

SEX EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR REDUCTION OF SEXUAL VICES AND PROMOTION OF HEALTHY REPRODUCTIVE STATUS IN NIGERIA

ONIYANGI, S. O.; *BABADARE, A. AND ERIC OSAYANDE

**Corresponding author*

E-MAIL: babadare2010@yahoo.com | G.S.M.: 08062346210 OR 08056678085

Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria and

Department of Health, Environmental Education and Human Kinetics,

University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the viability of sex education as a veritable tool of reducing sexual vices and promote healthy reproductive status. It looks into ability of all educational experiences on sexuality health on over sexual habits and behaviours of people. The review takes a holistic examination of meaning of sex education and sexuality health. It also x-rayed in detail the relationship between sex education and sexual behaviour of people. The paper also identify the scope as well as importance of sex education. Based on this reviewed work, it is recommended that all parents should endeavour to teach their children/wards some of the vital aspect of sexuality health. The necessary and relevant aspects of sex education should be integrated into the curriculum of all our educational system.

INTRODUCTION

The wrong impression of most culturally minded people is that sex education provides sex information that encourage sexual pervasiveness, and promotes sexual promiscuity among students and young people. Bamigboye (1988) noted that most of the sexual problems that exist in our society, such as population explosion that leads to poverty, hunger, famine, war, disease, sexually transmitted diseases and abortion are all direct results of lack of sex and sexuality education. The activities of sexual miscreant will be reduced if there is an effective educational opportunity open to people on desirable sexual behaviour and conducts.

The issue of sex education in Nigeria is highly controversial, mainly because of cultural beliefs of people and their religion doctrine. Oniyangi (2008) stated that children are not allowed to discuss sexual matters freely with their parents or teachers, and parents too do not consider it important to guide their students on the issue of sex education.

By and large, a healthy reproductive life can be achieved if the two sexes (male & female) understand their reproductive system and, inculcate good sexual habits and behaviour. Samuel, Fasuyi and Njoku (2002) observed that proper knowledge about sex and correct attitudes towards sexual life are very important for a healthy and happy life. Sex education involves much more than knowing the facts of life. It embraces all aspects of educational opportunity that create better understanding of working of reproductive system and problem associated with unguided sexual relationship.

AN OVERVIEW OF SEX EDUCATION AND SEXUALITY HEALTH

There have been relentless efforts by reproductive experts to determine the scope of sexuality health as well as improving reproductive health of people in Nigeria. Ikpe (2004) remarked that socio-economic re-arrangements within the societies have been a major contributor to the redefinition and re-appreciation of human sexuality. The societal advancement in term of development in all its ramifications has paved way for rejuvenation of meaning of sexuality, and sexuality health. Abubakar (2008) posited that sexuality is an autonomous sphere in which personal, social, cultural and political relationships are built and transformed. According to Abubakar (2008) sexuality health is the totality of all the processes concerning the state of reproductive health of two sexes i.e. male and females and relationship that exist between them.

In the Nigerian society, there exists series of sexual health problems which would have been adequately reduced if not eradicated with the introduction of sex education. Bamigboye (1988) stressed that many children are not given sex education in their homes. They received information about it on the

streets, on the television, in novels, in magazines and among peer groups. Thus, wrong information are given to them that brings about the consequences of lack of sex education.

Every society has lust for sexual decency, good social and moral conducts prevalence. This kind society always channel their people oriented programme and activities towards ensuring health and well being of people. One of these remedial programmes is introduction of sex education to all spheres of our daily endeavours. According to Abbey (2001), sex education which sometimes called sexuality education is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identify, relationships and intimacy. Globe (1995) and Kirby (2001) defined sex education as a way of developing young people's skills so that they make informed choices about their behaviours and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices. In the view of Blake (2001) sex education has to do with the identification and dissemination of information on sexuality to fulfill different sexual needs of boys and girls.

SEX EDUCATION AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE

Human being often behaves irrationally when it comes to sexual relationship and conducts. Samuel, Fasuyi and Njoku (2002) stated that the social changes taking place, particularly in standards of family life, sex conduct, attitudes towards marriage and divorces are affecting almost all societies. Adults have the responsibility to educate young people on such matters so that they will base their future lives on sound moral and ethical principles. According to Samuel, Fasuyi and Njoku (2002) the rapid increase of illegitimacy, divorce and broken homes calls for sound knowledge of the working of the male and female body parts, their role in reproduction, the rearing of a family and above all an understanding of human nature. This is what sound sex education tries to impart.

The cases of sexual misconducts, sexual pervasiveness and sexually transmitted infections are common among the adolescents and young peoples because they belong to the active sexual ages. Eriksson (2008) and Oyerinde (2006) noted that adolescents and young adults often try out their sexual related vices which largely resulted into unwanted pregnancies and abandoned babies which further contribute to social delinquency. They then cautioned that adults have a Herculean task to assist these abnormally behaved individuals so that they can curtail their sexual excesses for the purpose of maintaining social stability.

Sexual behaviour among the sexually active groups i.e. the adolescents and young adults are dimensional and often determined by level of their reproductive efficiency. Hyde (2002) described sexual behaviour as the behaviour that produces arousal and increases the chance of orgasm. Araoye and Fakeye (1998) noted that sexual behaviour as specific sexual practices including the relationship within which sexual contacts occur, and the range and number of sexual partners within a specific period.

