



Counselling Girl – Child Against Teenage Pregnancy And Its Preventive Measures

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated counselling girl-child against teenage pregnancy. The paper defined teenage pregnancy as pregnancy that violates cultural due process or societal value. The work equally explained virginity as state of a person who has never engaged in sexual intercourse and also identified characteristics of girl-child toward sex such as seeing it as a fun and means of getting money. The paper then highlighted the consequences such as depression and impact on health. The study identified causes of teenage pregnancy such as lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights. The paper went further to discuss the preventive measures such as total abstinence and use of condom. The discussion was rounded up by drawing pointers to the implications such as physical, cognitive and psychosocial effect and recommended that government should sensitize the teenagers on the dangers of underage birth.

Keywords: Counselling, Girl-child, Teenage pregnancy, Preventive Measure.

INTRODUCTION

It is pertinent to put certain actors into consideration regarding the sensitivity of this topic that concerned the girl-child operations and challenges in the society.

It is crystal clear, that certain cultures preserve virginity of their daughters and see it as a taboo if their daughter is deflowered in any circumstance. In the light of the foregoing, virginity is highly regarded in the society both in the past and presents. These had posed problem in some communities because of the recent happenings to our girl-children. That our daughters get pregnant surprisingly without minding the consequences therein. The word fear is out of sight and minds of these ones involved in the act of illegal or unauthorized sex. The control of these indiscriminate sex desires is out of the minds girls of nowadays. The forbidding teenage pregnancy in the past is now being accepted in the many communities. The reason behind this ugly development is lack of formal counselling through a professional counsellor in the society. Majority of our girl-child lack the knowledge of teenage pregnancy implications and sexual abuse. The implications is not been communicated to them, that is why, they get involved of being a victim of teenage pregnancy in the society. The secret of their involvement anchored on lack of counselling among the girl-child in the society.

Furthermore, teenage pregnancy, has become one of the pressing problem bedeviling the Nigerian society today. Girl-children are prone to it, which was as a result of proper counselling. Every girl-child in the society need proper sensitization and counselling on the dangers of being a teenage pregnancy victim in the society (Basky, 2019).

Teenage pregnancy among our girl-children have rendered many girls useless in their various homes subjecting some into hypertension that resulted to death and others abandoned by their parents. Teenage pregnancy is a forbidding act by some culture.

In this development, teenage pregnancy is highly prohibited in some of the Northern States, more especially states like Katsina, Kano etc.

The first daughters of the emirs cannot admit having sex before getting married, if she does, she might be sentenced to death by the father because it is against their culture.

Concept of Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is a term used to refer as pregnancy that violates societal due process or values. It can also be defined as an underage pregnancy (Mandela, 2019). This type of pregnancy is prohibited by parents and society at large. It is considered as a pregnancy that is against the societal practice and constitution.

How to identify or discover a teenage pregnancy girl-child

These are fundamental steps we can take to identify a teenage pregnancy victim in the society such as:

1. Through covering of stomach under aged pregnant girls always use wrapper to cover their stomach or wearing big gowns. They don't want people to notice it fast but, at last the pregnancy will still show. Pregnancy cannot be covered, it is a gift from God.
2. Through continuous spitting: They are generally known by dropping of spit constantly and the child in the womb cannot permit them stop it at the initial stage.
3. Through change of colour: they are noticed through body change and their face and nipples will gather surprising position in their body

Concept of Virginit

Virginit is a term used to refer as total abstinence from sex. It could also be defined as undeflowered holy girl-child (Sandra, 2020). A virginit girl-child is highly respected among her fellow women and the general public. The girl-child commands constructive criticism and pride to the family and mostly to her brothers. It is obvious, that there is difference between a virgin and non-virgin in the society. A girl-child need to exhibit high moral standard of diligence and comporment as regards making herself proud of being a virgin. It is a simple to practice as a girl-child than destroying yourself. It requires self discipline attached with closeness to God.

The people in the world are full of deceit and evil against girl-childs in the society. Every girl-child need to be prayerful and operate within God's rules and regulations. Girl-childs should place honorability and sincerity to their holy gift known as "private place".

