

# *Chapter Ten*

## **SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS A CORE CONCEPT FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FUNCTIONAL EDUCATORS FOR NIGERIAN SCHOOLS**

**BY**

**KAJANG, Y.G**

Individuals have questions on what education mean when speaking of sex education. Some critics perceive it as a sinister campaign to create an unceasing and dangerous with sex in the minds of children. To those who are not informed, sex education sounds as if it was education for sex, and to many is a dirty word at worst and liken to coitus at best. Sex education in the real sense could be described as the acquisition of facts and information that are related to sex by individuals for creative living that provide understanding of human sexuality as an integral inseparable part of life. It may be better and safer to state clearly that sex education encompasses the three domains of education and will help not only improve public relation but would also help to clarify the goals of sex education for those charged with its teaching.

As explained by Blair (1985), it seem clear that if adolescents are to achieve a healthy adjustment to the sexual changes at puberty, they need specific sexual information since there are mixed feelings concerning the idea of teaching the concept. So, in essence, this has been a major problem that confront educators, counselors and indeed the entire society of our time of how to effectively address and meet the sexuality need of the young population. Again, the challenges posed by the growing incessant complication arising out of nowhere created by the erosion of the various traditional methods of sex and family life education makes it imperative for educators to consider those various channels and ways through which the sexuality needs of the youths can be satisfactorily addressed. It is known that education is meant to help people to make informed decisions which will empower them to live productive lives. Inline with this, World Health Organization (WHO) (1985) explained that in

health promotion and empowerment, is a process through which people (students inclusive) gain greater control over decisions that are affecting their health. Empowerment according to them could be a social, cultural, psychological or political process through which individuals and social groups are able to express their needs, present their consents, device strategies for involvement in decision making, and achieve political, social and cultural actions to meet those needs (in this case sexuality education).

In the light of this, health promotion is directed towards creating the conditions that offer better chances to enhance better sexuality relationship between youths of opposite sex. This is better achieved by making the subject a core concepts in the production of functional educators that will teach in Nigerian schools. To provide a better focus of this paper, the following are discussed.

1. Schools of thoughts and sexuality education
2. Some empirical studies and their implications
3. Conclusion.

For many years, there have been various opinions as to which of the agencies of socialization is/are to be given the responsibilities of teaching sexuality education as effectively as possible. Based on schools of thought, the home of course and parents remain the dependable medium of reaching the youths and resolving most, if not all of their productive health needs. To some, the peers could do better in this regard, while others tend to find solace and consolation in religious organizations as natural agencies for such a moralizing programme. Furthermore, another school of thought expressed that only the formal school system can have the most effective strategy for disseminating information and counseling in the subject of sexuality education for the youths. To express a greater detail of the merits and demerits of all schools of thought this is started from the home.

The home is known to be the first agency where the child is known to start his/her socialization process. This may be the reason why World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (WCMRY) (1998) expressed that like religious training, sex education belongs peculiarly to the home and the parents. This assumption may be based on the fact that where parents do adequately fulfill their obligations, all necessary sex and family life education would have been exhaustively given at home, and therefore other individuals and organizations

would have not been expected to intrude. In line with the statement made by WCMRY (1981), a Pastoral letter (1988) by the U.S. council of Bishops as contained in "Human life of our day" expressed that parents are of the sacredness of sexuality, this will ordinarily be best accomplished when both parents discharge this duty in mutual consolation and shared responsibility.

However, Collier (1978) observed and expressed that even if the problem of communication is solved, there still remains that fact that today, most parents are surprisingly ignorant as a good many of them are usually willing to accept. Furthermore, that according to a survey of suburban parents, about three-quarters of them felt that parents did not know about sex to advise their children properly.

Based on these thoughts above, there seems to be disagreement of the home being a good agency for sexuality education. Again, the revelation by the study conducted by Collier is a pointer that if in an advanced country like Britain can have this result, what will one think of Nigeria where over thirty something percent of the parents are illiterates? This is further supported by the result of the study conducted by Ari (1988), that there was an overwhelming agreement of parents' inability to offer sex and family life education to their children. He therefore suggested that it was necessary for an alternative strategy to be used in reaching out to the youths with regards to sexuality education. In line with these cultural constraints, Mogbolu (1989) opined that sex and family education be shared with other responsible institutions and organizations.

Discussing on influence of peers, Durojaiye (1972) explained that many school pupils in Nigeria, as indeed in most countries, suffer from insufficient sex education information in their homes. This according to him was due to the fact that many parents were inadequate in this respect, school pupils have to rely on their own initiatives and whatever they can learn from their friends and school mates. To buttress this thought, Essen (1974) posited that Nigerian adolescents needed and wanted guidance concerning sex matters, but because they find the home and the school prudish and censorious, they have turned to their own peer groups for whatever they could get. This is suggestive that it based on the information gathered that our youths behaves and approach sexual matters. It is therefore not surprising that sexuality transmitted diseases are on the increase. Furthermore, these statements seem not to affect only the Nigerian culture as Frank (1984) pointed out that in United States of America, except in some

exceptional families, it has been customary to regard matters involving sex as more or less shameful. That it was considered depraved and perverse for children to be curious about biological processes and anatomical differences and social influences. Viewed in this light according to him, children have obtained a greater part of their information about sex largely from peers. The statement made by Frank is suggestive that with enlightenment of the society things can change for the better.

