

Perception of Undergraduate Students towards Comprehensive Sex Education in School Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

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Comprehensive Sex Education has emerged as an important educational concern due to increasing awareness regarding adolescent health, emotional well-being, gender sensitivity and responsible social behaviour. This paper is focused on examining undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum. A quantitative descriptive survey method was employed for the study. 100 undergraduate students were selected from the departments of English, Economics and History of the University of Lucknow (Campus), Lucknow through convenient sampling technique. A self-constructed Likert-scale questionnaire was used for data collection. Statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and One-Way ANOVA were used for analysis and interpretation of data. The findings showed that the majority of undergraduate students possessed favorable perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum. No statistically significant difference was found between male and female students or among students belonging to different subjects. Similarly, no significant difference was observed among male students and female students on the basis of subjects, they belonged to. The study shows that educated youth increasingly recognize the importance of scientifically accurate and age-appropriate comprehensive sex education for awareness, emotional development, personal safety and healthy social relationships.

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1. Introduction

Education contributes significantly towards the intellectual, emotional, social and moral development of individuals. In the contemporary society, adolescents and young adults are increasingly exposed to information related to sexuality through media, internet platforms, peer interaction and social networking sites. Much of this information is often misleading, unscientific, or incomplete, which creates misconceptions and confusion among young people.

Therefore, the need for structured and educationally appropriate Comprehensive Sex Education has become increasingly important. Comprehensive Sex Education refers to a scientifically accurate, age-appropriate, culturally relevant and developmentally suitable educational process that provides information regarding human sexuality, reproductive health, emotional development, consent, gender sensitivity, personal safety and healthy relationships. According to UNESCO, Comprehensive Sexuality Education helps learners develop knowledge, attitudes, skills and values necessary for maintaining health, dignity and respectful social relationships.

In India, inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum continues to remain a socially sensitive issue due to cultural beliefs, misconceptions and social hesitation. Nevertheless, changing social conditions, increasing adolescent health concerns, and rising awareness regarding gender equality and personal safety have strengthened the educational importance of Comprehensive Sex Education. The present study was undertaken to examine undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum and to identify whether differences existed in terms of gender and subject, the students belonged to.

2. Review of Related Literature

Several national and international studies have emphasized the educational importance of Comprehensive Sex Education.

Kirby (2002) reported that school-based sexuality education programs positively influence adolescents' awareness, reproductive health knowledge and responsible behaviour. The study emphasized that scientifically designed sexuality education contributes towards informed decision-making among adolescents.

Tripathi and Sekher (2013) analyzed Indian youths' experiences and expectations regarding sex education using national survey data. The findings showed that most of Indian youth supported the introduction of sex education in schools, particularly from middle and secondary classes. The study further highlighted a substantial gap between the educational needs of youth and actual access to sexuality education.

Penda (2025) conducted a study on perception of senior secondary students regarding inclusion of sex education within Biology subject curriculum and found that students possessed favorable attitudes towards sex education. Teachers also demonstrated positive attitude regarding inclusion of sexuality related topics in curriculum.

Sondag, Johnson, and Parrish (2022) emphasized the importance of inclusive sexuality education that addresses emotional well-being, gender sensitivity, healthy relationships and psychosocial development. Their study highlighted that traditional sex education often neglects broader emotional and social dimensions of adolescent development.

Kaur et al. (2025) observed that college students considered Comprehensive Sex Education important for awareness regarding reproductive health, emotional maturity, consent and prevention of misconceptions. The study emphasized the educational importance of scientifically accurate sexuality education programs.

The reviewed studies indicate increasing acceptance and educational significance of Comprehensive Sex Education among students and researchers. The limited studies have specifically examined undergraduate students' perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education within Indian university settings.

Rationale of the Study

In recent years, adolescent health, gender awareness, personal safety and responsible relationships have gained educational importance. Discussions on sexuality and reproductive awareness remain limited in many educational

and social settings in India, leading students to rely on informal and unreliable sources of information. Changing social conditions and growing youth awareness have highlighted the need to understand students' views on Comprehensive Sex Education. As undergraduate students represent mature and educated youth, their perception can provide valuable insight into the acceptance and relevance of including Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum. Therefore, this paper was undertaken to examine undergraduate students' perception towards its inclusion in the school curriculum.