Honour Accorded To Virginit In The Society

In pursuance to this fact, mothers were prompted to watch over their daughters conducts, movement and are conscious of them while they live with them at home. The duty of parents is to been search light towards their daughters regarding misconduct and also guide or sensitize them with fearful stories concerning indulging on having sex underage. Another point is that people in the community recommend such person for marriage quickly. They also held the family of the girl in a high esteem. A virgin girl-child is rewarded with money during marriage by the public and parents.

Duties Of Parents At Marriage

At marriage, the parent of the bride, mostly the mother has an obligation to produce the first bedspread for the couple. It is the duty of the bride's mother to dress the bed for the couple at the night of excursion. It is expected of the bridegroom to meet with his bride to call or announce the expected result of her being a virgin or not. If she is a virgin, there will be bed-stain which will prove to world sthat she is a virgin. When such happened, the parent will receive the stained bedspread for a memorial of their daughters virginit.

This very act will bring joy and pride to the whole family, mostly brothers. The news will be published so as to inform all the relations, for the honour done on them by their daughter. It is obvious, that defilement of oneself among girls attracts corporate punishment that is death penalty. This very action proves that teenage pregnancy is not welcomed in some communities.

Cultural Value Of Virginit In Contemporary Society

In most contemporary societies and in some cultural setting, teenage pregnancies are blamed on the mothers who has complete jurisdiction on their daughters in question.

It is obvious, that culture and the society demands the mothers guidance and counselling to her daughter. Kandel, (2016) posted that women know their daughters better than their husbands being the father of the said girl.

The reasons are as follow

1. Mothers can carry out virginit test without the knowledge of the husband.

2. Mothers can dictate to their daughters and can also know when their daughter starts the periods without the knowledge of the husband being the father.
3. Mother's monitors the movement of their daughter more than their husbands. Except, when there is a case of rape reported against their daughter that his knowledge is required.
4. Mothers can secretly take their daughter to medical doctor or a native midwife without the knowledge of the man being her husband. Sometime these were done when there is suspicion or an abuse.

Ikendu (2017) stated that if a girl is found virgin in marriage, her mother will be greatly rewarded, but if she is being found not a virgin, her mother will be blamed seriously and the shame will be upon her. Ibanri (2014) posted that if a girl got pregnant without a husband that is the worst situation a teenage girl can face in life. He went further to say that such conditions had prompted many girls not to marry in life after such incidents. The incident of early pregnancy had caused some girls to generalize all men to be the same. In his own point of view, he went further to say that during the era of schools being managed by missionaries, that if a teacher happened to be involved in such incident, his teaching career will be terminated. The girl involved in such act will never see school to attend. This singular act prompted teachers of those days to be very careful of themselves and their class girls.

Free Sex and its Implications

In spite of all our modern education and awareness, teenage pregnancy is still on the increase. Akindele (2016) confirmed that most boys and girls indulge into indiscriminate sex acts without knowing the implications. It is such ignorance that results in teenage pregnancy in our society and in most. He went further to blame this lack of knowledge of the implications of sex to both the mothers and the government for them to provide counselling units and orientations on the consequences to the girl child in the society.

Peterson (2016) blamed indiscriminate teenage pregnancies to parents who live in one room apartment with their grown up children, mostly daughters. He said these children practice what they see their parents do but were ignorant of its result. He went further to point accusing finger by saying that the problems that result in such societal ills, where the lack of sex –education from their parents at home. The implications were not known and the children were left to live their lives in vague situation to discover things by themselves. Indeed, the girl child's heart is like a tabular racer, that means nothing is in their heart. It is open to receive anything. As such they practice whatever comes their way without cognitive understanding.

The Characteristics of Girl-Child Toward Sex

Pen (2016) stated following as the characteristics of girl-child towards sex:

1. Girl-child sees sex as a right, more especially, when they have gotten breast and hairs in their private or public area.
2. They see sex as a fun
3. They also see it as a process of making money in order to answer big girl.
4. Girl-child also sees sex as a means of building relationship in the name of having a partner.

How to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy

The following are means of reducing teenage pregnancy in the society:

1. Girl-child should be taught on the dangers attached to indiscriminate sex by parents and non-governmental organizations.
2. Girl-child should be placed on orientation as means of sensitizing them on the consequences of having a child without father.
3. Girl-child should be exposed to counselling by the parents and a trained personnel in the field of counselling.
4. Government should come up with policy that will prohibit teenage pregnancy attached with punishable.
5. There should be sensitization through media such as television, newspaper and radio on how to avoid teenage pregnancy.
6. NGO's and community leaders should educate the girl-child on the consequences of underage birth.

