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Sexual Intercourse and Reproductive Health- Risk Perception among Tribal Adolescent Girls in Gadchiroli

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Abstract:

The term adolescent means 'to emerge' or 'achieve identity.' Adolescents are a diverse group and are in varying situations of risk, status and environments. Hormonal changes during adolescent leads to puberty and rapid physical and psychological changes. Understanding of sexual intercourse and reproductive health behaviors of the adolescent girls particularly in tribal community is important to design the effective health programs. The study was conducted among the 400 tribal adolescent girls in Gadchiroli district of the Maharashtra to understand their risk perception. Conclusion drawn is based on response given by the respondents and conclusion drawn related to penetrative sexual intercourse, safe sex; sexual violence and reproductive behavior are particular to the community and can't be generalized for whole society.

Keywords: Sexual Intercourse, Reproductive Health, Risk Perception, Adolescent

Introduction:

The term "adolescence" has been defined as including those aged between 10 and 19 years. Cambridge Dictionary define adolescent as 'a young person who is developing into an adult'. Adolescent phase in the life is characterized as rapid physical and psychological changes. Adolescent are diverse group with specific need. They are varying situation of risk, status and environment. During adolescent, hormonal changes lead to puberty. Various changes like assertion of self-identity, sex drive and attraction towards the opposite sex take place simultaneously.

Gadchiroli district is situated on the North-Eastern side of Maharashtra is categorized as tribal and under developed district.

Review of the Literature:

Adolescents are regarded as a bridge between the children and adults, an important group through which every adult must have passed and the children aspiring to reach (Bott, Jejeebhoy, Shah and Puri, 2003). The problems of the adolescents often have been viewed in isolation without the full acknowledgement that adolescent reproductive health is highly a function of the health of families, communities, and the larger environment (Ewalt, Freeman and Poole, 1998). Adolescents seek to develop their own identity, opinions, and values, according to Miller (1989) and take risks, the consequences which can be negative such as unprotected sex leading to unwanted pregnancies, diseases, truncation of educational career and sometimes, child abandonment (Worell and Danner, 1989; Rolison and Scherman, 2002). Crane (1991) in a study found that social pathologies are transmitted among the adolescents epidemically through peer associations. Brooks-Gunn, Guo and Furstenberg (1993) confirmed the role of peers in reproductive health information – seeking behaviours which are negative.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify sexual and reproductive health practices prevalent among tribal adolescent girls
2. To assess the Sexual Intercourse and Risk Perception among tribal adolescent girls

Research Methodology:

The study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from tribal adolescent girls in the Gadchiroli district with the help of interview and secondary are collected from various sources like magazines, books, reports websites etc. It is very difficult to get authentic data of the adolescent tribal girls. Therefore, a sample size of 400 was collected. Percentage, tabular method and graphs are used as statistical tools to analyse the data.

Data Analysis:

Table No. 1- Have you ever had a partner (boyfriend)

