

Exploring Attitudes toward Sex Education: A Comparative Study of Youth and Elders across Church Denominations in Aizawl City

Ramdinmawia*

J. Lalhriatpuii**

Ramdinmawia*, IV Semester M.A. Student, Dept. of Education, Government Aizawl College.

ramdinmawia11082001@gmail.com

Dr. J. Lalhriatpuii**, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Education, Government Aizawl College.

jlalhriatpui@gmail.com

Abstract

Sex education, often known as family life education, is the process by which people learn about sex. It offers information about human reproduction, sexual anatomy, emotional relationships, sexual health, unintended pregnancy, immature sexual relationships, reproductive rights and duties, and other facets of human sexual behaviour. This paper is a report of a study aimed to find out and compare attitude towards sex education among youths and elders in different church denominations in Aizawl city. The sample consists of 5 females and 5 male youths from each denomination and 3 elders from each denomination (7 church denominations) respectively. The study reveals positive attitude towards sex education among church members, regardless of gender. Younger members are open to learning about it, indicating growing awareness and changing societal perspectives. Elders of other churches also have a generally positive outlook, with no significant opposition. This suggests a shift from traditional resistance to a more tolerant attitude, possibly due to contemporary issues, health consciousness, and better educational initiatives. This suggests sex education is becoming a more common topic in churches.

Keywords: Sex Education, Attitude, Church Denominations.

Introduction:

All living things have sex, which is a universal phenomenon. Sex education, often known as family life education, is the process by which people learn about sex. It offers information about human reproduction, sexual anatomy, emotional relationships, sexual health, unintended pregnancy, immature sexual relationships, reproductive rights and duties, and other facets of human sexual behaviour. Emotional relationships and obligations, human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, age of consent, reproductive health, reproductive rights, safe sex, birth control, and sexual abstinence are all topics covered in sex education. (Neha, 2021).

Society's duty is to give children a platform to learn about themselves, both physically and emotionally, as well as their roles and obligations towards their families, society, and each other, in addition to teaching the academic components of various courses.

Christian education about sexuality is based on the revelation that God created humankind to be male and female, each bearing fully his image (Genesis 1:26, 27). The distinction between males and females from birth has significant ramifications. Understanding and celebrating who we are as God created us should be the goals of sexuality education. According to Miller (2024), biblically based sex education has a major impact on students' academic achievement; however the results differ for male and female students. This method is more beneficial to female students academically since it is consistent with their values and religious beliefs, which may lessen the tension and anxiety that comes with having opposing worldviews.

Rationale of the Study:

Church members frequently have powerful positions in their communities, and their opinions can help or hurt the adoption of sex education initiatives. While some denominations may see sex education as a danger to traditional values or as a promotion of promiscuity, others may see it as an essential tool in the fight against problems. Examining these differences in viewpoints can shed light on the larger social issues and present chances to implement comprehensive sex education that takes into account cultural and religious sensitivity. Policymakers, educators, and religious leaders working to create and carry out successful sex education programs in Aizawl City must have a thorough understanding of different viewpoints. Stakeholders may encourage discussion, clear up misunderstandings, and advance a more knowledgeable and comprehensive approach to sex education by recognizing the underlying beliefs and concerns of various Christian groups. By bridging the gap between religious principles and the public health imperative, this study can improve community well-being while honoring the community's spiritual and cultural identity.

Statement of the Problem:

Attitude towards Sex Education among Youths and Elders in Different Church Denominations in Aizawl City

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations
2. To find out the attitude towards sex education among elders in different church denominations
3. To compare the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Hypothesis of the Study:

There is no significant difference in the attitudes of church youths and elders in Aizawl City towards sex education.

Operational Definitions:

1. Sex Education: Sex education is the process of providing knowledge and understanding about human sexuality, including anatomy, reproduction, relationships, and sexual health.
2. Attitude: Attitude refers to a person's consistent way of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward a particular object, person, idea, or situation.

3. Church denomination: A church denomination is a distinct religious group within Christianity that has its own organizational structure, doctrine, and worship practices. Examples include Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and various Protestant groups like Baptists, Methodists, and Lutherans.

Review of Related Literature:

Lalmalsawmzauva (2019), did a research on “Pre-Marital Sex Attitude among Students of Mizoram University”. This study aims to investigate the attitudes of research academics and students at Mizoram University regarding premarital sex. In order to support the widespread belief that younger generations are becoming more liberal in their thinking and more receptive to premarital sex, this study examined "how liberal or conservative" the educated youngsters are. The study found that while 70% of MZU students remained conservative on the subject, 29.8% of them felt that lovers should engage in premarital sex. This demonstrated that the widespread belief that younger generations are more liberal is not entirely accurate.

