

SEX EDUCATION: AN INEVITABLE TOOL FOR THE GROWTH OF ADOLESCENTS WITHIN THE SOCIETY

by

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Abstract

We are in the age of sexual insanities. In the world of disoriented crave for sex, in the age of sexual adventures and exploitations. The whistle of sex exploits has been diversified in its manifestation ranging from nudity, sex advertisement and shows, erotic movies, pornography, phone sex and literatures, all seen and taken as an acceptable way of our adolescents/ youth today. God's purpose of procreation has been abused and misused. There is a sexual revolution and this revolution is not without effect on our society most especially in our young people. The purpose of this paper is to provide an inevitable tool of sex education for the growth of adolescents within the society. The importance of sex education, the aims of sex education, the scope of sex education, parents misconception about sex education, when to start to teach sex education and who can provide sex education. It comes to conclusion and recommendation with various contributions, to both individuals and society to see for the success of sex education as a tool of information, knowledge and power to adolescents in the society.

Introduction

Sex education means the explanation of the facts of human reproduction to children and setting down the do's and don'ts of sexual behavior by the adults (Okoli , 2011). It is the process of making the individual development a positive and wholesome attitude towards sex,(Fakunle, 2006). Sex education is all about developing young people's skills so that they make informed choices about their behaviour and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices. But the facts remain that for a very long time, the issue of sex education for young people in our society has been misconcepted to be a taboo. Although sex is a natural developmental process, many parents, cultures and societies frown at discussing sex

with their adolescent children because it is perceived as generation taboo. Parents, even teachers regards sex education as sacred and difficult to be discussed and these adults' attitudes help to push the adolescents to seek answers to their questions from their peers. In the process of the their quest, they find sex gratifying and can be enjoyed without being aware of the hazards in the practices.

Esen (2008) revealed that high school adolescents aged between 12 and 16 are already involved in sex exploration than adults realize and that their main source of information is their peer groups and mass media. Kaluger and Kaluger (2008) opined that most information about sex come from the peer groups and often bring misconceptions. Without destroyed the fabric of the society or culture, it is imperative to teach young people sex education in a way that not only reflects the value of the family and society, but also enhances the sustainability of a balanced culture. It is therefore vital that sex education should begin early in childhood for the basic principles of wholesome human relationship and biological facts. Because that sex has a profound influence within the teens and in the society. Having sexual feelings a primitive and intrinsic human tendency that emerges in all of us in different forms and at different times. One thing is certain, if we do not educate our children on sex and sex related issues, they would learn from other devastating sources. Sex education is not only important as a developmental process in the life of a child, it arms the child with the tools to understand himself or herself better in relations to the immediate environment and the threats that could emerge from interaction. This is to say that young people would gain incremental knowledge of the ability to protect themselves and alert people of the threats of sexual exploitation if they are sexually advocated. Therefore this paper is meant to ex-ray sex education as an inevitable tool for the growth of adolescents within the society.

Importance of Sex Education

The age of modernization and progress has virtually opened a Pandora's box of opportunities and choices for the youth today. This makes the need for and the importance of sex education among the youth necessary. The young are unpredictable and have the risk taking streaks in them which makes them vulnerable. As far as sex education for youth is concerned one does see the obvious increase in unwanted teenage pregnancies, and miscarriages, abortions and the spread of STDs. How unaware the youth are interns of risking their lives. Precautionary measures are the need of the hour. One must know how to tackle the restlessness of the youth and channel their energies to a more meaningful direction.

Imparting Sex Education to Youth

Sex education might be implemented at the level of privatized and government schools with a carefully knitted syllabus covering all the aspects of sex

education for youths. Various other risky behavior such as forced sex, indulging in pornography, physical abuse can lead early pregnancies. This should form the vital part of the curriculum helping the youth to understand the unethical and the inhuman aspect of such behaviors. The importance of sex education among the youth also involves the knowledge of contraceptives and differences between various contraception methods such as morning pills, cock caps, condoms and finally abortion. This should also include the time duration for taking these precautions. Many girls from varied age groups do not have access to this information and give still births or even encounter death.

Colleges and schools can hold debates and discussion about sex education and sensitize teachers and students. This can be done by making the youth understand, through intensive training programmes, the importance of self worth. Random sexual act can cause irreparable damages to the human body. Every individual should learn to understand the worth of life. Another important point with sex education is to teach the youth about personal hygiene. The youth must not allow the generation gap they have with their parents come in their way.

Consultation with parents, guardians or trusted authorities can be the best way to put ones anxieties to rest.

Prejudice and being bias prevent one from understanding the importance of sex education. Every youth must undertake this venture as a responsibility and not just as curriculum.

