

Amrita Dey, 2020

Volume 6 Issue 2, pp. 219-233

Date of Publication: 4th August 2020

DOI- <https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2020.62.219233>

This paper can be cited as: Dey, A. (2020). Addressing Adolescence: A Critical Analysis of Life Style Programme in Schools in West Bengal, India. *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2),219-233.

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ADDRESSING ADOLESCENCE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF LIFE STYLE PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

Amrita Dey

*Assistant Professor of Sociology, Government General Degree College, Lalgarh, West Bengal,
India*

amritadey06@gmail.com

Abstract

Addressing adolescence through formal school-based sexuality education was part of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000). Life Style educational intervention programme was propagated by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (from 2004 onwards in the state of West Bengal, India) as a part of this global thrust to cater to the needs of adolescents for improved reproductive health, in combating HIV/AIDS and to ensure their right to access adequate information through school-based sexuality education. Life Style claimed to address adolescents' issues; physical, psychological, and socio-cultural, in a holistic manner. To implement it, teacher-training was started, a manual for guiding teacher-educators was published and schools allocated compulsorily fixed periods for the dissemination of this programme. This paper focuses on the developmental trajectory of the programme to gain insights into organizational problems; effects of culture on pedagogy and experiences of teacher-educators. The deliberate dissociation of the programme from any reference to sexuality education is also identified and explored as inherent contradictions. The content of the Life Style Teachers' Manual and the narratives of the associated teacher-educators has been explored and analysed. The qualitative data is specific to a particular time (2010 to 2012) and location (city of Kolkata and Greater Kolkata, West Bengal, India). The

sample of respondents has been selected based on purposive sampling. The findings provide suggestive insights into certain social trends and patterns. Explanations of the findings are traced to larger patriarchal social structures and processes. This paper in essence is a qualitative exercise in exploring the conflict and negotiations taking place between established and emerging norms shaping the adolescents' issues, needs, and rights within the formal educational intervention.

Keywords

Adolescence, Sexuality Education, Pedagogy, Teachers, Content Analysis, Narrative Analysis

1. Introduction

Life Style Programme initiated in around 2004 by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) was an attempt to address adolescents' issues through school-based curriculum and class activities. It was a policy decision backed by the administration and at the beginning, WBBSE collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and West Bengal State AIDS Prevention and Control Society (WBSAPCS). Even as it was being conceptualized Life Style Programme was objected by important stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, and also by political dissent groups. The main objection was against the introduction of sex education in schools and Life Style was perceived as an attempt to introduce school-based sex education. Life Style was implemented and was mandatory in schools until 2010. The following article discusses the context of the study and explains how adolescents emerge as a critical cohort. It is followed by a specification of objectives, theoretical foundations, and methodology of the study. The main objective is to critically analyze Life Style Programme, focusing on the developmental trajectory of the programme, the resources it used, the pedagogy it followed and the way it was implemented through teacher-educators. The theoretical foundation lay in explaining how patriarchal norms shape conservative discourses around adolescent sexuality, gender stereotyping and reproductive health. It explains how adolescent sexuality is seen as a threat and in need of control. Such orientation defeats the purpose of the Life Style programme. Both the resources and teacher-educators of the programme suffered from inherent contradictions. Discussion on methodology focus on the importance of deciphering the narratives of the teachers associated with the Life Style programme. The manual for the teachers published by WBBSE is critically analysed. The narratives and experiences of the teachers are also analysed, which reveals the internal contradictions within organizational and administrative set up of the programme. The teachers as agents of implementation showed their contradictory understanding of what is necessary knowledge and what is appropriate in a normative pattern. Life Style suffered from being labeled as a subverted attempt to impart sex education but the propagators could never enlighten themselves and others of

the fact that sex education or rather an attempt to address adolescence such as Life Style is not to restrict or control or shape sexuality of the adolescents but to free them from ignorance.