The sharp sexual instinct of adolescents can be attributed to body physiological make up and physical appearance of boys and girls. Adebuseye (1991) opined that the involvement of adolescents in sexual behaviour could be attributed to biological and social reasons. The presence of sex hormones in the blood stream, constitute a powerful force that reinforces the sex desires, and craving in adolescents. There is also the visual factor which operates in the sense that the adolescents can be made aware of the newly established physical parts of their peers (boys and girls).

Apart from the above identified reasons for the abnormal sexual urge of the adolescents and young adults, other factors are frustration, divorce among parents influence of mass media, harsh economic conditions to mention but few. Odewinge (1996) stressed that frustration is a potent factor that drives many adolescent and young adult into unsafe sexual practices in Nigeria. The inability of parents to satisfy the needs of the children and young adult for all the good things of life might have driven teenage girls into the ready hands of men who have the where withal to exploit them sexually or their male counterparts who have rich parents.

SCOPE OF SEX EDUCATION

The areas of interest in sex education are numerous and multi-dimensional in nature. Sex education is not only concerned with the relationship between a male and a female. It is more than warning given to the adolescents on need to maintain safe sex and sex hygiene Owuamanam (1991) reiterated that sex

education includes knowledge of anatomical and physiological aspects of human life or reproductive system of the body.

Sex education as an educational aspect of behavioural science need to be taught at various level of our educational system. Frustenberg (2004) emphasized that sex education is not mere unit in reproduction, it has a far richer scope and goal which include helping the youngster to incorporate sex, most meaningfully into his or her present and future life to provide him or her with some basic understanding of virtually every aspect of sex by the time he reaches full maturity, to help him or her to recognize the existence of different sex patterns, so that he/she will interact harmoniously with those whose sex norms differ from his/her own. Kirby (2001) reviewed sex education programme and found the following ten common elements of most effective sex education programme:

- Give a clear, consistent message based on accurate information;
- Focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviours that lead to unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection (STIs) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS);
- Be specific to age and culture;
- Successful sex education programme should look at the factors that affect sexual behaviour, beliefs, attitudes, norms and skill. A curriculum should be designed to address these factors;
- Sex education should include information on human development, reproductive anatomy, relationship between different part of reproductive system, personal behaviour and gender role.
- Using teaching method that are skilled based and involve students and in a real-life situation;
- Conduct session of sufficient length of time, environment where young people can comfortably and safely explore issues and develop skills to practice safer sexuality information and education begin early when children are in primary schools and continuing through adolescence;
- There should be adequate motivation and training of teachers for effective teaching of sex education.

The teaching and learning of sex education should not be confined into classroom situation alone. The home and religion groups constitute an important bloc in achieving the goal of sex education Kirby (2001) stressed that the school should enlist parental support and involvement throughout the planning and operation of the programme. Sex education should be sensitive to parents concerns.

IMPORTANCE OF SEX EDUCATION TO REPRODUCTION EFFICIENCY

The importance of teaching sex education cannot be over-emphasized going by the persistent sexual pervasiveness and sexual problems afflicting people in Nigeria today. Thurman (2005) posited that the investigation of recent years indicate how profoundly various aspects of sex hygiene affect our lives not only from physical but also from the mental point of view.

All educators hate ignorance and would do everything possible to get rid of it. Majority of the children and even most students in schools are so ignorant and uneducated when it comes to sexual issues. This in the end could have very bad and undesirable results on them. Thurman (2005) stressed that there are many reasons why every child and every adult should understand the various complicated functions by which the family comes into existence and is held together as a unit.

The teaching of sex education is an important measure for clearing persistent ambiguity between sexuality issues and sensual matter. Thurman (2005) stated that sexuality has been confused with sensuality because they both share the same instinct.

The teaching of sex education prevent unwanted pregnancies among teenage girls. Huffstuter (2007) asserted that being pregnant in school can ruin one's education for a life time. It is lack of sex education and sexual awareness that leads to abortion and child abuse in Nigeria today.

Sexuality education converge on people a new experience and knowledge to address their sexuality and reproductive problems. Oniyangi (2008) observed that sex education should be encouraged and discussed among children and students because it teaches children what to do and what to avoid to prevent unfavourable consequences.

The knowledge and insights gain from sex education assist in prevention of spread of sexually transmitted infections. Ihimodu (2009) stated that sex education gives the individual the knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) especially those that are prevalent in Nigeria and even in the world at large.

The introduction and teaching of sex education will help to control the sexual indiscipline and harassment common in the higher institutions of learning Ihimodu (2004) emphasized that sexual harassment is common in higher institutions of learning. It is the female students who suffer these actions. Sexual harassment comes from lecturers and even the male students because female lack the teaching of sex education. Sex education teaching create awareness on the need to shun harassment of opposite sex and protection of female counterparts against sexual coercions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It will be appropriate to state here that the teaching of sex education is a good and effective measure for reducing sexual indiscipline and improvement of reproductive health. Ignorance is not an excuse in court of law, for this reason, all educational experiences directed toward prevention of sexual pervasiveness are welcome development. Based on this reviewed literature above, the following recommendations were made:

- All parent should endeavour to educate their children and wards on the ideal sexual practices;
- Sexuality education should be incorporated into the curriculum of all the levels of our educational system.
- All religion groups should teach sex education in churches and mosques;
- Teachers should possess adequate knowledge for teaching of sexuality education;
- The governments at various levels and the educational authority should organize seminar, workshops and conferences to up-date the knowledge of teachers for better performances on the teaching of sexuality education.

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