The Aims of Sex Education

We are in the age of sexual insanities. The sexual insanities have taken biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological dimensions. These are points of attraction that give birth to sex saturation. We are in the world of disoriented crave for sex. We live in an age of sexual adventures and exploitations (Ughaerumba, 2007). Therefore sex education aims at providing the young people with the information they need to understand their bodies and gender roles in positive ways. It is about better understanding of humanity, our reproductive rights and developmental changes such as puberty, menopause, ageing, that could be experienced in the course of ones reproductive life. It provides a safety net for young people whose life are already infiltrated by messages from that wrong sources may not reflect core family value. Educating young people about themselves sends message of self appreciation, self esteem and highlights the facts that the change they are experiencing or would experience is needed normally

Humans are curious beings and young people are exploratory as an expression of their intrinsic curiosity. Peer pressure and media have enormous influence in the lives of the so called generation Y, and if we don't teach them about sex, somehow they would learn and may be learn in a way that may have devastating

consequences. Some elements of the mass media are biased, ill informed and may not portray accurate reflection of reality. Sex education will serve as counter -insurgency to the war that has been declared against family value by the media. Children are more likely to make better and more informed decisions when adequately educated and parents will feel more confident knowing that their children are aware of the realities around their reproductive lives. Although most parents work hard to prevent their children from premature sexual relationships, the reality is that it still happens and could happen in spite of the threats and intimidation. Educating the child on the importance of protection as part of safe sex routine may serve a higher purpose of preventing sexually transmitted infection.

Scope of Sex Education

Sex education is based on information in which young people can develop well informed attitudes and views about sex and sexuality. Young people need to have information on all the following;

- a. Sexual development and reproduction which include the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty and sexual reproduction, including fertilization and conception, as well as sexually transmitted diseases.
- b. **Contraception and birth control:** what contraceptives are the merits and demerits how they work, how people use them, how they decide what to use or not and how they can be obtained.
- c. **Relationships:** what kind of relationships they indulge in like, love and commitment, marriage and partnership, the law relating to sexual behavior and relationships as well as the range of religious and cultural views on sex, sexuality and sexual diversity. Young people should be provided with information about abortion, sexuality and confidentiality, as well as about the range of source of advice and support that is available in the community and nationally.

Parents Misconception about Sex Education.

Most adults believe that sex education is a form of promoting promiscuity and premature genital involvement amongst the youth and children thereby polluting the society. This made most parents not to care to check the sex information possessed by their children. They believe that such information such as family planning, abortion gender issues and others are misleading to children. There are number of reasons why parents are reluctant to teach their children about sex. Prominent among the reason for families frowning at sex education include but not limited to the preservation of virginity, prevention of premarital sex, illegitimate pregnancy and abortion, religion and culture, as well as maintenance of family honor and dignity. Contrary to this

assumption, a number of surveys have shown that girls who were not educated about sexuality, including changes during puberty are more likely to embark on sexual indiscretion and become pregnant in their teenage years than those who were educated about sex. Parents should be aware that knowledge, they say is power and this power when bestowed on adolescents could be the difference between an irrational decision and a well informed one.

The Inevitability of Sex Education

Sex education is inevitable and necessary for our young ones. Being mindful of the exposure given to our young ones in school, in the media and among their peers. Sex education teaches our young ones about sex intimacy, but also enlightens them on their reproductive system, birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. It also exposes them to their gender identity; gender role family role, body images, sexual expression (what it entails and how to tame it), intimacy and the marriage relationship. In sex education relevant and accurate information about sexuality in boys and girls are given depending on their age. It will be unfair and criminal to ignore or put aside the fact that they are aware of their sexuality, in whatever stage or state they are. Sex education should naturally be integrated into their lives as they grow up both by the parents, teachers and the society in a very mature way.

Parents should answer their children's question properly and information according to their level of exposure and maturity. It will not be appropriate to look embarrassed or pretend sex never exists. We might be fooling ourselves and exposing these children to untimely dangerous curiosity. The children must be taught how to cope and handle their own sexual feeling, use of drugs and urges. Prior to the time of sex education, parents should develop good communication with their children. Be their friends, have positive attitude to sex, yourself.

Good relevant sex education provides knowledge, knowledge is information and information is confidence. It has been noticed that well informed children on male and female anatomy handle puberty better than uninformed ones. Sex education affects a child's attitude positively. Each gender become more tolerant of the others behaviour pattern and option.

A sexuality oriented child learns to believe in the quality of men and women, the sacrament of marriage and parental responsibility.

With well accepted sex education, there is usually a lower rate of unwanted pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted diseases. To the pure, all things are pure. When sex is passed down to our children from a pure heart, they too receive it with a pure heart.

Though there are studies with findings of young people who experiments on the concepts taught them by including in masturbation, homosexuality, lesbianism etc. they were found to be those that have had a bad lay down and have misconcepted

the ideas given to them. Consequently, parents should make sure that they do not give their children a “half- baked” sex education and should as well monitor and guide their children’s behavior to see to the positive consumption and implementation of what they were taught. So there is no evidence that sex education has any effect on the child’s character and information, rather sex education when carried out in a good Christian foundation has a gratifying result. Fasuyi and Njoku; (2006), opined that adults should educate young people on such matters like sex as to base their future lives on moral and ethical principles.