2. The Context: Adolescents Identified as Critical Cohort

Life Style Programme in West Bengal can be seen as a part of and/or a response to a worldwide initiative as well as a nation-level awareness to address the issues related to adolescents who are identified as a critically important cohort of a nation's population. At the almost same time, (in 2005) Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) was launched nationwide in India by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in collaboration with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO). United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group-Population and Development (IAWG-P&D) (2003) report titled *Adolescents in India: A Profile* stated that adolescents aged between 10 years and 19 years constitute one-fifth of world's population (p.3). According to the UNICEF flagship project (The State of the World's Children) in 2011, adolescents as a category are very critical in the fight against poverty and inequity in the world and therefore cannot be neglected (Rajalakshmi 2011). Some of the crucial areas identified by this project were training, education, participation, a supportive environment for health and education, and so on. From 2001 to 2011 the increase in the number of adolescents and youth in India almost doubled; from 28.1 million in 2001 to 41.8 million in 2011 (ORGI and UNFPA, p, 9). In 2015, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) stipulated by the United Nations were significant towards this rising awareness for the adolescents' population. For example, MDG- 3 which propagated the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and MDG-5 which called on reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal reproductive health and MDG-6 which focused on combating HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) were supposed to have the significant outcome for the adolescent population. In the state of West Bengal, WBBSE made Life Style Programme mandatory from standard six to standard ten (addressing adolescents aged nine years to sixteen years approximately) in all government and government-aided schools. During the implementation phase, from 2001 to 2008 experts held workshops and 5 teachers from each school from the major number of districts were chosen and trained. From these trainee teachers, few were chosen as a district resource person and were given the responsibility to supervise training at their respective district schools. By 2008, around 10,000 (approximately) schools were covered under the programme (data provided by government officials interviewed). There were also peer-learning processes involved. Teachers would select a few students and train them to be peer educators in each school. It was also decided that components of Life Style will be

integrated with general subjects to heighten the efficacy of the programme. However, the teachers' organization did not welcome the initiative, citing the reason that topics are "sexually explicit" and will therefore be embarrassing for the teachers to teach (Pandey, 2004). In the case of both AEP and Life Style Programme, the main objection from different stakeholders was that these are forms of sex education. The Life Style Programme was discontinued after 2012. This article following its specific objectives focuses on the data gathered from specific period when Life Style Programme was active, which is from 2010 to 2012.

3. The Objectives, Theoretical Foundation and Methodology

The overarching objective of this paper is to critically analyse Life Style Programme. The main focus is on the developmental trajectory of the programme, the resources it used, the pedagogy it followed and the way it was implemented through teacher-educators. The specific objectives are as follows: (i) to critically analyse the content of the Teachers' Manual of the Life Style Programme to identify the inherent complexities and contradictions; (ii) to analyse the narratives of the resource persons and teachers-educators to understand the lapses and inadequacy of the programme; (iii) to explain how addressing adolescence is rooted in established patriarchal norms whereby efficacy of Life Style Programme is significantly affected.

The theoretical foundation of this discussion lay on understanding how patriarchal society shapes norms related to sexuality and gender. The emerging sexual awareness of adolescents was meant to be controlled. It is evident in the way sex education emerged. The conservative discourses on sex education advocated abstinence until marriage and perceived adolescents' sexuality as a possible threat that needs to be controlled (Jones, 2011, p.371). Learners are regarded as a passive entity and sex education inculcated the dominant norms advocating abstinence, no or none approach, physical hygiene, and so on. Deviations to established moral structures such as masturbation, sexual experimentation, and sexual desire are seen as a threat that can affect the stability of social institutions such as marriage and family. The conservative orientation served the patriarchal norms as it deliberately portrayed adolescents as asexual beings. Feminist critics argue that patriarchy promotes a medical and reproductive approach to adolescent sexuality and therefore inhibits the development of any communicative space that can discuss sexual pleasure and desire and a positive constitution of adolescent sexuality (Cameron-Lewis and Allen, 2013, p.122). United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advocated Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) from 2009 onwards. Sexuality education has replaced the term sex education because the latter was narrowly defined and its scope was limited to biological

