and homosexuality as well as drug addiction are increasing rapidly.