3. Objectives

1. To study the level of perception of undergraduate students towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.
2. To study the significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.
3. To study the significant difference in undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.
4. To study the significant difference in male undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.
5. To study the significant difference in female undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

4. Hypotheses

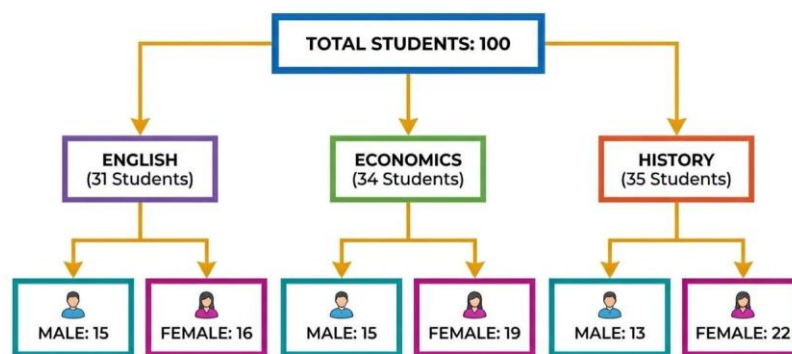
1. There is no significant difference in the level of perception of undergraduate students towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.
3. There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.
4. There is no significant difference in male undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.
5. There is no significant difference in female undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

5. Research Methodology

This present study adopted the quantitative descriptive survey method as it was suitable for examining undergraduate students' perception towards the inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.

5.1 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Lucknow (Campus). The sample comprised 100 undergraduate students selected from the departments of English, Economics and History. Both male and female students were included in the sample. Convenient sampling technique was used for selection of respondents.



5.2 Tool Used

A self-constructed Likert-type questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire included statements related to:

- ❖ Awareness regarding Comprehensive Sex Education
- ❖ Reproductive health education
- ❖ Emotional and psychological development
- ❖ Gender sensitivity and consent
- ❖ Educational importance of Comprehensive Sex Education

5.3 Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analyzed through standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, mean and t-test percentage analysis.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1: To study the level of perception of undergraduate students towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.

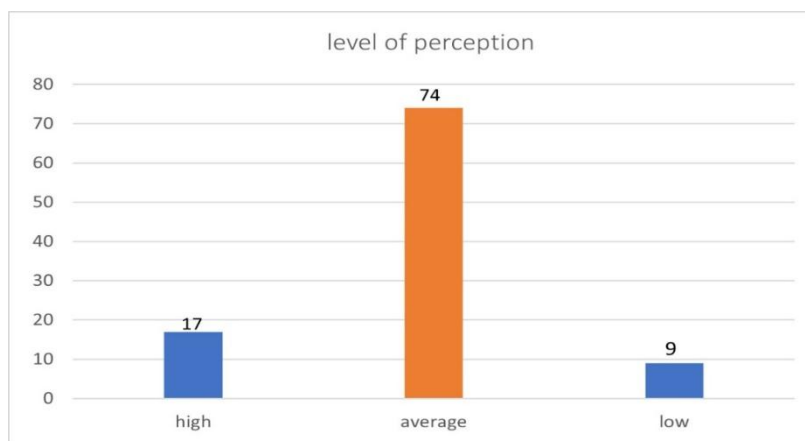
H₀₁ : There is no significant difference in the level of perception of undergraduate Students towards inclusion of comprehensive sex education in the school curriculum.

Table 1: Level of Perception of Undergraduate Students

Sr. No.	Level	Score Range	Number of students	Percentage
1.	High	Above 152	17	17%
2.	Average	114-151	74	74%
3.	Low	Below 113	9	9%
Total			100	100%

Interpretation

The findings revealed that out of 100 undergraduate students, 74% students possessed average level of perception, 17% showed high level perception, and only 9% showed low level perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum. The overall Mean score was found to be 133.20 with a Standard Deviation of 19.61, indicating moderately favorable perception among students. This shows that the majority of undergraduate students supported inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Graph 1: Level of Perception of Undergraduate Students

Objective 2: To study the significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum.

