

## EARLY SEX EDUCATION IN NIGERIA(OVERVIEW)

Mukhtar Aminu Zaitawa<sup>1</sup>

*The Federal University of Kashere, Zaitany35@gmail.com*

*Submission : Mei 06, 2023*

*Revised : June 14, 2023*

*Accepted : June 28, 2023*

*Published : June 30, 2023*

### Abstract

The focus of this study was to investigate the impact of Early sex education in Nigeria. The results revealed that there are Outbreaks and High rates of sexual embarrassment like Firebreaks in the forest, problems, misuse of sex, high teenage pregnancies and abortion, and inadequate information on sex. Sex education is a vital aspect of the health education curriculum. It provides factual knowledge to assist parents and teachers, children and adolescents to avoid sex-related problems. The knowledge also includes ways of helping children develop self-respect, sexual understanding, define the values of interpersonal relationships and strengthen communication skills in sex and education. This promotes a wholesome and stable sex life. Parents and teachers must acquire a scientific, social, and psychological understanding of the need for sex education. The sexual revolutions among contemporary youths recommend sex education as an imperative for adolescents that should be protected from the harmful effects of deviant sexual behaviors.

**Keywords:** Content, Formatting, Article. Early Sex Education, Sex Education in Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

The concept of sexuality can be dated back to our ancestors, who laid much emphasis on the care of self and the act of procreation, emerging population and health concerns have led to the re-thinking and re-identification of the relationship between sexuality and human activity and behavior, slowly then has undergone many changes within the past forty years. The emergence of the sexual revolution has also impacted greatly sexual orientations, patriarchy, sexual relations, reproduction, and family formations.

Against this backdrop, this paper will examine the origin of the concept of Early sex education, how it evolved in Nigeria, and how well it is fairing in Nigeria. In doing this, the paper will highlight some conceptual perspectives of sex education, and identify its definition, its content, and structure. Conclusions will be drawn and practical ways of moving sexuality education forward in Nigeria will be suggested.

### 1.1. Early childhood

In human life, children are the most valuable assets. They have extraordinary potential so they become active, dynamic, enthusiastic people who want to know what they see, hear, and feel. Therefore early childhood must be nurtured, guided, and directed so that the child's potential develops in a positive direction and benefits. Children according to Nigerian government law are in the 0-18-year age range, and according to UNESCO, early childhood is in the 0-8-year age range. Early childhood can be seen from the path of formal education, playgroups, kindergartens, and elementary schools. Informal age education can be through family education and environmental education. Parental education style is essential in developing the personality of children and adolescents.

## 1.2. *Sexuality Education*

Sexuality education has been given various definitions by various schools of thought. AHI (2003) described sexuality education as "a planned process of education that fosters the acquisition of factual information, the formation of positive attitudes, beliefs, and values as well as the development of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality." That is, learning about the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the sexual response system which determines identity, orientations, thoughts, and feelings as influenced by values beliefs, ethics, and moral concerns. It is the interactive relationship of these dimensions that describes an individual's total sexuality (SIECUS, 1995). Also, sexuality education teaches us that, religious principles, beliefs, rules and regulations, and ethical considerations affect our everyday interactions just as our culture, role models in our families, and our friends impact us as well. Sexuality education is simply the art of learning how to conform to a certain art of living by being able to reason, examine and monitor oneself in clearly defined terms.

In Nigeria as well, traditional forms of sex education existed in kinship systems and coming-of-age ceremonies where the youth were tutored about manhood and womanhood. Its essence was purely biological and culture-specific. There were various methods of contraceptives which included virginity, herbs, breastfeeding, the ring, and abstinence; most of which were strictly meant for the married and kept a secret. Issues on sexually transmitted diseases were also of great concern but were barely discussed while the contraction of them was a big shame and stigma. The socialization process of the child remained strictly the only way of acquainting the child with issues like family relationships and public manners with very little room for self-expression.

As school education expanded, people began to question moral viewpoints about virginity and abstinence and wondered about the credibility of rigid moral standards and myths that surrounded sexual issues. The fast pace of domestication encouraged rapid improvement in communication, transportation which had a tremendous effect on sexuality issues in Nigeria. The use of telephones and letters helped to promote interpersonal relationships. The print media intensified and popularised the notion of flirting, dating, and a variety of sexual behaviors. Intimate relationships developed from social activities such as dancing, singing, and local drama sketches. Despite these changes, information on sexuality was still kept in the dark, not openly discussed, and was perceived as dirty or evil, particularly by religious leaders who often viewed morality as being determined by a higher order from above (Adepoju, 2005).

