

Full Length Research Paper

Understanding human sexuality: A case study on innovative method for sex education to adolescent children

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Globalization has a far reaching influence on every aspect of human life. No other sector has embraced globalization as much as television entertainment industry. The speed with which television entertainment industry has imbibed changes is unprecedented. One of the most obvious outcomes of liberalized and privatized visual entertain medium is easing of censorship owing to which, the sexual behavior and attitude towards human sexuality has gone sea change, especially among the youth. Consequently, degradation in moral standards and a weakened value system is manifested by increasing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases apart from deadly HIV-AIDS apart from putting strain on social fabric. The subject 'sexuality' is one of the most stigmatized and most misunderstood topics of all the issues concerned with human behavior, part of the reason being that there is no culture of open, frank and informed discussion over the subject. Consequently, the subject of sexuality is fret with myths and misconception. It requires tremendous maturity and skill on the part of the educator. This subject cannot be taught with traditional approach. Hence, there is a greater need for innovative methods of teaching and training human sexuality leading to increasing felt need for access to support in the form of training or consultation with other sex educators. This paper deals with innovative training methodology.

Key words: Human sexuality, sex education, methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Being a health professional, very often we are called upon to handle a class on sex education. Very often such sex education is inappropriately equated to educating children/youth participant about human reproductive system. Dealing with human sexuality with rehabilitated adolescent children and youth is all the more challenging. It can be seen that children are least interested in the anatomy of genital or reproductive organs, or process of fertilization or menstruation. Very often children are obsessed with the idea of sex. They are obsessed with abstractness of sex. The mere utterance of the word "sex" is titillating to them. Hence, there is need to change in approach for handling this very sensitive but interesting subject (Wolfe et al., 2011). The subject 'sexuality' is one of the most stigmatized and most misunderstood topics of all the issues concerned with human behavior. Part of the reason being there is no culture of open, frank and informed discussion over the subject (Macdonnell, 2011).

Consequently, the subject of sexuality is fret with myths and misconception. It requires tremendous maturity and skill on the part of the educator. This subject cannot be taught with traditional approach. Hence, there is a greater need for innovative methods of teaching and training human sexuality leading to increasing felt need for access to support in the form of training or consultation with other sex educators (Carman et al., 2011; Ott et al., 2011).

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines reproductive health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its function and processes (www.afro.who.int/en/clusters-a...reproductive-health/overview.html). It suggests that people with adequate reproductive health have a satisfying and safe sexual life, can have children and can make a choice as

to whether they would like to have children and if so, when and how to have them. One can be easily overwhelmed by the enormity of multitude complexity and the devastation being caused by disease such as AIDS where in countries in sub-Saharan countries in Africa are facing the prospects of their major chunk of adult population being wiped out. World over, sex education is being considered as one of the many strategies to counter the menace.

The subject 'sexuality' is one of the most stigmatized and most misunderstood topics of all the issues concerned with human behavior. Part of the reason being that there is no culture of open, frank and informed discussion over the subject. Consequently, the subject of sexuality is fret with myths and misconception. This paper deals with innovative training methodology in teaching and training human sexuality

Objectives

1. To provide a platform to conduct free and frank discourse over sexuality among peer group to rediscover the marginality of physical and to appreciate need for having high moral standards and strong personal value system;
2. To devise a tool to counter the negative effect of globalization on the attitudes and behavior of youth by encouraging them to adopt healthy and value based life styles.

METHODOLOGY

To understand adolescent and youth understanding of sexuality, focused group discussions are run, the following methods have been found to be very helpful:

Funnel approach: This approach is generally adopted in behavioral studies while handling sensitive issues. In this process discussion is guided from a larger and wider topic and gradually narrowed down to the topic of interest.

Activity based learning: Sexuality being a very sensitive issue, it is important that ice should be broken before taking up such issue. Activity based discussed are often found to be useful in forging a rapport within the group and also with the facilitator.

Simulation: Staging a hypothetical real life conflict situation requiring informed decision making and choices made from multiple options is another exercise.

How to do it- A process description

Funnel approach with "ice breakers"

While discussing a sensitive issue like that of human sexuality, it is important to create the milieu of trust, privacy and comfort. Funnel approach paves the way by channeling the deliberations from generic and impersonal topic to a personal and intimate topic that is the funnel approach could start with descriptions of the participants

on different characteristics that is regions represented, language (mother tongue spoken) religion and education background etc. Ice breaker game is initiated by asking the participants to name few parts of a tree. Generally, the responses start flowing in as Trunk, branches, leaf, flower, fruit, bark etc. Similarly, the group is asked to name the parts of Bi-cycle Handle, wheels, chain, peddle, Bell, seat, breaks. Repeat the same exercise by asking the participants to name parts of tree

Activity based learning

As the participants start gelling in, the facilitator introduces the concept of body mapping. An outer line of a human body is sketched on the ground and each of the participants is requested to complete the picture by marking different body organs. It can be noticed that participants will hesitate to draw genital organs on the body map. At this point, the discussion is initiated as to the reasons of feeling shyness or hesitation in drawing the genital organs.