Lalnunfeli and Malsawmi (2021), conducted a research on the topic ‘A Comparative study on the attitude of Students, Teachers and Community members towards Sex Education at Secondary School level in Mizoram’, it was founded that since secondary school teachers in Mizoram are primarily responsible for teaching sex education, they are typically well-versed in the actual nature of the subject and its significance for teenage pupils. They appear to be aware that sex education can reduce the risk of unintended births, improve healthy relationships between the sexes, and stop the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The majority of educators understand the need of teaching students about the fundamentals of human reproduction, thus it is not surprising that the current study also discovered that instructors have a more positive attitude than community members.

Kumar and Mittal (2015), conducted a study on “A Study of Attitude towards Sex Education of College Going Students in Relation to Their Home Environment”. The purpose of the study was to examine and contrast college-bound students' attitudes on sex education and explore how these attitudes relate to their home environments. Students attending college have a positive view on sex education. The attitudes of urban female students towards sex education have been overwhelmingly positive. College-bound students' attitudes on sex have been influenced by their location. it has been discovered that metropolitan pupils have a more positive attitude on sex education. Rural students' attitudes on sex education were unaffected by sex. Students' attitudes towards sex education have been influenced by their home environment and its aspects.

Toor (2016), did a research on the topic “A Study of the Attitude of Teachers, Parents and Adolescents towards Sex Education.” The purpose of this study is to examine how parents, instructors, and teenagers feel about sex education in connection to a few demographic factors. The sample included 100 teenagers from Punjab's Ludhiana area, 50 parents, and 50 teachers. For this investigation, the descriptive survey method was employed. According to the findings, the majority of teachers have a positive view on sex education. The majority of educators stated that they require specialised training in order to have conversations with pupils about sexuality. The majority of parents thought that sex education will make kids more responsible with their sexual activity. The findings also show that parents'

attitudes towards sex education are unaffected by their financial situation. Compared to girls, boys have a far more positive attitude on sex education.

Sharma, Kandre & Patel (2020), conducted a study “A Study of Sexual Attitude, it’s Bearing to Sexual Knowledge and Strength of Religious Faith amongst College Going Youth in Ahmedabad City”. The current study sought to determine the degree of sexual knowledge and religious belief among college-bound students in Ahmedabad, as well as the impact these factors had on their attitudes towards sex. Of the 299 participants, 48.5% were female and 51.5% were male. It was discovered that people who were male, lived in joint homes, and reported having had sex before the age of 15 knew more about sex. Individuals with a liberal attitude towards sex were those who reported a history of sexual exposure and those from joint households. There was a substantial ($p < 0.05$) correlation between the knowledge and attitude scores on the SCSRFQ and SKAQ. In addition to having superior knowledge and a strong religious belief, students with a liberal attitude towards sex also had superior knowledge.

Methodology:

Method of the Study:

The present study is descriptive in nature. Quantitative method was used for the analysis of data.

Population of the Study:

The population of the study will comprise of all the members of the different denominations of church in Aizawl City.

Sample of the Study:

The sample will be collected from the youths and elders from different denominations of church in Aizawl through Purposive Sampling Method. The sample consists of 5 females and 5 male youths in each denomination and 3 elders from each denomination respectively.

A table showing the different denominations of church in Aizawl City where the data was collected.

Serial No.	Church	Male	Female	Church Elders
1	Presbyterian Church of India (PCI)	5	5	3
2	Salvation Army	5	5	3
3	United Pentecostal Church (UPC)	5	5	3
4	Fundamental Baptist	5	5	3
5	Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM)	5	5	3
6	Roman Catholic Church	5	5	3
7	Isua Krista Kohhran (IKK)	5	5	3

Tool Used:

In order to find out the attitude of sex education among church members in different church denominations in Aizawl city, the researcher will employ an “Attitude scale towards sex education” developed by DR (Smt.) Usha Mitra.

Analysis of Data:

The data were analyzed quantitatively using statistics like mean, standard deviation, and t-test for comparison in terms of gender and different church denominations.

Results and Findings:

Objective No.1: To find out the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations

Table 1:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education among youths in different church denominations

Serial Number	Score Range	Staircase Grade	Interpretation	Church Denominations						
				PCI	Salvation Army	UPC	Fundamental Baptist	BCM	Roman Catholic	IKK
1	Above 129	9	Very High Attitude towards Sex Education	7 (70 %)	9 (90%)	10 (100 %)	9 (90%)	10 (100 %)	10 (100%)	10 (100 %)
	120-129									
2	110-119	8	High Attitude towards Sex Education	3 (30 %)	1 (10%)		1 (10%)			
	100-109	7								
3	90-99	6	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education							
	80-89	5								
	70-79	4								
4	60-69	3	Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	50-59	2								
5	40-49	1	Very Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	Below 40									

With a score above 129, the majority of young people from all denominations are classified as having a Very High Attitude toward Sex Education (Stanine Grade 9). The data unequivocally shows that young people in every faith denomination examined had a strong, favorable attitude toward sex education. The IKK, BCM, Roman Catholic, and Fundamental Baptist groups all displayed consistently highly positive sentiments. Although a minority scored somewhat lower (still in the high range), the PCI and Salvation Army denominations likewise displayed a plurality with very high attitudes. None of the participants had moderate, low, or very low attitudes toward sex education, as indicated by their scores outside of stanine grades 1–7.