essentialism. UNESCO (2018) conceived sexuality education as being comprehensive, curriculum-based and based on the human rights approach (p,16). It includes teaching /learning cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality; aiming to empower youth with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to realize their health and dignity, develop the respectful sexual and social relationship, consider the consequences of their choices to the well being of themselves and that of others and be able to protect their rights throughout life. The shift in orientation in education began in the 1970s and was linked to other reforms such as feminism, gay liberation, and so on (Jones, 2011,p. 375). CSE is a result of this critical, feminist ideological shift in how adolescent sexuality and physicality is perceived. The body and sexuality are not any more seen as solely meant for procreation and traditional intercourse, it is the site for complex sexual identities. It is a political space where sexuality, desire, pleasure, and power dynamics are interwoven. Thus CSE is a platform that creates scope for discussion and deliberation. Adolescents are no more meant to be treated as passive learners but informed decision-maker. However, Life Style Programme was conceptualised within a socio-cultural space that upheld the established notions of the patriarchal family, marriage, relationships, gender, sexuality and body. The objective of the programme was to address adolescents, inform them and support them during their growing-up age but it ended up being an authoritative and moralistic platform. The inherent contradictions evident within the programme will be discussed in detail in the following section.

This article specifically focuses on Life Style education programme at a particular period; from 2010 to 2012 approximately. As such the sample selected is based on non-probability samplings such as purposive sampling and snowball sampling. It consists of teachers who were actively associated with the programme. The sample includes ten teachers (six male teachers and four female teachers) of which three also acted as key resource persons in the conception and implementation of the programme and in writing the teachers' manual. All of them held post-graduate degrees and had an average of ten years of teaching experience. They all belonged to the Hindu, Bengali community. The limitations of the sample are its small size and its homogenous character, with no representations of other communities. What can be argued in support of the selected sample is that it was selected with a specific purpose in mind, to select respondents who were actively attached to the programme and therefore capable of sharing important insights regarding it. Also, it is to be noted that Life Style education programme was a contentious issue. So not all teachers contacted for an interview consented to act as a respondent. So far as representation of other communities is concerned, it needs to be pointed out that WBBSE gives pre-eminence to the Bengali language as a medium of instruction and therefore mostly involves Bengali community.

The West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education looks into the school education of Muslim students and Life Style education was never meant to be implemented in Madrasah or Madrasah high schools which specifically cater to the Muslim community. Thus the sample includes neither Muslim teachers nor non-Bengali speaking people. The mode of data collection was face to face in-depth interviews. The narratives of the respondents are analyzed by its content. The content analysis of the Life Style Teachers' Manual is also done to gain important perspectives.

4. The Life Style Teachers' Manual: Analysing the Content

The Life Style Teachers' Manual published in 2005 had its content divided into five principal topics. It began with a focus on topics related to physiological aspects such as information related to human reproductive organs. Along with physiological, attention is given to mental wellbeing so that adolescents can tackle tensions associated or originating from misinformation, ignorance or repressed thoughts. Another group of topics discussed social aspects of life familiarising adolescents about social norms and behavioral codes. The manual also discussed cultural aspects of life to breed interest among students on various practicing arts and cultural activities. A group of topics also discussed ethical issues in which the main aim is to address the morality of adolescents. The manual is meant for three age groups; those in standard six and is around twelve years old, those in standard seven and eight and is around fourteen years old and those in standard nine and ten and are around sixteen years old.

Learning content for the twelve years old begins with a discussion about self. The idea was to make students aware of themselves but we find a discussion on values such as truthfulness, honesty, empathy, and so on. It is not very clear as to the significance of discussing values while propagating self-realization. It seems as if at the very beginning the manual is trying to ground the students into a socially established value system. Nowhere it is discussed how values socially originate and get established. It neither discussed the relative nature of a value in a given social context or across social contexts. The students are made aware of the family relation once they are made aware of their self. The manual instructs the teacher to discuss the equal partnerships and responsibilities of both the genders within the family. However, the hypothetical familial issue the manual draws up here ends up strengthening the gender inequality. In this example a girl child is facing gender discrimination as her mother and grandmother continue to favour her younger brother. The female members establishing patriarchy while the father though aware of the discrimination, remain silent. This is followed by a discussion related to the body and physiology. The manual does mention the need to talk about maintaining genital hygiene.

“Boys should clean their penis at least once a day by retracting the foreskin and girls should also clean their genitals with clean water... during menstruation clean, soft cloth or sanitary napkins should be used to avoid infection... undergarments should be washed daily” (WBBSE, 2005,p. 57).

