

ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS SEX EDUCATION IN AIZAWL NORTH CONSTITUENCY

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Abstract: This study investigated the attitudes of secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency and examined difference in attitude with respect to gender and school management. The study employed a descriptive survey design which included 345 secondary school students from government, private and deficit schools. The participants were selected through stratified random sampling, with school management serving as the basis for stratification. Data were collected using the Attitude Scale Towards Sex Education (ASTSE) developed by Usha Mishra (2008). The findings indicated that the majority of students demonstrated a high level of positive attitude towards sex education, while none were classified under the low or very low attitude categories. A statistically significant difference was observed between male and female secondary school students, with female students showing significantly higher attitude scores than male students. However, no statistically significant difference was found in attitudes across government, private and deficit schools.

Key Words: Attitude, Sex Education, Secondary School Students, Constituency.

INTRODUCTION

Sex education is an important part of education that supports young people in developing accurate knowledge, healthy attitudes, and responsible behaviour related to sexuality and relationships. It extends beyond biological aspects of reproduction and includes emotional, social and physical dimensions of sexuality. The European Expert Group on Sexuality Education (2016) describes sexuality education as a process that helps children and young people make conscious, healthy and respectful choices concerning relationships, sexuality along with emotional and physical health. Thus, sex education is not merely about providing information but also about helping young people develop the understanding to make informed and responsible decisions.

However, the effectiveness and acceptance of sex education are not determined by knowledge alone. Students' attitudes towards sex education are equally important. Attitude refers to an enduring positive or negative evaluation of a person, object or issue (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). A favourable attitude towards sex education can encourage students to engage with the subject openly by seeking reliable information and participating in discussions related to sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, negative attitudes may limit students' willingness to access or benefit from such education. Understanding students' attitudes is therefore important for determining how sex education is perceived and received within the school environment.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The need for the present study is highlighted by the importance of providing adolescents with accurate and appropriate knowledge about sexuality, relationships and reproductive health. Adolescence is a stage when students begin to form attitudes towards relationships and sexuality. However, information may often come from peers, social media or other informal sources and may not always be accurate. Schools therefore provide an important setting for delivering reliable and age-appropriate information. Adolescents are less likely to engage in unprotected sexual intercourse when they develop social skills for managing romantic and sexual relationships, which may also promote other healthy behaviours (Schaalma et al., 2004). This highlights the importance of providing appropriate education during the secondary stage, when students are developing attitudes and behaviours that may influence their future relationships and health.

In the Indian context, discussions surrounding sex and sexuality have often been influenced by social and cultural sensitivities. This may be particularly relevant in societies where such topics are considered private or taboo. Mizoram is no exception, as discussions related to sexuality may still be approached with considerable sensitivity. At the same time, the need for meaningful sexual-health education is further highlighted by the HIV situation in Mizoram. According to the National AIDS Control Organisation's (2024) Sankalak report, Mizoram recorded an estimated adult HIV prevalence of 2.73%, compared with the national prevalence of 0.20%, making it the state with the highest estimated adult HIV prevalence in India. While HIV prevalence

alone does not determine the need for sex education, it highlights the importance of strengthening awareness and preventive health education among young people.

In relation, secondary school students represent an important group for understanding attitudes towards sex education. Their attitudes may differ according to their social experiences and educational environments. Gender is relevant because male and female students may encounter sexual related information and expectations differently. School management is also important because government, private and deficit schools may differ in their educational environments, resources and approaches to student support. Examining these variables can therefore provide a clearer understanding of whether students' attitudes remain similar across groups or whether meaningful differences exist.

Therefore, studying the attitude towards sex education of secondary students in Aizawl North Constituency is relevant not only for understanding how adolescents currently perceive the subject but also for providing local evidence base for teachers, parents, schools and educational authorities in planning sex education that is context-sensitive, age-appropriate and responsive to the needs of secondary school students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

More (2012) examined the attitude of youths towards sex education as well as the effectiveness of sex education programme on such attitude. The study found that the overall attitude of youths was mostly high and moderate towards sex education. The effect of sex education programme was also found to be an effective measure.

Lalnunfeli and Malsawmi (2015) explored the attitude towards the introduction of sex education at school level among teacher trainees using Attitude Scale towards Sex Education developed and standardized by Usha Mishra (2008). The result of the study showed that female teacher trainees possess a higher attitude towards sex education as compared to the male teacher trainees.