Sr. No	Item	No. of Respondents	%
1	Yes, I have	256	64
2	No, I haven't	144	36

Table/Graph No.2- Penetrative sexual intercourse is natural part of dating

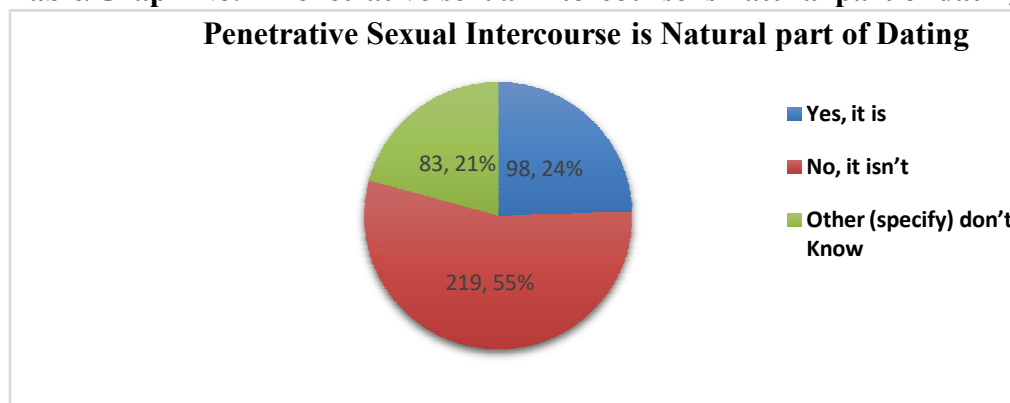


Table No.3 - Why penetrative sexual intercourse is not natural part of dating

Sr. No.	Item	No. of Response	%
1	Because of social pressure	52	53.06
2	Because I cannot explain this to my family	24	24.49
3	Because I don't trust on my partner	12	12.24
4	Because I am not sure that we will marry	9	9.18
5	Because the duration of the affair is not long enough	1	1.02

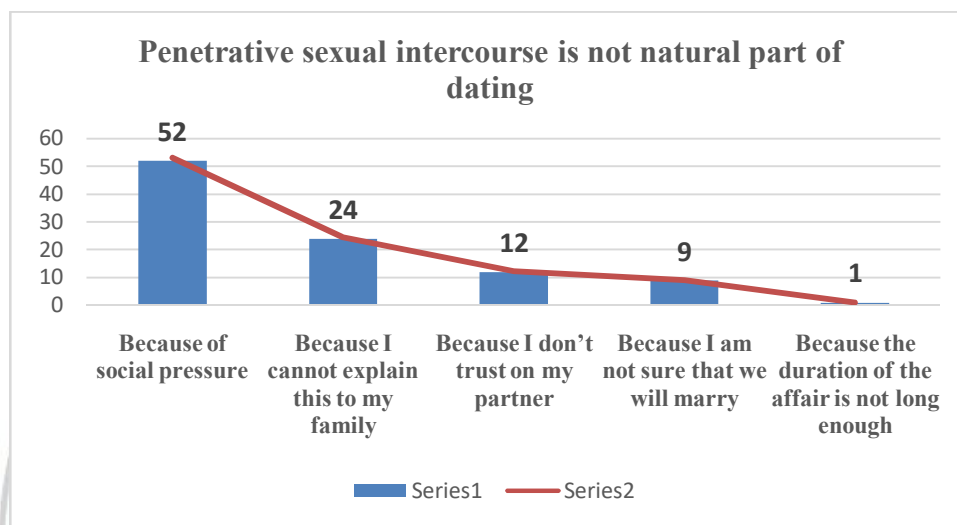


Table No.4- Ever had a penetrative sexual intercourse

Sr. No	Item	No. of Respondent	%
1	Yes, I have	191	47.75
2	No, I haven't	209	52.25

Table No.5- What does safe sex means (multiple choices)

Sr.No	Item	No. of responses	%
1	Not having sex	373	93.25
2	Monogamy	231	57.75
3	Using condom	174	43.5
4	Not becoming pregnant	231	57.75
5	Protection from STIs	97	24.25
6	Using contraceptive methods	126	31.5
7	Having sexual intercourse with an unknown partner	79	19.75
8	Other (specify) Masturbation	175	43.75