The manual uses a short story by Rabindranath Tagore at the very end of its guidelines meant for standard six. The short story titled *Chuti*(meaning holiday) metaphorically refers to the end of the troubles of an ignorant adolescent boy through succumbing to death and therefore peace. The highlight of the story relevant in this context is the socially bred incapability of adult caregivers in understanding adolescents whose vulnerability is pronounced by the liminal age status. They are neither a child nor an adult and therefore difficult to be categorised. However, the manual does not give any instructions to the teacher as to the relevance of the story to the context.

Learning contents for the fourteen years old students of standard seven and eight include discussions on the body, physiological changes during adolescents, sexual differences and sexual roles, reproduction process and peer relationships. The manual categorically instructs the teacher to distinguish myths from facts. Thereby giving attention to the reality that adolescents are often misinformed and that may result in mental anxiety. To note a few instances, the manual emphasize that adolescents understand certain physical changes such as onset of menstruation or menarche among female adolescents and nocturnal emission for male adolescents so that they do not come to have any misjudged conclusion, undue fear and misinformed activities. The section that deals with human reproduction ask the teacher to start with reproduction in plant and proceed to that in animals to make students understand the naturally occurring process of reproduction for the survival of the species. Here, the manual seems to play on the defensive note and is trying to lessen or avoid the sexual side of human reproduction. It instructs the teachers to be sensitive to the fact that students might be uncomfortable while discussing human reproduction and therefore male and female adolescents can be seated separately. The manual is reflecting the basic standpoint of the propagators of Life Style education, that it is not meant to impart sexuality education. Measures are evident in which any form of reference to sex is avoided. The manual does not address the fact that the teachers can also be uncomfortable while holding such a discussion. In addition to these topics, this section also addresses problem-solving skills. Through various group activities, the teacher is instructed to make students aware of peer pressure, identify friendship and infatuation and be assertive of one’s feelings.

The section for standard nine that is students aged around sixteen years old includes all the above topics and in addition to that, it discusses alcohol and drug use, unwanted peer pressure and HIV-AIDS. It again focuses on bursting myths around alcohol use, noting that it is not a drug or that

alcohol and drug abuse can help in any form of problem-solving. Unwanted peer pressure is discussed as a contributing factor to teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and HIV-AIDS. The teacher is instructed to discuss how one should learn to say no.

“Your friend feels this is the right time for sexual intercourse. You love him/her, but you feel that you are not prepared and it will be a wrong act. Your friend says that you are afraid...you feel that your relation may snap but still, you have decided to say you are not prepared for it” (WBBSE, 2005, p.95).

However, adolescents can also have consensual sexual adventures. In such cases, only proper information and knowledge about the outcome can prevent adolescents to step into risky behaviors. Such insights were not discussed in the manual. HIV-AIDS was discussed along with many other human ailments. The idea that the manual seems to propagate is that HIV-AIDS is one of the many human ailments. But in doing that it is consciously subverting the significance of discussing HIV-AIDS to adolescents in an extra-curricular classroom teaching. The significance of the discussion should ideally be highlighted, that adolescence if practicing unprotected sex is particularly vulnerable to HIV-AIDS which will almost fully impair their life.

On the whole, the manual entrust the teacher to discuss many relevant topics, guides the teacher through examples, role play and group activities. However, one cannot overlook the attempted subversion of topics such as sexual intercourse, reproduction and human sexuality so that it is not confused as a sexuality education manual. Also, the manual makes no reference to audio-visual media, free pornography available over Internet and Social Networking sites such as Facebook as a potent source of influence over adolescents’ thinking and behaviour.