The mundane views about early childhood sexuality were kept intact until recently when it came to light that early childhood experiences are related to sexuality. Today, conservative morality about sexuality is beginning to diminish with people gradually coming to terms with the fact that sexual knowledge can serve as a great weapon against ignorance. Evolution of Sexuality Education in Nigeria Initial efforts to introduce sexuality issues in the Nigerian educational system were done through the introduction and institutionalization of population education which was considered as a potential way of tackling the problem of rapid population growth and its consequences for socio-economic development in the country. The need to inform young people about the causes and consequences of uncontrolled rapid population growth has become paramount hence the National Population Policy of 1988 which was recently revised and officially launched in

February 2005, was put in place with emphasis on population education as a potential vehicle to translate the population policy into action.

Also, among health and educational professionals in Nigeria, the feeling is widespread that the health of adolescents is at risk. This burgeoning adolescent group who constitute more than 12 percent of the population of Nigeria and whose number is expected to rise sharply over the years are often prone to unplanned sex, unwanted sex, unsafe abortion, sexual coercion, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections, and even HIV because they are uninformed, or poorly informed, about the implications of their reproductive behavior and health risks especially from under-age sexual practices and other anti-social practices. Over the years, the federal government, donor agencies, and non-governmental agencies have put forward initiatives to address population problems and issues. The Federal Ministry of Education and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) have been involved in curriculum and instructional package development and teacher training for school-based population and family-life programs.

Drawing from practical experiences, the Directors of National Education Programmes in African countries drew up general principles upon which African population and family-life education programs were based, as follows:

1. The contribution that population education can bring to the socioeconomic development of the community and the nation.
2. The importance of both individual decision-making on population matters and the role of the family in collective decision making.
3. The importance of understanding the social and cultural context in which population education contents are to be integrated.
4. The fact that low rates of school enrolment and high rates of drop-outs should lead to greater recognition of out-of-school programs.
5. The need to sensitize the decision-makers in Africa on their countries' population situation and problems (UNESCO, 1985).

Udo and Viederman (1979) argued that the definition of population education should include components such as:

1. Population education is part of a total social learning process that can assist learners to better regulate their lives and their environment.
2. Population education, being a problem-centered process, could enable learners to define their own and their communities' population-related problems.
3. Population education is concerned uniquely with the population interactions and inter-relationships between the individual and the communities in which she lives.
4. Population education is oriented towards the improvement of the quality of life of both individuals and society, both now and in the future.

### ***1.3. Islam and Early Sex Education***

Sex is instinctive to organisms and is a basic human need, sex functions to be able to carry on children. The fulfillment of sex requires rules or norms so that humans do not fall into deviations and destruction. Islam has clear and detailed rules in the Sharia so a Muslim must understand and apply them every day to be protected from loss and misery. Sex education can be started as early as possible so that children are better prepared to face physical changes during puberty with all the consequences and can protect themselves from exploitation and sexual abuse.

#### 1.4. *Early Sex Education According to the Islamic Law (Sharia)*

Sex education is a series of understandings and awareness about the concept of self-preservation of deviant sexual behavior. If we look into Qur'an and Sunnah we can Emphasize the following:

1. (Tasmiyyah) Give a good name according to gender.
2. Separating children based on gender when sleeping.
3. (Al-hayah) Embarrassment.
4. View in the association of men (Muharram) and women (Muharramah).
5. (Ikhtilat) not to advertise between Men and Women.
6. (Al-khalwah) Educate children not to do seclusion.
7. (Al- tahajjub) ethics of dressing.
8. (Khitan) circumcision.
9. (Al-haibhat) menstruation.
10. (Al-nifas) birth blood menstruation.
11. (Al- ihtilam) dream of intercourse until the semen.

## 2. Conclusion

Early Sex education in Nigeria is still understood to be limited to the guidance of knowledge protection about children's reproduction. When in fact the Sharia and Education have been explained as a series of manners that must be built by a family related to the relationship of men and women both inside and outside the home. In this case, parents play an active role in educating children and instilling these social customs and values. The teacher also plays a role in helping parents do the same thing in the school environment. Therefore, the role of educators is very urgent to socialize the understanding that Early sex education in a different perspective which includes the ways mentioned above so that parents and the community understand Early sex education is not limited to the guidance of knowledge about the reproduction of men and women.

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