The discussions links it sex. From there, the discussion spills over various aspects of sexuality mostly social stigma associated with it. The whole proceedings finally boils down to the topic of the day 'sex'. The facilitator now writes the word 'sex' on the board and for a moment scans the facial expression of the participants, which is literally rainbow of emotions ranging from shyness, glee, fear, hesitation etc.

Thinking man's TV exercise

In the thinking man's TV exercise, the facilitator requests the participants to close their eyes for 2 min and think of sex and ask the participants to observe what picture come to mind when they think of sex and the feelings they experience. Once the 2 min are over, the participants are requested to open their eyes and describe their visuals and experience. Before this is done, some ground rules to be followed are agreed upon collectively as a group:

1. It is an open discussion;
2. Treat it like a serious technical subject;
3. Not to feel shy;
4. It s an experiment and it is like a research where the truth should come out for the benefit of others; and
5. The fact that the biggest risk with sexuality lay in it being highly secretive, people do not open up and hence there are many misconceptions regarding sexuality, leading to emergence of new and deadly disease like HIV-AIDS; hence there needs to be absolute frankness and openness while discussing this issue. Emphasis that it is being discussed as a health topic.

Pigeon out of hat exercise

This exercise could be done if the facilitator finds that participants are hesitant and are not actively participating in the proceedings. In this exercise, participants could be asked to write three things on a piece of paper based on either what they visualized or felt during the Thinking Man's TV process what they experienced without indicating their name. The same could be mixed well and picked up one by one and put it on the board. In one of the sessions, the following things were listed by the participants on what they visualized during the Thinking Man's TV exercise : naked body, intercourse, kissing, large breasts, cleavage, rain song, rape, marriage, first night, bathroom, bra, thigh, biting lips, hugging, sleep one above the other, and facial expression.

Note: Colloquial terms should be enlisted to be replaced by apt nomenclature/word- it is important to take away the arousal impact associated with the colloquial description associated with any

particular organ or act. This would maintain the sanctity of discussion.

Having created the milieu of open discussion, now its time for questions and clarifications. Some time few weird questions may arise as it happened in one of our training sessions, the query was related as to whether do the Mosquitoes have breast? Strange it may sound but it was asked in one of the training sessions? Some time the question may not be asked for genuine enquiry but more to satiate obsession with the idea of sex. Such questions should not be dismissed or shot down, rather they should be handled tactfully. These are the situation from which any skilled facilitator worth his salt brings in all his skills and experience to bail himself out and convert it into opportunity for learning

For example, given an illustration of how this question was handled. The question was not dismissed? It was tactfully handled appreciating it as a good question. The transcript of the proceedings is given as follows:

Lets try to answer...I have never thought of it? Let's see if we can find the answer together on your question, Do mosquitoes have breasts?

The question was redirected to the participants:

Q. Who has breast?

Ans: Girls, women,

Q. Good, who else?

Ans: Boys and men but they are very small. Very good who else

Q. Animals- excellent!! Can you name few?

Ans: Cow, Cats, Pig, Monkeys...

Q. Do hens have?

Ans. No

Q.What about birds, crocodile, snake

Ans: No

Q- What are the major differences within the earlier stated animals?

Ans: difference - wings, small in size etc.

To direct the discussion, ask a leading questions:

Q. How do animals give birth?

Ans. Live birth and laying eggs.

Explain the concept of viviparous and oviparous animals. Animals that give birth to their offspring's directly are called Viviparous. Animals that give birth to their offspring by laying eggs are called Oviparous. Keeping this information, if one can understand, that the animals that lay eggs will not have breasts. Mosquitoes- lay eggs- hence no breast – inductive logic.

PART II

Having created an ideal milieu for free and frank discussion, its time for participants to appreciate the different dimensions of human sexuality. This is a crucial phase where participants begin to appreciate sex and sexuality beyond physical parlances and contextualize it in moral and value system. The participants begin to appreciate that love actually means a mature relationship, strong bonds and having a set of value

system for individual behavior. Obviously, these attributes cannot be taught, but need to be appreciated and internalized individually. To accomplish this goal, some real life situations are simulated in group debates so that the participants could get a feel of social and emotional dynamics that are in interplay.

Situation 1

Girl/boy married against will, are totally dis-interested in each other but since they are forced to marry and demand to have early child they share a bed without any interest or bonding with each other. The relationship is very mechanical in nature.

The facilitator question, will the person have a happy sexual life?