Using the media as an alternative source for providing information about sexuality education, many scholars have favoured their use. Some believe that well serialized articles in newspapers and carefully produced programmes in the television and radio could be used to reach the youths in a wide number of areas about their sexuality in general. It was not surprising that WHO (1996) posited that health issues. The use of the mass and multimedia and other technological innovations as stated by them, increase awareness of specific aspects of individual and collective health (which will be sexuality education) as well as importance of healthy in development.

Badura and Kichbush (1991) were quick to point out that research shows that theory driven mediated health promotion programming can put health on the public agenda, reinforce health messages, stimulate people to seek further information, and in some cases, bring about sustained health lifestyles.

It is interesting to note the above, but we must forget the fact that not many youths have developed good culture of reading and that certain statements made in the media may not be easily understood by them. The implication of this is that the school must be ready to provide answers to grey areas to the youths who spent most of their lives schooling. This again is a pointer that educators must have relevant and capable skills to be able to provide the needed information. Therefore, the training of teachers must provide these.

Pointing to the school as a good agent for socializing the youths concerning sexuality education, Meyer (1968) emphasized that:

For a long time, we have believed that an effort to stimulate parents to fulfill their responsibility as educators would be sufficient to provide for the sex education of their children. It is only recently that we come to realize that many aren't able, that many don't care and that even those who are able and do care can profit by the support of schools in achieving what they are trying

to achieve. It is for this reason that we consider the role of the school and teacher. This must be the overpowering conviction, no matter what sort of negative reactions the teacher might encounter in attempting to implement a total programme of education in human sexuality.

Reasoning in the same line, Blair (1985) pointed out and suggested that there was no question but that school counseling and sex education programmes should meet this problem head-on. That guilt feelings where they exist, must be eradicated and wholesome school activities that will provide substitute outlets for the abundant energies of the youth should be encouraged, perhaps, as the more of the society change to fit the facts of human nature, the problem will become less acute but there is some indication that with a counseling revolution, this will take place.

This observations seem to be all of it, however, it should be pointed out the education that will produce the will be counselor and teachers must as a matter of urgency include sexuality education. It is only when an individual is equipped that he/she can deliver the goods. Again, since no education can rise above the level of the teachers, it is pertinent that the teacher education curriculum must include the subject of sexuality education. It is only when an educator knows the value of something that he/she will see the need to teach it.

May be, to provide a better insight on the subject of discussion, some studies are used below.

A study conducted by Kirby (2005) on impact of sex and HIV Education programmes on sexual Behaviours of youth in developed and developing countries reported that highly effective sex education and HIV prevention programmes that affect multiple behaviour and/or achieve positive health impacts. Behaviour outcomes have concluded delaying the initiation of sex as well as reducing the frequency of sex, the number of new partners, and the incidence of unprotected sex, and/or increasing the used of condoms and contraception among sexually active participants. Long-term impacts have included lower Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) and for pregnancy rate.

Again, evaluations of comprehensive sex education and HIV/STI prevention programmes show that they do not increase rates of sexual initiation, do not lower the age at which youths initiate sex, and do not increase the

frequency of sex or the number of sex partners among sexually active youths.

This report implies that good programmes designed and executed by capable hands can influence sexuality related influences negatively. Research work of this nature cannot be conducted by anyhow educators. This is therefore, a pointer that good and proper training of educators is the best for a developing country like ours. These in turn help in handling complicative issues such as sexuality education.

In a related study, Klein and Committee on Adolescence (2005) found out that virginity, pledge programme increase pledge-takers' risk for STIs and pregnancy. The study concluded that 88 percent of pledge-takers initiated sex prior to marriage even though some delayed sex for a while. Rates of STIs among pledge-takers and non-pledgers were similar, even though pledge-takers initiated sex later. Pledge-takers were less likely to seek STI testing and less likely to use contraception when they did have sex. Giving a report on US generally, he reported that in a debate, most parents in the U.s. feel that teenagers should remain sexually abstinent, but should have access to contraception. Almost 60% of adults also think that sexually active teenagers should have access to contraception. A 1977 study found that about 48% of high school students were sexually active. If this is reported from an advanced country like U.S, what does one think of a country like ours where majority of the youths have access to sexuality education through peers and friends. Is only God that knows the number of our youths that are sexually active because of how the society is rottened. We have to start from somewhere and of course, the training of capable educators for functional education should be the basis.

## **Conclusion**

From the discussion above, it is concluded that there is the need for the sexuality education. This can only be possible when capable; well enlightened as well s functional educators are produced. This is so because teachers are parents or will become parents, therefore the practice should start from them; it is only when this happens that they will see the value to teach same to the young ones.

## Recommendations

1. Due to what experts in sexuality education discovered about the inability of many parents to offer sexuality education to their children, it is recommended that the curriculum for teacher education be reviewed to include the subject for all disciplines in College of Education and Faculties of Education in Nigeria.
2. To achieve a meaningful progress in sexuality education, it is recommended that the multi-sectoral approach be adopted using all the agencies for socialization to enlighten the youths concerning the subject matter.
3. To be able to conduct good, acceptable and usable studies in the area of sexuality education, it is recommended that conferences, seminars and workshops be organized or in-service training programmes be planned for practicing teachers to help up-date their knowledge.

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