When Should Sex Education Start.

Sex education that works starts early, before young people reach puberty and before they have developed established patterns of behaviour. The précised age at which information should be provided depends on the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the young people as well as their level of understanding. What is covered and also how, depends on who is providing the sex education, when they are providing it, and in what context, as well as what the individual young person wants to know about. Providing basic information provides the foundation on which more complex knowledge is built up over time.

It is important that sex education begins at a young age and also that it is sustained. Giving people basic information from an early age provides that foundation on which more complex knowledge is built up over time. For example, when they are very young, children can be informed about how people grow and change of overtime and how babies become children and then adults, and this provides the basis on which they understand more detailed information about puberty provided in the pre-teenage years. They can also when they are young, be provided with information about viruses and germs that attack the body. This provides the basis for talking to them later about infections that can be caught through sexual contact.

Who Can Provide Sex Education

Sex education can take place in a variety of settings, both in and out of school. In these different contexts, different people have the opportunity responsibility to provide sex education for the young people.

Emeto (2003) opined that your sexuality is a precious gift from God hence he created them male and female therefore should be treasured and preserved like a precious gold.

To provide sex education the following should be considered:

- 1. The parents:** At home, young people can easily have one on one discussion with parents which focus on specific issues, questions or concerns. They can

have a dialogue about their attitudes and views. Sex education at home also tends to take place over a long time, and involve lots of short interactions between parents and children. There may be times when young people seem reluctant to talk, but it is important not to interpret any diffidence as meaning that there is nothing left to talk about. As young people get older advantage can be taken of opportunities provided by things seen on television for example as an opportunity to initiate conversation. It is also important not to defer dealings with a question or issue for too long as it can suggest that you are unwilling to talk about it. There is evidence that positive parent-child communication about sexual matters can lead to greater condom use among young men and a lower rate of teenage conception among young women but the issue must be dialogue and well acknowledged.

2. **Teachers:** In school the interaction between the teacher and young people takes a different form and is often provided in organized blocks of lessons. It is not as well suited to advising individual as providing information from an impartial point of view. The most effective sex education acknowledges the different contributions each setting can make, school programmes which involves parents, notifying them what is being taught and when, can support the initiation of dialogue at home. Parents and schools both need to engage with young people about the message that they get from the media and give them opportunities for discussion.
3. **The church:** The church of God has a big work of preaching sex education to the young people/youth and bring to their knowledge the commandments of God as regards to the 6th commandments where God says; *You shall not commit adultery* (Exodus, 20:14). Emphasizing the purity of life and the blessings thereafter. Bring to the young people the good, the bad and the ugly of sex education and the ordinances in the sacrament of matrimony; so that the young people will see the God's purpose for procreation in the sex affair thereby identify their worth in communion with God's commandment.
4. **Young People:** In some countries, the involvement of young people themselves in developing and providing sex education has increased as a means of ensuring the relevance and accessibility of provisions. Consultation with young people at the point where programmes are designed helps ensure that they are relevant and the involvement of young people in delivering

programmes may reinforce messages as the model attitudes and behaviour to their peers.

Conclusion /Recommendation

The inevitability of sex education in the society calls for a serious commitment in other to save the young people/youth from the allurements of the sex crazy world. Therefore the following contributions have to be made for us to win the war.

- 1. Individual Contribution:** There are certain tools and techniques which can guide individuals especially adolescents. These tools include adolescents at the age between 10 and 16 should be aware of their sexual maturity. When interacting with each other should bear in mind that, they are of opposite sex. Adolescents should give their sexual energies through useful activities such as in games and sports activities, reading good books, watching educative movies, writing, attending church activities, photographing etc. They should avoid pornographic films, ugly literature, nudity phone sex and immoral discussions. Adolescents should avoid idleness and day dreaming and always engage in meaningful activities
- 2. Societal Contribution:** Sex education should be incorporated in the curriculum from primary to tertiary institutions and the teachers be sure of implementing it well. The federal, state and local governments should establish a functional youth friendly programme. WHO (2006) supported this youth friendly programme establishment by suggesting for formulation of policies and attitudes that will attract youths, provide an enabling environment to meet the needs of the youth like giving employment at the appropriate time. Schools should encourage debating activities, press clubs, excursions to keep their minds busy with positive reasoning. Sexual and reproductive education especially in relation to development and maturation, gender issues, sexual abuses, and exploitation, decision making about abstinence and sex, sexual and contraceptive negotiation and option should pregnancy occur. The church of God should never relent in preaching moral behaviour as it concerns sex education and youths. Above all youths should be loved, nurtured and be counseled by their parents at first step. For charity begins at home. Nwoye, (2010) opined that the greatest tragedy on earth is not death but ignorance.

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