Ans: NO

The facilitator invites reasons; responses from the participants which largely revolve around.

1) Lack of interest. 2) Lack of active participation. 3) Lack of intimacy. 4) Mind game. 5) Lack of warmth in relationship. 6) Love making is the zenith of the feeling of love between two mates etc.

Hence the conclusion is drawn:

Sex is not in between legs but it exists in between the ears.

Situation 2

In this situation, participants are offered to be sent to the country of their choice, to be shifted permanently from their place. They will have choice to migrate to three countries with varying levels of restrictions and freedom on sexual behavior.

State of affairs in country A: Sex is free, no restrictions on morality, infidelity accepted, can divorce easily, and teenage pregnancy is not seen as taboo.

State of affairs country B: Sex is highly restricted, complete censorship, girls and women are expected to be in *Burkha*, boys and girls are not permitted to talk, if they are not related to each other, laws related to sexuality are very brutal lynching and stoning to death is in practice.

State of affairs in country C: This is a country which is a midway between. While there is no restriction for grown up girls and boys mixing together but would not be allowed to have extra-marital affairs or infidelity. The of joint family norm with strong family values is promoted and moral restraints are exercised.

Ask the participants to make their choice for immigration:

Those who do not like restrictions are offered to be sent to the country- again illustrate advantages of choosing country A where there is lots money, no restriction, no questions asked. Exchange of wife is allowed, no social stigma. One is not allowed to take parents, only the wife is allowed. It is quite possible that if you live your child with the neighbor, you might have to pay for it. One can make lots of money and as much as 25 times more than his/her present income. Similarly, the situation in other two countries is illustrated. Now throw open the choice to the participants invite them to exercise their option to choose their country of choice. The facilitator draws a three column table for the country A, B and C respectively. The facilitator requests participants to choose only one country to settle by raising up their hands as a sign of indication. Expectedly, very few hands were raised for country A and the maximum number of participants chose country C.

Keeping the total votes for each of the country, that is the facilitator draws attention of the participants to the striking difference between this moment when participants are choosing everything other than sex and during the start of the session, wherein the majority were obsessed with the idea of sex, and did not want to discuss anything other than sex.

Explain the reasons for not opting for Country A:

Ask them as to why would they not prefer migrating to country A? Remind them that it is Pandora's Box to everything one can only dream of lots of money, free sex, no social restriction- why not.... The responses were family- parents, intimacy lacking, family values, and social support these attributes are the core values.

Situation 3

The objective of this simulation exercise is to help the participants to appreciate the social and cultural dimensions associated with sexuality beyond physical plane, hence it transcends from the being a private affair between two Individuals to a web of social relationships. Hence, every individual behavior is accountable to the society that the individual lives in, after all man is a social animal.

What happens, generally when a hero and heroine meet in movies?

The participants will generally come out with list of responses: Eye to eye contact, running around the trees, songs, two outcomes parent's disapproval- run away, suicide, and break up.

Positive outcome – they get married, and start a family.

Throw a question: Why do people get married?

The facilitator gives a straight forward answer; to produce children.

Ask the participants on whether the sole purpose of the marriage is to reproduce and to beget children?

The facilitator gives a straight forward answer; the aim of marriage is for sex and producing children.

While all participants do agree that starting a family and children is a very important aspect of marriage but insist that it cannot be the sole purpose of a marriage.

Freelasting-2

Enlist the social ritual/custom associated with pre and post marriage?

Pre-marriage: Screening of girl/boy. Engagement, Marriage, Sapta-padi, Mangalsutra, Reception, bidai, doli.

Post marriage: First night, Honeymoon, *Karvachot*, Pregnancy, Child birth, Namkaran.

If coming together of man and woman is just for procreation to satisfy one's "sexual urge" then lets propose to ban all such celebration associated with marriage and bring out law that anybody who celebrates will be put behind bar.

Ask the participants whether they would be party to such legislation:

One can notice their general frowning and rejection of the idea.

So there is general consensus, that coming together of a man and woman as two adults has wider significance than just coming together for physical affinity or purely for procreation.

Morale of the story: If you want to practice the concept "Its my life, take it or leave it" then one need to go somewhereu know ...Jungle

Learning point – Happy family life, personal value system, ethical approach to life, and social support is more important than obsessed with self centredness.

Conclusion

Sex education does not mean explicitly teaching sex to children. Expanding reach of Television and Internet have made any restriction meaningless. NACO' observes that most young people become sexually active during adolescence. In the absence of right guidance and information at this stage, they are more likely to have

multi-partner unprotected sex with high risk behavior groups.

It requires tremendous maturity and skill on the part of the educator. This subject cannot be taught with traditional approach. Hence, there is a greater need for innovative methods of teaching and training human sexuality leading to increasing felt need for access to support in the form of training or consultation with other sex educators.

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