Kumar et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study to explore the knowledge, attitude and perception of sex education among school going adolescents in Haryana. The finding showed significant association between type of school and perception of sex education. Adolescents from private schools demonstrated a higher favourable perception compared to those from government schools.

Adiaha et al. (2018) investigated adolescent student attitude towards sex education in contemporary Abuja society, Nigeria. The study showed that adolescent students held generally positive attitudes towards sex education, where it is also revealed that females hold more positive attitudes than male.

Lalremruata (2019) studied the attitude of secondary school students and teachers towards sex education in Champhai District. The study found that majority of the respondents have positive attitude towards sex education. It also revealed most male students possess higher and positive attitude towards sex education as compared to female counterparts.

Lalremruati (2023) reported that out of 60 College students of Govt. Mamit College, majority students (73.33%) have high attitude towards sex education where there were no students with low or very low attitude towards sex education. Similarly, from the selected 30 college students of Govt. Zawnuam College, most students (76.67%) have a high attitude towards sex education with no students having low or very low attitude towards sex education as well.

Rani (2025) explored adolescents' attitude towards sex education among 100 government and private higher secondary school students in Raipur. The study found no significant difference between government and private adolescent student towards sex education. The study also reported no significant difference with regard to gender.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study the attitude of secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.
2. To compare the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.
3. To compare the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

2. There is no significant difference in the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive Survey Method was used for recording, analysing and interpreting the study.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population comprised all Class IX and Class X students studying in government, private and deficit secondary schools within Aizawl North Constituency.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Selected sample included 345 secondary school students from government, private and deficit schools within Aizawl North Constituency. Stratified Random Sampling method was used for data collection.

TOOL USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was completed using the Attitude Scale Towards Sex Education (ASTSE) developed by Usha Mishra (2008).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Attitude of secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

Table 1
Attitude of secondary school students towards sex education

Score Range	Interpretation	No. of students	Percentage
Above129	Very High	21	6.09
120-129			
110-119	High	235	68.12
100-109			
90-99	Moderate	89	25.79
80-89			
70-79			
60-69	Low	0	0
50-59			
40-49	Very Low	0	0
below 40			
Total		345	100

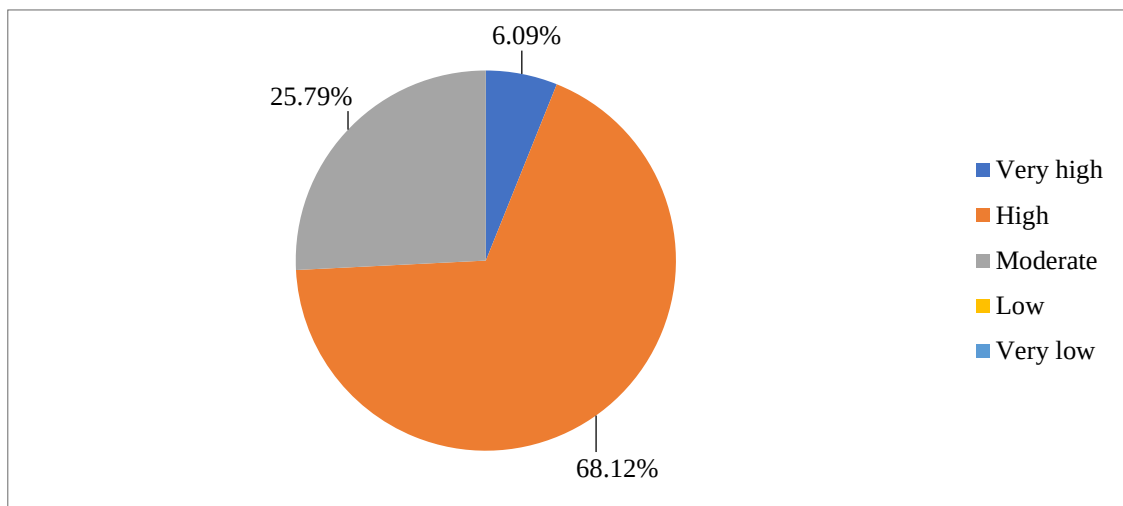


Fig 1

Pie chart showing the attitude of secondary school students towards sex education

In the given Table 1 and Figure 1, the attitude of secondary school students toward sex education is revealed where the majority of respondents which is 68.12% demonstrated a high level of positive attitude, while 25.79% exhibited a moderate attitude. Further, 6.08% reflected a very high attitude toward sex education. No students were categorized under the low or very low attitude levels. This indicates an absence of negative perceptions within the population. This distribution showed that secondary school students generally hold favourable or at least neutral views regarding sex education.