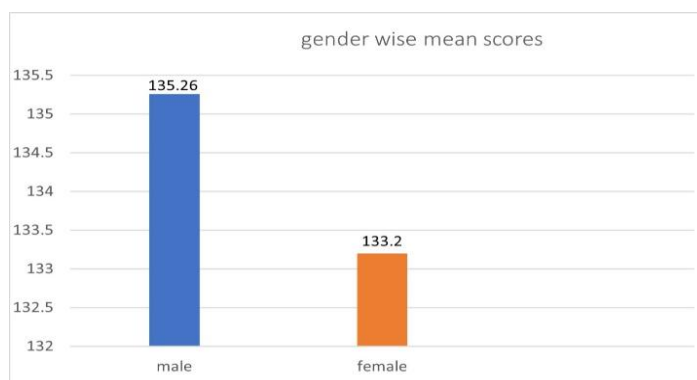
Ho2 : There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate students in their perception towards inclusion of comprehensive sex education in the school Curriculum.

Table 3: Difference between male and female students' perception

Gender	Number of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-test	Degree of freedom	p-value	Result
Male	43	135.26	19.61	0.91	98	0.365	Not significant
Female	57	133.20	20.85				

Interpretation

The Mean score of male undergraduate students was found to be 135.26 (SD = 19.61), whereas the Mean score of female students was 133.20 (SD = 20.65). The calculated t-value was 0.91 with p-value 0.365, which was not significant at the 0.05 level. This showed that no significant difference was found between male and female undergraduate students in their perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Graph 2: Difference between male and female students' perception

Objective 3: To study the significant difference in undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

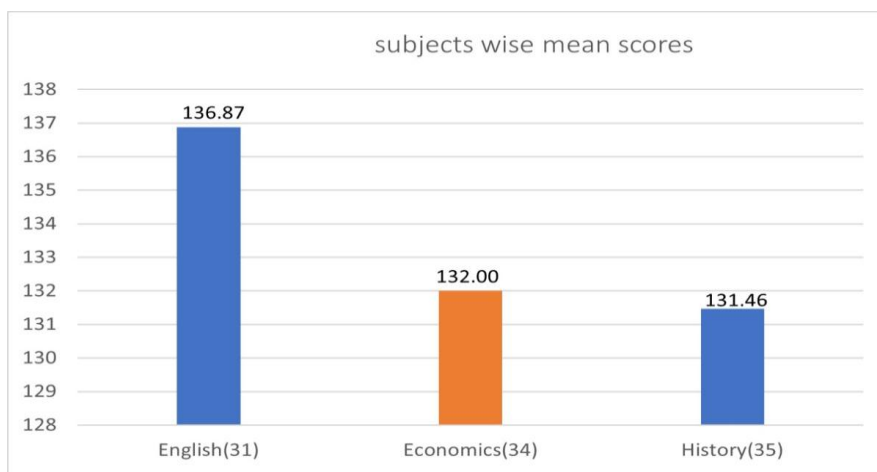
Ho3: There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA difference on the basis of subjects

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between groups	489.57	2	244.79	0.63	0.534
Within groups	37568.43	97	0.63		
Total	38058.00	99			

Interpretation

Students belonging to the English subject obtained the highest Mean score (136.87), followed by Economics (132.00) and History (131.46). The calculated F-value through One-Way ANOVA was 0.63 with p-value 0.534, which was not significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that undergraduate students belonging to different subjects possessed nearly similar perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Graph 3: Subject wise Mean Scores

Objective 4: To study the significant difference in male undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

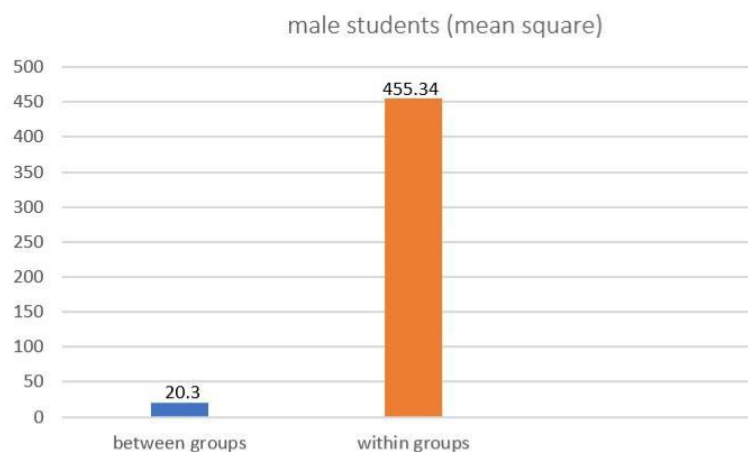
Ho₄: There is no significant difference in male undergraduate students' perception towards inclusion of comprehensive sex education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA for male students