5. The Narratives and Experiences of the Teachers

The indecision regarding whether to designate Life Style Programme as a medium of imparting sexuality education divided the teachers’ opinion. For some, it is not a medium of imparting sexuality education because it follows a holistic approach. They stated that unlike sexuality education programmes that tend to focus on the body, sexual and reproductive health, issues and adolescent sexuality, Life Style discusses various topics outside this domain such as values, mental wellbeing, relationships, culture and so on. Then some teachers agree that Life Style does fulfill partially the aims of a sexuality education programme because it initiates talks regarding physical developments, sexual intercourse, and unintended teen pregnancy and so on. One of my respondent, a key resource person (also a principal of a government funded boys’ high school catering to students belonging to lower and medium-income group families) who was associated

with Life Style from the beginning and have also contributed in conceptualizing the manual narrated his experiences regarding the initial tensions in introducing the programme. Teacher educators resisted training programmes as they found the materials developed by WBBSE along with WBSAPCS as being sexually explicit. It was considered that sexuality education will undermine the particular socio-cultural context and will create unrest and anxiety among parents and teachers. Personally, as a teacher and a resource person my respondent realizes the need for intervention into adolescents' developmental processes. He narrated a few instances where he has personally spoken and counseled his students on issues related to physical development and anxiety-related problems. For example, boys in his school often suffered from infections in genital areas because they lacked proper information regarding genital hygiene. The parents were also not properly informed in this regard. In a few situations, parents and students approached him for advice and guidance and on those occasions, he could help them understand the issue and advised accordingly. According to him, such intervention was only possible as the parents and students themselves sought for help. He is unsure as to how much the parents can and will support such interventions if the approach is first made from the teachers themselves because the society, in general, is not open to discuss intimate and sensitive issues when unsolicited. My respondent being associated with creating the Teachers' Manual was of the view that an adequate amount of workshops and discussions were held while writing the manual and such workshops were attended by parents, teachers, educationists, WBBSE officials and members of various political parties and so on. However, another respondent (a science teacher who was assigned with Life Style classes in the boys' high school he taught) stated that under the guidance of UNICEF and WBSAPCS, the approach of Life Style manual was more direct about Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ARSH). But such an approach did not suit teachers due to their inhibitions. As such the manual have brief content on human reproduction and concentrated more on life skills.

Before initiating Life Style Programme, chosen teachers from selected schools from all over West Bengal were made to attend the orientation programmes and training workshops. Some teacher respondents narrated their experiences during such training. It is narrated that the teachers were not very serious about the aims or vision of the programme. As reported by a teacher respondent attending such workshops,

“teachers use to laugh among themselves on being given lessons on human anatomy...they would laugh at the trainer drawing an ovary”. (Dey, 2015, p. 219)

Teachers also found it to be a hard task to discuss issues related to body and sexuality in a class of sixty students. The situation of the schools, according to them, was not equipped properly

to initiate a programme like Life Style. Then again, one teacher respondent narrated her positive experiences in one such workshop group activity. Through this group activity, she learned to be comfortable with physical proximity with the same and other sex and with people from a different religion. The aim was to open up one's attitude towards physicality and sexuality, towards people of different sects, question the conventional behavioural norms and lessen socially nurtured inhibitions. One teacher respondent stated that though the workshops were helpful, yet no training is better than the teacher's instinct in handling student issues. He narrated that during workshops teachers were divided into groups and were given group tasks to come up with innovative teaching methods and problem-solving. However, in actual class situation he handled a problematic situation in the way he thought would be best to do and he had to react almost instantaneously. He found his student flipping through a pornographic magazine. He states,

“instead of punishing or scolding, I asked him to read the magazine in front of me...the boy could not even touch the magazine out of shame...I bought another book and asked him to read and he did...then I asked why he could not read the other magazine in front of me...and he admitted there are bad pictures in the magazines which one should not see...the idea of dealing with this sensitive issue came to my mind spontaneously... I think it is my years of teaching experiences that helped me to find a solution ...it is not something I learned from Life Style workshops”. (Dey, 2015, p. 218)

The number of workshops conducted was not sufficient enough to train the school teachers from all over West Bengal. Nor sufficient resources were provided to the teachers. Many teacher respondents repeated about this lack of training workshops and resources. Many teachers respondents expressed their failure in motivating their fellow teachers into being more open and interested in Life Style classes. They also reported that the school authority did not supervise the implementation of Life Style Programme with efficiency. Teachers associated with Life Style Programme at the administrative level reported that there was no attempt to map the development and progress of the programme. There was a lack of proper communication between administration, state-level implementers and teachers. Decisions taken were not properly communicated. The state-level administration also did not supervise how the schools are implementing the programme. It is also noted that the programme suffered due to political reasons. Political influences led to bias into personnel selection, into the preferential selection of schools, teachers and students, thereby giving rise to resentments within groups.

