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**“SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE MANDATORY IN SCHOOLS!”**

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**I. INTRODUCTION:**

Sex Education which is the subject of debate among various experts, which has been discussed by various experts as to whether Sex Education should be taught in schools. Nowadays, due to the rapid development of information, there has been an increase in demand to provide sex education in schools, the youth are usually very eager to learn all the new things that came to them especially abstract things like Sex. There are many who support the move, while there are some who are against it. While many believe that school students are in the right position to offer sex education, there are others who say that school students are not mature enough to understand the implication of the subject.

There is nothing simple about teaching children about it. In these pre-adolescent times, pregnancy between teenagers and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), youngster and adolescents require much more than a one-time chat about creatures. Prevention of pregnancy and faith sex should really be current and relevant topics. Therefore, both teachers and parents need to give their children or students the right concepts of sex before being misled by indecent magazines and irresponsible media.

Ideally, children will get all the knowledge whatever they need at home from their respective parents and in order to break this chain, a massive step must be taken to teach children about sex education and make them aware about the true meaning of sex education. The following essay is based on the same issue. It is noticed that to prevent heinous crime against women there has been an increasing demand to impart sex education in schools. So, this essay will

depict that sex education should be implemented in schools because it is considered as an important source of information as it consists of various education programs which are good at giving information and appropriate moment for the development of skill and enlighten attitude in a formal way through lesson within the course of instruction. This issue is being highlighted in this essay as it will also deliver the correct information to the teenagers in order to make the right choices in life due to occurrence of many sex-related social problems among the teenagers.

Reproductive health problems such as HIV, unintended pregnancy and unsafe abortions in adolescents are connected to inadequate knowledge about sexuality and lack of access to fertility and contraceptives. Sex Education is not only the responsibility of teachers but also it would be the joint responsibilities of the following:

- i. *Parents*
- ii. *Teachers*
- iii. *Local authorities and Governments*

## **I.I. SEX EDUCATION AT DIFFERENT STAGES:**

<b>SCHOOL LEVEL:</b>	<b>IMPORTANT CONTENTS:</b>
Primary school	Good touch, bad touch, personal safety
Middle childhood	Feelings, relationships, sexuality
Teenagers	Sex diseases, safe sex etc.

## **I.II. SEX EDUCATION: WHAT IS IT?**

It originates from the Latin term '*sexus educatio*'. It is a term used to describe education about sex, sexuality, contraceptive methods, physical developments and relationships, how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, the importance of safety, opinions and principles about

sex. Holistic sexuality education is defined as *“learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality. Sexuality education starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood. For children and young people, it aims at supporting and protecting sexual development. It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe and full-filling relationships for their own and other people’s sexual health and well-being.”*<sup>1</sup>

### **I.III. PROGRAMS OF SEX EDUCATION:**

*The types of education children should receive can be broadly classified into two categories:*

#### **1) Comprehensive Sex Education:**

This program starts in early childhood and continues through high school. It also seeks to manage both safety and emotional concerns regarding sex along with basics birth control and sexual consent. It brings up different sexuality topics including safe sex, contraceptives and condoms in order to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy and infection with STDs, including HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, masturbation and body image.

It teaches that sexuality is a normal part of a living thing and diverse sexual orientations. It aims to provide children and young people with knowledge, skills, and values that will permit them to realize their health, well-being and dignity.

#### **2) Abstinence-only-until-marriage-programs:**

It is also known as Sexual Risk Avoidance Programs. It teaches that abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage will have harmful social, psychological and physical consequences. It also teaches a set of values which is morally correct for all the students. It usually fails to discuss topics such as abortion, masturbation and sexual orientation. It

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Centre for Health Education, *sexuality education*,  
[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/379043/Sexuality\\_education\\_Policy\\_brief\\_No\\_1.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/379043/Sexuality_education_Policy_brief_No_1.pdf?ua=1)

discusses condoms only in terms of failure rates and limits sexual expression. It generally includes inaccurate medical information and estimate statistics regarding STDs, HIV. It also teaches that carrying the baby for adoption is the only solution for pregnant teens.

Let's take an example, at present time in the United States, the rate of teen birth and abortions is highest with teenagers as compared to other western countries where a number in million going through pregnancy every year. According to reports and surveys, there occur many cases of sexually transmitted diseases. At the same time. *Saharan Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia* have also reported the highest number of teen pregnancy in the world. Developed countries like *Japan and South Korea*, their teen pregnancy rates are the lowest rates in the world.

**And hence, the question arises- Should Sex Education be implemented in schools?**

So, most probably sex education should be implemented in schools as it helps to reduce the teen pregnancy rates and school is the only appropriate place that can give the information regarding sex and sexual protection method and it also protects the teenagers and children which would be considered best for the children rather than social media or any other source.