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between groups	40.60	2	20.30	0.05	0.956
Within groups	18213.59	40	455.34		
Total	18254.19	42			

Interpretation

The One-Way ANOVA conducted among male undergraduate students revealed a Between Groups Mean Square value of 20.30 and Within Groups Mean Square value of 455.34. The calculated F-value was 0.05 with p-value 0.956, which was not significant at the 0.05 level. This showed that male students belonging to different subjects did not differ significantly in their perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum and so and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Graph 4: Mean Square comparison of male students' perception on the basis of subject

Objective 5: To study the significant difference in female undergraduate students' perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

H₀₅: There is no significant difference in female undergraduate students' perception towards inclusion of comprehensive sex education in the school curriculum on the basis of subject.

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA for female students

Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between groups	682.94	2	341.47	0.98	0.382
Within groups	18802.04	54	348.19		
Total	19484.9	56			

Interpretation

Among female undergraduate students, the Between Groups Mean Square value was 341.47 and the Within Groups Mean Square value was 348.19. The calculated F-value was 0.98 with p-value 0.382, which was not significant at the 0.05 level. The female undergraduate students belonging to different subjects possessed almost similar perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in the school curriculum and the null hypothesis was accepted.

Graph 5: Mean Square comparison of female students' perception on the basis of subject

7. Major Findings

- Undergraduate students possessed favorable perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum.

- No statistically significant difference was found between male and female students regarding perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education.
- Students belonging to different subjects demonstrated similar perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education.
- Male undergraduate students from different subjects possessed nearly similar attitudes towards Comprehensive Sex Education.
- Female undergraduate students from different subjects also demonstrated similar perception towards Comprehensive Sex Education.

8. Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that undergraduate students generally possess favorable perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum. Students recognized the importance of scientifically accurate sexuality education in promoting awareness regarding reproductive health, emotional well-being, personal safety, gender sensitivity and healthy relationships.

The findings are consistent with earlier studies conducted by Tripathi and Sekher (2013), Penda (2025) a and Kaur et al. (2025), which also reported positive attitudes of students towards sexuality education. The absence of statistically significant differences on the basis of gender and difference subjects suggests that acceptance towards Comprehensive Sex Education is becoming increasingly common among educated youth irrespective of demographic and academic differences.

The findings additionally indicate that students consider Comprehensive Sex Education important not only for biological awareness but also for emotional understanding, consent, respectful behaviour and responsible social interaction.

9. Educational Implications

Educational institutions should include scientifically accurate and age-appropriate Comprehensive Sex Education within school curriculum. Teachers should receive proper professional training regarding effective teaching of sexuality-related topics. Schools should create safe and inclusive environments where students may discuss adolescent health-related concerns without hesitation. Curriculum developers should incorporate emotional well-being, consent, gender sensitivity and healthy relationships within sexuality education programs. Comprehensive Sex Education may contribute towards development of awareness, responsible behaviour, emotional maturity and personal safety among adolescents.

10. Conclusion

The present study indicates that undergraduate students generally possess positive and favorable perception towards inclusion of Comprehensive Sex Education in school curriculum. The findings demonstrate that educated youth increasingly recognize the educational and social importance of scientifically accurate sexuality education for healthy personal and social development. The study further suggests that Comprehensive Sex Education should not be viewed merely as biological instruction but as an important educational process that contributes towards emotional understanding, gender sensitivity, personal safety and responsible citizenship. In contemporary society, where adolescents are frequently exposed to misinformation and unhealthy social influences, the inclusion of structured

and culturally sensitive Comprehensive Sex Education becomes highly relevant. Therefore, educational institutions and policy makers should adopt balanced, age-appropriate, and evidence based approaches for implementing Comprehensive Sex Education within school curriculum in order to support holistic development and well-being of students.

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