7. Government should engage them on a skill.
8. Girl-child should be exposed to condom use to avoid pregnancy.
9. Girl-child should be cautioned about the association or peer group to avoid being a victim of teenage pregnancy.
10. Parents should be strict sometimes too the girl-child.

Effects and Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy

1. **Depression:** Teenage mothers have higher rates of depression. They also have higher rates of suicidal ideation than peer who aren't mothers.
2. **Impact on Health:** Teenage mothers and babies born to suffer health, social and emotional problems older mothers who have given birth. Pregnant teens have a higher risk of getting high blood pressure, also known as pregnancy induced hypertension, than pregnant women in their 20s or 30s. They also have a higher risk of preeclampsia, which is a dangerous medical condition that combines high blood pressure with excess protein in the urine, swelling of a mother's hand and face, and organ damage.
3. **Impact on Education:** Teenage pregnancy certainly disrupts a young woman's education. In fact, the majority of teen mothers drop out of high school with only about one-third of them obtaining a high school diploma. Fewer than 2% of teen mothers finish college before age 30.
4. **Lower wages:** This lack of education limits teen mothers in their ability to provide for themselves and their children. In fact, 80% of teen mothers must rely on welfare at some point. Teenage mothers are also more likely to live in poverty and depend on public assistance. Children born to teen parents are more likely to have lower school achievement, enter the child welfare and correctional systems, drop out of high school and become teen parents themselves, compared to children born to older parents.
5. **Major Decisions:** While some teen mother get support from their parents, for some they decide the best decision is to terminate an unexpected pregnancy. For others, the right choice mans giving up their babies for adoption while others may feel obligated to marry their babies' fathers. The decision to marry based solely on the need to care for an unplanned child is not likely a promising one.

Causes of Teenage Pregnancy

1. Lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights.
2. Inadequate access to services tailored to young people.
3. Family, community and social pressure to marry.
4. Sexual violence.
5. Child early and forced marriage, which can be both a cause and consequence.

Preventive Measure

1. Encouraging them not to have sex
2. Encouraging them to use effective birth control to prevent pregnancy, along with condoms to protect against sexual transmitted diseases.

Counselling Implications

Teenage pregnancy makes every family to be conscious of their girl-child more especially those who have encountered ugly experience towards their daughter.

The situation involves the teenage in three ways, which required professional guidance and counselling. They are as follows:

1. Physically
2. Cognitively
3. Psychosocially

The counsellor who is a trained personnel in the field of guidance and counselling will approach such person with his counselling wealth of experience and techniques at his disposal. Consequence upon this, counsellor knows that guidance and counselling services are for all kinds of people which is based on the recognition of dignity and worth of the individual.

Physically

Physically, every eyes had seen the problems and the deteriorating conditions as it affects the teenager. This condition posed big problem as the teen sees herself pregnant. This situation ostracized the teen among her mates or peers. The teen moves alone without friends because of the condition she

finds herself and she knows that society forbids it. The condition makes her feel isolated and depressed which could lead to death or high blood pressure.

Cognitively

The pregnant teen's condition changed her thinking and understanding with added problems. She sometimes behaves demented and uncomfortable. Her body system and thoughts differs from others. She is in a fixed of uncertainty and continuous weeping day and night. To cap it all, her problem can only be solved and consciousness regained through a counsellor with empathetic understanding to bring such a person to life.

Psycho-socially

The effect of her condition psycho-socially is that she will be subject of talk of the day, she will feel as if she is not accepted in the society. In this development, she will be depressed and their family's reputation has been impuned or hampered.

CONCLUSION

The absent of competent guidance and counselors has created unbearable hardship to our society. Government should look into our educational system and value counselors services to tackle girl-child problems. Our society suffers today because of lack of competent men and women of visions like the counselors. Guidance counsellors need full recognition in Nigerian as to help curb some social issues bedeviling the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should endeavour to employ guidance counsellors and create counselling units in all the villages.

Parents should assist in counselling their daughters on the dangers of or consequences of teenage birth.

Proper sex education should be given to our girl-child on the adverse effect of teenage pregnancy.

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