**The following key points are maintained to impart of Sex Education in schools as given below:**

- *Boys and girls who are both entering adolescences need to learn all aspects of physical and emotional changes they will undergo as they grow older.*
- *It is the current need to provide sufficient information about the physical and psychological differences between the sexes that they behave differently at different ages.*
- *It is believed that sex education will be influenced by marriage to increase unwanted pregnancies during adolescent girls.*
- *Sex education in high schools helps youngsters to be more prepared for life changes like puberty, menopause etc.*
- *It is observed that girls would not get shocked, panic and afraid at their first menstruation, once they already had the knowledge about it.*

- *It is also noticed that in more cases parents don't feel comfortable talking about sex-related issues with their children. So, it becomes the responsibility of school or institutions to provide adequate education in this regards in the right direction at the right time.*
- *Sex Education in school will provide children with the knowledge of understanding the intentions of ill-minded people and those having covetous eyes and how to stay away from them.*
- *In this digital world, various adult content is readily available to children as a result of the internet, pornography is very easy, if children are not taught properly about it, and they may end up in the wrong circle of friend and spoil their own life.*
- *Sexual safety is a part of science so it has to be taught to both teachers and parents as well.*
- *It is also noticed that in day-to-day life, children and women are vulnerable to being violated, especially if they are kept ignorant in sex education.*
- *Sex education also acquaints on sexually transmitted infections to stay healthy.*
- *It is also noticed that in rural India that teen pregnancy cases are increasing enormously. So, sex education will play a crucial role to prevent it.*
- *Sex Education also helps the children to understand the body structures and skill of interpersonal relationship among the opposite sex.*
- *As per medical science, the best time to give sex education is when the child experiences physiological and psychological changes in their body and hormones.*

The above changes occurred during the adolescence. So, schooling age is one of the utmost and suitable stages to teach sex education to mold them to become a useful citizen for both the society and the nation.

## **II. RESEARCH REPORT:**

*“According to **SIECUS**, the Sexuality and Education Council of the United States, 93% of adults surveyed support sexuality education in high school and 84% support it in junior high school. As a matter of fact, 88% of the parents of junior high school students and 80% of*

*parents of secondary school students believe that Sex Education schools make it convenient for them to talk to their teens about sex. Also, 92% of adolescents' report that they want their parents to talk about both sex and to have comprehensive-in school sex education.*

*Moreover, a "study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, found that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are ineffective."<sup>2</sup>*

### **III. DOCUMENTATION:**

It suggests that a combination of comprehensive sex education and way to birth control reduces the rate of unexpected pregnancies in adolescents. A meta-analysis that compared comprehensive sex education programs with abstinence-only programs where it was found that abstinence-only programs did not reduce the chance of child-bearing, but may have even increased it.

Many studies show that various educational programs provide accurate information about condoms and contraception may reduce risky behaviours reported by young people as well as decrease unwanted pregnancies and STIs. Programs that only teach abstinence have not been shown to be effective.

Research has also shown that young people adopt impartial attitudes about gender roles due to delay in sexual initiation and use of condoms. These individuals were also less likely to engage in violent relationships and had lower rates of STIs, including HIV and inadvertent pregnancy. By highlighting rights and gender issues, these programs help to reduce and gender-based violence, promote safe schools, gender equality and advocate young people for their rights.

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<sup>2</sup> Joshua Campbell, Sociology & Education, pg. 113

#### **IV. WHY IS SEXUAL EDUCATION TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS IN INDIA?**

The importance of the distribution of sex education in an appropriate time for this important demographic has been emphasized by current data, which shows that approximately one-fifth of each person in the world is a teenager. They comprise 18% of the world's population, 88% of developing countries in 2009. India has the largest adolescent population having 50% of the population living in urban areas. These figures show the importance of addressing the health needs of this important demographic, particularly for developing countries such as India.

Recent literature suggests that at this point of time they are likely to experiment and engage in highly risky behaviours that have the capacity to affect the health quality and survival probability in both short and long periods of their lifetimes. It covers issues such as early pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STIs including HIV, and sexual abuse and violence.

**The following reasons are given below:**

##### **1. Disease Control and Prevention survey:**

In the 2017 centres for disease Control and Prevention survey, 40 percent of all high school students reported that they had sex and 10 percent of high school students have had sex with two or more partners in their lifetime. Students who had sex in the middle of three months before the survey, 54% of the population reported the use of condom and 30% of the population reported the use of birth control pills, an intrauterine device implants, shots reported during the encounter. In 2017, the birth rate for women aged 15-19 was 18.8 per women, a decrease of 7% from 2016. According to the CDC, the reasons for the decline are not completely clear, but evidence suggests a significant number of adolescents are prevented from sexual activity and pointed to the increased use of birth control in sexually active

adolescents. Although the teen birth rate has fallen to its lowest level since data collection began, the United States has the highest teen birth rate in the industrialized world.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Extinction of Pregnancy Problems in Adolescent Age:**