Discussion

It is observed in the present study that most secondary school students had a high level of positive attitude towards sex education, while some demonstrated moderate and very high levels of attitude. No students showed low or very low attitudes, which indicated an overall favourable attitude towards sex education. This finding is consistent with Lalremruati (2023), who reported similarly high levels of positive attitudes among college students in Mamit and Zawlunam, with no students showing low or very low attitudes. Similarly, More (2012), Adiaha et al. (2018), and Lalremruata (2019) found generally positive attitudes towards sex education among youths and secondary school students. The consistency of these findings across different groups and settings suggests a growing acceptance and favourable perception of sex education among adolescents and young people. The absence of students with low or very low attitudes in the present study further indicates that sex education is generally viewed positively by secondary school students.

2. Comparison of the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

Table 2

Comparison of the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education

Gender	Number	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Inference
Male	165	103.52	8.33	343	5	Significant
Female	180	107.92	8.10			

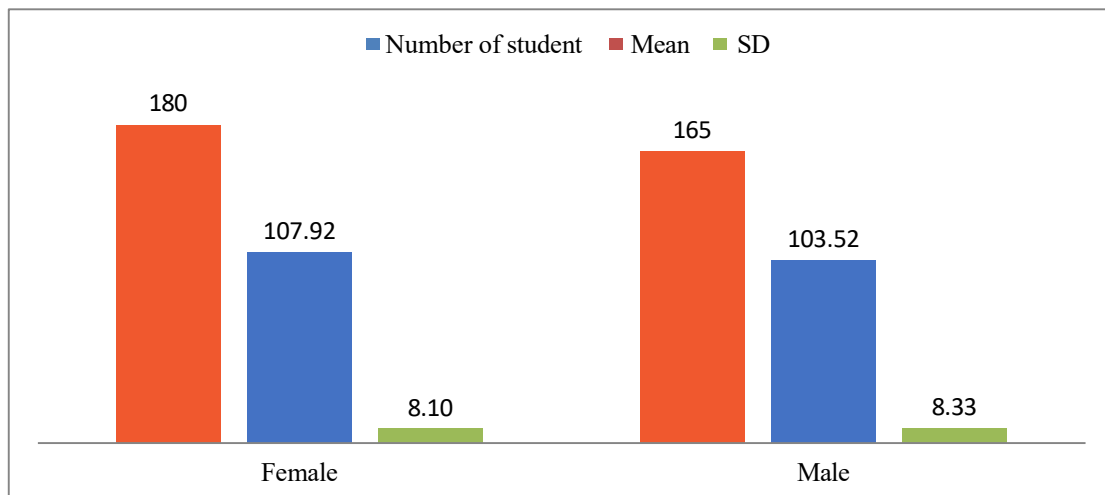


Fig 2

Graphical representation of the attitude towards sex education of male and female secondary school students

Table 2 and Figure 2 showed a statistical comparison of the attitudes toward sex education between male and female secondary school students, as measured by their mean scores and standard deviations. The data reveal that female students (180) have a higher mean attitude score of 107.92 and SD of 8.11 compared to male students (165) who have a mean score of 103.52 and SD of 8.34. The t-value of 5, with degrees of freedom which is 343 indicated that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated, there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency is rejected.

Discussion

The present study found a significant difference in attitudes towards sex education between male and female secondary school students, with female students showing a higher and more positive attitude. This finding is consistent with Lalnunfeli and Malsawmi (2015) and Adiaha et al. (2018), who both reported more positive attitudes among female students as well. A possible explanation maybe that girls perceive sex education as more directly relevant to issues such as menstruation, pregnancy and reproductive health which may increase their interest in sex education. However, this finding differs from Lalremruata (2019), who reported more positive attitudes among male students, and Rani (2025), who found no significant gender difference. These mixed findings suggest that gender differences may be shaped by the socio-cultural and educational context of the students.