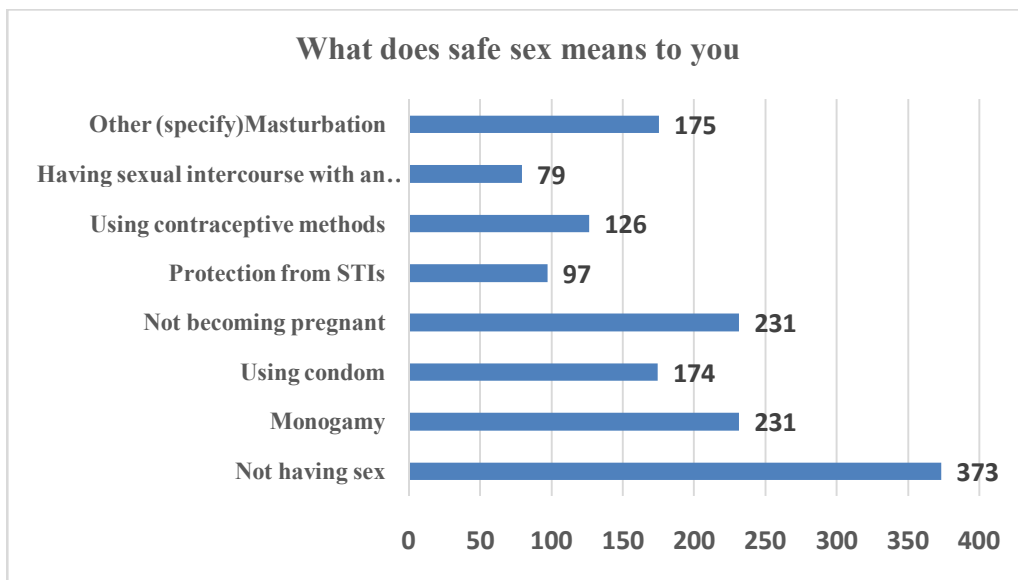


Table No.6- Most important risk during penetrative sexual intercourse

Sr. No	Item	No. of responses	%
1	Pregnancy	34	8.5
2	AIDS	21	5.25
3	Other sexually transmitted infections	12	3
4	Losing virginity	243	60.75
5	Other (Dishonour)	90	22.5

Table No.7- What should be done in case of an extra-marital, unwanted pregnancy

Sr. No	Item	No. of responses	%
1	Induced abortion	317	79.25
2	Partners should marry	76	19
3	Partners should end the affair	3	0.75
4	Anyway, pregnancy should be continued	4	1

Table No.8 - Carrying Condom

Sr. No	Item	No. of responses	%
1	Each young person (female and male) should carry condom	23	5.75
2	Only men should carry condom	242	60.5
3	Only women should carry condom	47	11.75
4	Not necessary to carry	88	22

Table No.9 -Sexual violence activities (multiple choices)

Sr. No	Item	No. of responses	%
1	Sexual harassment by hand, eyes or words	95	23.75
2	Having sexual intercourse without the consent of one partner in marriage or dating	213	53.25
3	Rape	287	71.75
4	Psychological pressure into sex	33	8.25
5	Battering during sexual intercourse	12	3

Major Findings:

- 64% of adolescent girls have a partner (boyfriend) however, 55% of them believe that penetrative sexual intercourse is not natural part of dating and 24 % believe that penetrative sexual intercourse is natural part of dating.
- Social pressure (53.06%), can't explain to the family (24.49%) and don't trust their partner (12.24 %) are some of the reason given by the adolescents who believe that penetrative sexual intercourse is not natural part of dating
- 47.75% of the respondents have a penetrative sexual intercourse
- Perception regarding safe sex is widely different among the adolescent girls. 93.25 % believe that not having sex is safe-sex, whereas, not becoming pregnant (57.75%), monogamy (57.75%) and masturbation (43.75%) are also considered as safe sex.
- Losing virginity (60.75%) Dishonour (22.5%) are being considered as most important risk during penetrative sexual intercourse.
- In case of extra-marital, unwanted pregnancy, 79.25% believe that they have to go for induced abortion.
- 60.5% respondents believe that only men should carry condom.
- Majority of the respondents believe that Rape (71.75%) and having sexual intercourse without the consent of one partner in marriage or dating (53.25%) are the Sexual violence activities.

Suggestions:

Sexual Intercourse and Reproductive Health are being considered as taboo is the family and society. There are many misconceptions among the tribal adolescent girls regarding Sexual Intercourse and safe sex. However, considerable number of the adolescents are having partner (boyfriend) and they have experience of penetrative sexual intercourse. Therefore, it should be included in the regular school curriculum and also health care providers should be trained on these topics to guide the adolescent girls. Health care programmes should be designed in such a way that

they create enabling environment for the adolescent girls in the society on sexual and reproductive health and ensure access to knowledge and services at grass root level.

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