6. A Critical Evaluation of Life Style Programme

The manual, as its content is explored, one can see the vision and aims of Life Style programme. And to implement those vision and aims the same need to connect or transpire into the chosen agents of implementation, which in this case are the teachers and the school administrators. In this respect, the Life Style Programme suffered greatly. The manual and those key resource persons associated with conceptualizing the whole programme and the training workshops conjured on many tactics and innovative methods. They spoke of games, group assignments, brainstorming sessions, creating question boxes, story sessions and case study discussion and so on. Very few of these creative thinking was applied in classrooms by the teachers. Teacher respondents informed that they felt overburdened when they are asked to take the responsibility of conducting the Life Style class. Some did put up question boxes. These boxes helped in maintaining the anonymity of the students and helped the teacher to address specific issues effectively within class timings. Brainstorming sessions were also reported to be held by the teachers.

According to Chakravarti (2011) the fact that the Life Style manual dissociates itself from any association with HIV/AIDS prevention education and sexuality education is a way of defending Indian culture having “Victorian values” and in doing that it contradicts the very rationality of its primary objective which was to respond to the global promotion of adolescent education (p,395). Femininity and masculinity were discussed in an archaic way, focusing on established moralities within the context of the traditional family and marital set up (Chakravarti,2011, p,396). Gender sensitization is inadequate in the manual as the social construction of gender is not discussed. According to Chakravarti (2011), the manual constructs all desires as “temptation”, arising mostly from peer groups (p, 395). In doing so the manual conforms to conservative discourse that perceives adolescent sexuality as something to be controlled and repressed. The manual does not provide a clear understanding of different forms of abuse such as generalized abuse and sexual abuse or between kinds and degrees of sexual abuse such as between harassment, rape, or molestation. Chakravarti (2011) also questioned as to why the book is made available only to teachers; as if the students will be negatively advised if they read it on their own (p, 398). On the whole Chakravarti (2011) thinks that the inherent contradictions evident within the manual such as between declared and actual values and content make it clear that the manual was written in hurry and the framers were not much convinced of their views, they lost assertiveness in face of resistance from different sectors (p, 399). Ahmadi and Amini (2015) notes that for meaningful learning, the text needs to be meaningfully constructed; the author should carefully plan the text so as the learners can understand

the link between concepts (p, 1287). The manual lacked meaningful construction and it may be the reason why the teachers could not connect to its given purpose.

The lapse between the ways Life Style was planned to be implemented but the way it was implemented is evident in various other aspects. The manual provided some specific instructions for the teachers to be followed and to put emphasis on certain topics. For example, it is asked that teachers should make students aware of the physical and mental developments during adolescence irrespective of their sexes. The discussions were held but the result remains gender-specific. This was because male and female students were segregated and the discussions remain limited to the developments of the particular sexes. Teachers never attempted to discuss the opposite sex. Nor did they ever mention the third gender, transgender and homosexual community and this omission is also present in the manual. It is also specifically mentioned in the manual that teachers will explain human physical parts with the help of visuals. None of the interviewed teachers reported having done this. Analysing the responses of the sample of teachers, it is possible to conclude that majority, both male and female teachers preferred to stick to certain specific topics in Life Style classes. Discussing values, good habits, identifying responsibilities with family and towards others and society were some of the common topics almost all teachers reported to have included in their Life Style classes. Science teachers took the responsibility of discussing physical developments and only stick to routine biological information. Teachers never went into complicated issues like abusive relationships within family, disruptions, and dissociations within a family or teenage pregnancy. The risk of unprotected sexual initiation and the probability of unintended pregnancy were not even discussed by female teachers to female students where at least the issue of being uncomfortable is much less. The way the teachers would address the adolescents' issues was very specific to the context. And they addressed the specific students only when personally approached by them. For example one can refer to the narration of the boys' high school principal who was approached by parents of students suffering from a genital infection. Another topic that was completely missing from Life Style initiative is the influence of Internet and media on adolescents. This would involve teachers talking about explicit visuals available freely on Internet. But again such issues were dealt with as and when it came up and not in a planned way. On the whole, the teachers followed the manual as per their level of comfort and knowledge. They did not follow any planned and homogenous approach. The fact that there was a low level of integration of Life Style programme through an inadequate number of workshops and resource materials seems to be a probable cause. The administration planned that if they can orient few teachers from few schools of an area, say for example the District of Midnapore, then those teachers will act as District resource person and