3. Comparison of the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency.

Table 3

Comparison of the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education

Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F- ratio	Inference
Between Groups	151.92	2	75.96	1.05	Not Significant
Within Groups	24684.94	342	72.17		

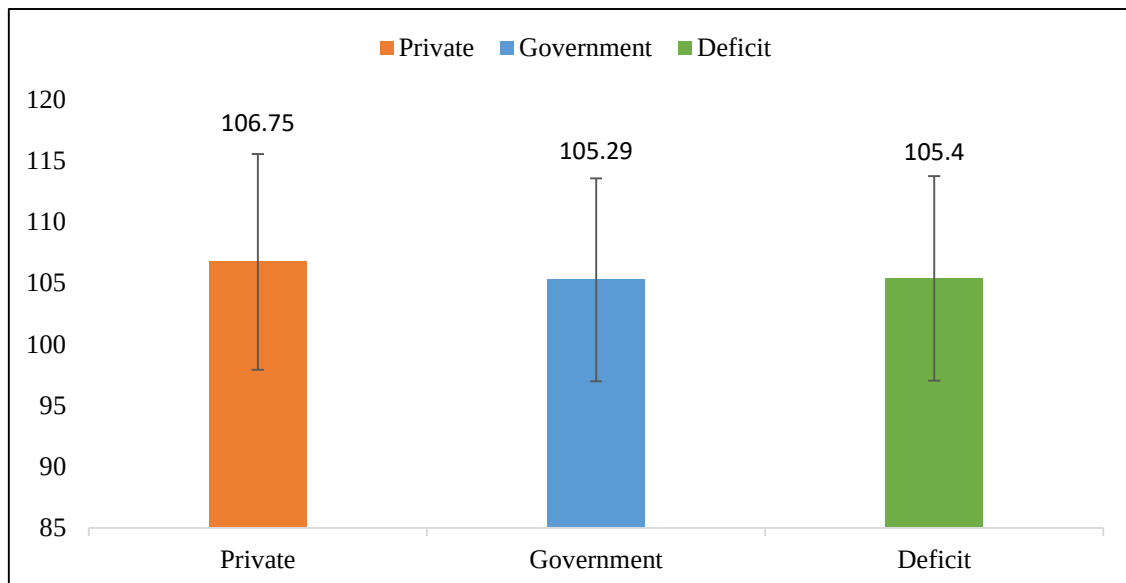


Fig 3

Mean attitude scores towards sex education among government, private and deficit secondary school students

Table 3 and Figure 3 showed the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to assess whether there are statistically significant differences in the attitudes toward sex education among students enrolled in government, private and deficit secondary schools. The analysis yielded an F-ratio of 1.05, which is lower than the critical F-value at both levels of significance, with between-group mean square variance of 75.96 and within-group mean square variance of 72.17. This indicated that the differences in attitude scores among the three groups are not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated, there is no significant difference in the attitude among government, private and deficit secondary school students towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency is accepted.

Discussion

The present study found no significant differences in attitude towards sex education among secondary school students in government, private and deficit schools in Aizawl North Constituency. This finding is consistent with Rani (2025) who similarly observed no significant difference between government and private adolescent student towards sex education. However, this finding differs from Kumar et al. (2017), where it is reported that adolescents from private schools demonstrated a more favourable perception of sex education compared to those from government schools. This suggests that attitudes towards sex education may be influenced more by societal awareness, media or peer discussions than by institutional type and quality alone.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of the study present a favourable picture of secondary school students' attitudes towards sex education in Aizawl North Constituency. The majority of students demonstrated a high level of positive attitude, while none were found to have low or very low attitudes. This indicates that sex education is generally viewed positively by students and provides a supportive attitudinal foundation for its implementation at the secondary school level.

The study also revealed a significant difference in attitude based on gender, with female students demonstrating more positive attitudes as compared to male students. This finding regarding gender variance highlighted the importance of considering gender-related perspectives when planning and implementing sex education programmes.

In contrast, no significant difference was found across government, private and deficit schools. This indicates that students' attitudes were broadly similar across different types of school management. Therefore, sex education should receive consistent attention across all school settings rather than being limited to a particular type of institution.

To sum up, these findings provide a good foundation for strengthening sex education at the secondary level. Consistent and age-appropriate sex education across schools can build on the students' positive attitudes and help them develop a better understanding of sexual and reproductive health.

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