Objective No.2: To find out the attitude towards sex education among elders in different church denominations

Table 2:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education among church elders in different church denominations

Serial Number	Score Range	Stanine Grade	Interpretation	Church Denominations						
				PCI	Salvation Army	UPC	Fundamental Baptist	BCM	Roman Catholic	IKK
1	Above 129	9	Very High Attitude towards Sex Education	1 (33 %)	1 (33%)	2 (67 %)	3 (100%)	2 (67 %)	3 (100%)	2(67 %)
	120-129									
2	110-119	8	High Attitude towards Sex Education	2 (67 %)	1 (33%)	1 (33 %)		1 (33 %)		1(33 %)
	100-109	7			1 (33%)					
3	90-99	6	Moderate Attitude towards Sex Education							
	80-89	5								
	70-79	4								
4	60-69	3	Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	50-59	2								
5	40-49	1	Very Low Attitude towards Sex Education							
	Below 40									

The study aimed to understand the attitudes of church elders from different denominations toward sex education. Using a scoring system, the results showed that most elders had either a "Very High" or "High" attitude toward sex education.

Every denomination was represented in the "Very High" group (scoring above 129). Notably, a majority of UPC and IKK elders, as well as 100% of Fundamental Baptist, BCM, and Roman Catholic elders, expressed very strong support. This implies that these groups have overwhelmingly positive opinions. Though in fewer numbers, participants from PCI, Salvation Army, UPC, Fundamental Baptist, and IKK were also found in the "High" group (scores 110–119). Only one UPC elder received a score in the next lower level (100–109), which is above-average but has no identifiable label. Overall, the findings show that, with none receiving low or extremely low scores, elders from different churches have a generally good attitude toward sex education. This indicates that the subject is becoming more and more accepted across denominations.

Objective No.3: To compare the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of church youth leaders and elders in Aizawl City towards sex education.

Table 3:

A table showing the attitude towards sex education between youth and elders in different church denominations

Age	Number of Church Members	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	t' value	df	Significance Level
Youth	70	131.42	8.2	1.55	89	Not Significant
Elders	21	120.9	5.64			

When it comes to views regarding sex education, youth (Mean = 131.42, SD = 8.2) score significantly higher on average than elders (Mean = 120.9, SD = 5.64). The observed difference between youth and elders may have happened by accident and does not meet the threshold of statistical significance (typically $p > 0.05$), as shown by the result's "Not Significant" label. As a result, the first null hypothesis—that there is no discernible difference between the views of Aizawl City elders and church youth leaders about sex education—is accepted.

Discussion of Results:

According to the averages, the youth seem to have a more positive attitude toward sex education than the seniors, but the t-test indicates that this difference is not statistically significant, so we cannot be certain that the groups differ based just on this sample. The significant mean difference, however, calls for a close examination of the data to look for any potential errors or anomalies. According

to the data, there is a definite tendency of teenagers and elders from various church groups having favorable opinions on sex education. This implies that, even within religious societies, younger church members are very receptive to learning about and talking about sex education, which may be a reflection of growing awareness and shifting societal perspectives. In a similar vein, the elders of other churches also displayed a generally upbeat outlook. Crucially, none of them were classified as low or extremely low, suggesting that senior church members have little opposition to sex education. This reflects a shift from traditional reluctance to a more accepting stance on the topic, which may be influenced by modern challenges, health awareness, and improved education efforts.

Conclusion:

These results collectively imply that sex education is becoming a more common topic of discussion in churches, with both younger and older members expressing interest in it. This increasing acceptability across denominations and age groups shows that faith-based organizations are willing to support more thorough instruction on the topic. According to the data, church members no longer consider sex education to be a taboo subject. Rather, it is becoming more and more recognized as an important and necessary component of individual and collective growth, suggesting a constructive change in perspective within religious contexts. It is possible that older persons require and have access to additional knowledge regarding the physiological and sexual changes associated with aging. This outcome can be connected to the fact that this topic is not included in the curriculum and is shunned in our nation's sociocultural environment. Furthermore, the results of this investigation are in line with earlier research showing older persons were more conservative than younger people (Kiziltepe, 2022).

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