would pass on the aim, vision, and methods to be applied in Life Style classes. But this model did not work. Given the sensitive nature of the issues that Life Style Programme sought to address, teachers chosen from each school from each district should have had direct and long-term training from experts. The programme would have needed much more time than the administration gave to train and orient the teachers. The administrators also did not foresee the problem that the teachers are already overburdened and the classes in district and rural areas are overcrowded with at least sixty students in each class.

It is also observed that teacher-educators were experiencing ambiguity and self-contradiction. They nurtured contradictory judgments and remained undecided as to acknowledge or to repress the natural tendencies and the emerging sexuality of the adolescents. A teacher respondent clearly states how he failed to decide whether it will be morally correct to acknowledge the fact that adolescents can develop attractions towards the opposite sex. Such a contradiction arises from role-conflict. On one hand, they have to uphold the dominant social values and follow the constraints of educational organizations. As educators following normative behaviour they cannot explicitly discuss sexuality because of social taboo. On the other hand, their education and experiences compel them to acknowledge natural developmental tendencies in adolescents. Thus teacher-educators adopt defensive pedagogy. Their approach towards the ARSH components in Life Style classes was indirect. Durkheim (1979) deliberates on the contradictory moral standpoint regarding sex education. At the very outset he declares that there is no dispute regarding the necessity of sex education in society and though each culture interprets it differently, none has existed without it (p, 140). The moral conscience regarding sex education remains perplexing because of the very nature of the sexual act (p, 142). If modesty is regarded as virtue then the sexual act is the most immodest, yet this act creates strong bonding among individuals (p, 142). The ambiguity the teacher-educators face regarding teaching sexual and reproductive health and hygiene is an existing social reality. To repeat after Durkheim (1979) anything associated with the sexual act shocks us, repels us yet attracts us; we cannot overtly advocate it nor can we declare it unimportant (p, 142).

7. Conclusion

WBBSE always argued that Life Style Programme has a more holistic approach towards adolescents' issues, focusing on their overall development that includes an emphasis on teaching life skills along with the monitoring of ARSH. Yet by the end of 2012, all important stakeholders as well as the new administrative authority decided to stop the programme as a separate curriculum. At

the present state of West Bengal is not running any adolescent intervention programme that focuses on health and life skills education. According to the initiatives taken by School Education Department, Government of West Bengal, the contents of Life Style Programme are being integrated into the general curriculum and so the programme does not anymore continue as a separate course (link given in References). A future direction of study on adolescent intervention through school needs to examine to what degree the present administration has successfully inculcated elements of Life Style within general teaching-learning. The recommendation regarding professional development programmes' impact on teaching-learning processes discussed by Hefnawi (2017) is relevant for carrying out further studies. According to Hefnawi (2017) the initial phase of implementation of the professional development programme requires collecting data on existing teaching-learning practices between educators and learners. Such data act as a 'baseline' for a clear understanding of the expected impact of professional development programmes (p,463). Hefnawi (2017) also recommends focusing on a school learning culture. Learning culture is the established conditions that influence the teaching-learning processes (p,461). The teachers' willingness to learn, share, and act collectively and willingness to be open to experimental activities are influenced by a school learning culture. Simultaneously, the school leadership should also create a knowledge base, align their vision with planning, monitor development and inspire communication and knowledge sharing among teachers (p, 462). Further study can focus on how to influence the teacher-educators by creating awareness regarding sexuality education, addressing their inhibitions and improve their communication regarding intimate topics associated with ARSH. The school learning culture is also a significant component and it can only open up to sexuality education if the society, in general, opens up to liberal and feminist discourses of evaluating the dominant norms governing the sexuality and gender roles of the adolescent learners.

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