Some social and economic costs may lead to teen pregnancy. Adolescent mother is less likely to end high school and more likely to live in poverty dependent on public assistance and remain in poor health than their peers. Their kids are more likely to suffer from health and cognitive harm, also exposed to child welfare and corrective systems, live in poverty and become parents of adolescents by themselves. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned pregnancy which is estimated to cost taxpayers of teenage children at least \$ 9.4 billion annually. Between 1991 and 2015, the teen birth rate declined by 64%, resulting in an increase of about \$ 4.4 billion in public savings of one year alone.<sup>4</sup>

## **3. Infections:**

Sexually transmitted infections affect the adolescents due to various reasons like biological changes, behavioural changes etc. 25 percent of the sexually active population is constituted by young people aged 15 to 24 but they acquire half of all new STIs, or approximately 10 million cases per year. Though there are many unreported cases of STIs but one in four sexually active adolescent females has been reported to have an STI. Here has been growth in the rate of reported cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and primary and secondary syphilis among the people aged between 15-24 years. According to a CDC analysis, it was revealed that the annual number of new STIs is approximately equal among young women and young men.

## **4. Comprehensive sex education doesn't encourage kids to have Sex:**

Similar to abstinence-only programs, good comprehensive programs teach students that abstinence is the only way to prevent STDs and pregnancy. The difference is that these programs give students realistic and factual information about the protection of various

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<sup>3</sup> The NCSL Podcast, *State Policies on Sex Education in Schools*, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The Importance of Prevention*, 2019

sexual practices, and how to improve barriers. Hence, comprehensive sex education doesn't encourage kids to have sex.

***5. It's the job of parents to teach faith:***

Nothing about comprehensive sex education prohibits parents from teaching their children their standards for moral behaviour. If anything, they should focus on explaining their personal religious beliefs and behavioural expectations for parents to know the facts in school.

***6. Extensive sex encourages abstinence, not ignorance:***

What do teenagers do when they are not properly informed about sexual risks? They perform oral sex or anal sex instead of vaginal intercourse. In particular, many teens do not view oral sex as incompatible with abstinence. This is true that even though oral sex can transmit multiple STDs.

Abstinence-only programs sometimes encourage students to abstain from sex, without explaining what sex is. Conversely, when comprehensive sex education is given in schools, it may encourage adolescents to make more informed decisions before participating in alternative sexual behaviours. Without sufficient information, these are behaviours that teens may wrongly assume are safe.

**V. ADOLESCENT SEX EDUCATION IN INDIA- CURRENT  
PERSPECTIVE:**

Sexual health is regarded as a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being, defined by WHO. Primarily, its predominance during adolescence (10-19 years) is an important preventive tool, as it is the appropriate time when youngsters experience developmental changes in their physical behaviour as they enter into adulthood. Such as early

and near-term pregnancies, unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, and sexual violence, whose rates are rising at an already disturbing rate.

## **VI. STRUCTURE OF CURRENT NATIONAL PROGRAMS IN INDIA:**

The current program of sex education included in the Indian curriculum is called as FLE and was proposed by the National AIDS Control Organization and the Ministry of Human Resources and Development.

***The main objectives of family life can be broadly classified as:***

- i. To develop emotionally stable children and adolescents who feel safe and secure enough to make decisions about their conduct without taking away from their feelings.*
- ii. Providing sound knowledge not only to the physical aspects of sexual behaviour but also to its psychological and sociological aspects, so that sexual experience can be seen as part of a person's total personality.*
- iii. Develop standards of behaviour and conduct that will ensure that youth and adults determine their sexual and other behaviours by considering its long-term effects on their personal development, the well-being of other individuals and the welfare of society overall.*

More specifically, the program covers the following topics, including but not limited to human sexual, anatomy, sexual reproduction, reproductive health, rights and responsibilities, emotional relationships, contraception and other aspects of human sexuality and also non-sexual behaviour.

## **VII. CONCLUSION:**

Children and adolescents need the right information from the right sources about sex, sexual relationships and various other related issues to make the right decision for their present and future. They need to understand what can happen if there are misconceptions about sex, which in turn becomes dangerous. After all, it is often said that education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world. Education provides us with the tool

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to improve the quality of life in modern society both economically and sociologically. In this current and risky world, everyone is adopting new techniques to prevent ignorance and to generate more awareness.

Not only that, but the provision of FLE also has many benefits for adolescent boys and girls, including delays in sexual activity, reduction in unplanned and early pregnancies and their associated complications, fewer unwanted children, reduced risk of sexual abuse, greater completion of education and later marriages can reduce the unsafe abortion and curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.

We must realize the demand and importance of implementation of Sex Education in schools. Hence, the students who are our future generations will be well prepared to face all the unexpected obstacles in their future to achieve the nation's goals.