The Menace of Teenage Motherhood in Ekiti State

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Abstract: This study was designed to investigate the menace of teenage motherhood in Ekiti State. Two hypotheses were formulated. Descriptive Research design of the survey type was used. The population for this study was made up of all teenage mothers in Ekiti State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the Local Government Areas for the study. The sample consists of 120 subjects purposively sampled from five Local Government Areas in Ekiti State. The research instrument used in this study was a self designed questionnaire on Teenage Motherhood (2005). The instrument was validated and piloted, the reliability of the instrument was established using the test retest method at 0.05 level of significance, the result showed that the instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.98. Inferential statistical technique of Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in the data analysis. The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between Family Life Education and the involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood. Also there is a significant relationship between Parental Marital Status and the involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood. Based on these findings, it was recommended that seminars and workshops on the social consequences of teenage pregnancy should be organised for our teaming youths regularly and couples should endeavour to keep their marriage to serve as model to their children because traditional conjugal family where couples live together help to socialise the children because they are builders of the children's self-concept.

Key words: Teenage • Parenthood • Vulnerability

INTRODUCTION

Teenagers all over the world attract attention. This may be as a result of their seemingly radical behaviour at home to parents, their peculiar stubbornness at school or simply because of their future relevance to policy makers [1].

Teenage parenthood is by no means a new phenomenon, women have tended to begin childbearing during their teens and early twenties. Each year in the United States of America for example about one million teenagers become pregnant at enormous costs to themselves their children and the society. While the facts are clear, the issue of teenage pregnancy is complicated by conflicting attitudes and behaviours. Talk about sex and sexuality education is all over the place, yet we are shocked at the rising numbers of teens who are sexually active with the attendant result of parenting [2].

There have been various attempts in various societies to cope with teenage sexuality. The sexual attitude was much healthier and sexual life more disciplined in the traditional society before colonial era and its attendant break up of community traditional structures causing teenagers to depart from their well respected traditional moral values [3].

In the developing world, teenage pregnancy and early child birth is very common due to differences in culture [4]. Traditional cultural parents in sub-saharan Africa favour teenage marriage and parenting [4]. In Nigeria, cultural differences between the predominant Christian culture in the southern part and Muslim culture in the northern part of Nigeria has led to different patterns of teenage marriage and parenting [5]. The crux of the matter is how a teenage girl is determined matured for the purpose of marriage. In some culture physical development may be used while in some others it may be economic sufficiency.

In Ekiti State, pre-marital sex is not encouraged culturally. The culture is in support of sanctity of sex but with the waves of civilization, that aspect of culture is gradually forgotten. It is however noted in the state today that there is increase in the rate at which teenager girls drop out of schools occasioned by mistimed pregnancy, increase in street hawking by teenagers of school
ages, increase in reported cases of child abuse and abandonment, indiscipline and moral decadence, reported cases of sexual abuse, the growing concern over indiscriminate mention of sex related issues and early and unprotected sexual activity among the youth.

Adesina [6] inferred that millions of naira which could have been spent on essential services is spent on school drop out. This situation becomes more critical in the light of the fact that there are few (if any) effective programmes designed to meet the trend and help afflicted teenagers resume normal lives after their first experience.

Physical and sexual maturity among adolescents is not accompanied by an ability to handle their sexuality in a responsible manner. And, its noted that young people, especially the very young are faced today with decision making beyond their experience. Hudson [7] argued that much teenage sexual activity results in pregnancy, in poorer countries this has probably always been the situation and little notice was paid to it until large populations moved off the land and into the cities and the traditional tribal structures began to break down. The problem this has created in terms of unsupported young mothers and fatherless infants has scarcely imprinted itself on the world's consciousness. Concern over teenage mothers has surfaced much more vividly in the wealthier countries of the developed world. Here a growing concern with democratic rights of access to a share of their enormous material wealth has identified groups who are excluded and who may be self-perpetuating. Teenage mothers form one of such groups. Francke [8] opined that about 100,000 teenagers in Britain become pregnant each year. The peak year for teenage births was 1971, when 82,600 teenage girls had babies. Numbers later dropped to 54,500 in 1984 but crept up again in the second half of the 1980's.

Bryran et al. [9] observed that contraception can fall or not be available or used. But not all teen pregnancies are unintended, about 22% of them are planned. The ideas of having someone to love them exclusively and unconditionally is a strong girls. Others are having a baby as a way to escape from an oppressive home environment. Both teen males and females may see parenthood as a way to enhance their status, to give them an aura of maturity or to enhance their masculinity or femininity. Some believe a baby will construct a shaky relationship. Even when young people have sufficient knowledge, their unwilling to put it into practice, or unable to make the connection between knowledge and use. Inspite of considerable advances recently in breaking down some barriers between the stereotype typical roles in our

society, it appears still to be true that girls are encouraged by our male dominated society to grow up to be emotionally and economically dependent. Botton [14] submitted that lack of information and discussion of sexual matters for boys is a problem, in a world of embarrassment and ignorance making decisions about sexual behaviour and its consequences is not easy. Many children and even adolescents are more innocent than adults believe them to be in matters of sex and procreation.

Ineichen [15] pointed out that parental influence, particularly between the same sex pairs, does not disappear during adolescence and plays a considerable part in teenage sexual behaviour. Skinner [16], in a study of 450 mothers and their teenage daughters, found that good communication between mothers and daughters meant that daughters were more likely to use effective contraception once they started to have sex. Prendergast and Prout 17 in another study of teenage girls showed up the ambivalence of their feelings towards motherhood. While motherhood was seen as inevitable destiny for women, most of the girls drew on their own families to describe motherhood as dominated by sentiments like isolation, boredom and depression. Oakley [18] supporting this in his own study of post natal depression, evidence was found of a desperate sense of failure among women who felt they had not come up to their own expectations of caring and coping motherhood. Their comments, looking back to their anticipation and expectations during pregnancy, revealed that they had over romanticized the whole process. The great majority felt their expectations of motherhood had been unrealistic and unduly romantic. The reality was quite different from what they had expected. Wills [19] however was against this submission saying inspite of the evidence-disappointment, depression, isolation, economic and emotional dependence-it appears that the dark side of motherhood holds little sway against social definitions of motherhood as a state which women are bound to want and to enjoy.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between Family Life Education and involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood.
2. There is no significant relationship between Parental Marital Status and the involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood.

METHODOLOGY

Research design: This is a research design of the survey type. This plan of study describes and interprets what is concerned with issues, conditions and practices that prevail and exist or views that are upheld and process that are going on, it helps us to have a systematic analysis of the present situation and it studies relationships existing among variables.

Population: The population for this study is made up of all teenage mothers in Ekiti State. Ekiti has its capital in Ado Ekiti. There are Sixteen Local Government Area in Ekiti State.

Sample and sampling procedure: To select the needed samples for this study, a total of 120 teenage mothers participated in this study through the purposive sampling technique because the selected local governments did not have the same number of teenage mothers. Five Local Government Areas were randomly selected for this purpose.

Research instrument: The instrument used was a self designed instrument titled Questionnaire on Teenage Motherhood. The questionnaire is divided into two major parts of A and B. Part A is made up of the bio-data otherwise known as the personal data of the respondents which comprises of age, location, town and local government area.

Part B of the instrument is made to elicit responses from teenage mothers in order to test and discuss the hypotheses raised.

Administration of the instrument: The researcher administered the instrument with the assistance of nurses of the various hospitals on subjects that came for post natal clinic and those that had just delivered and were on admission. The use of nurses was sought to allow for professionalism as they would be able to know through the personal data of their clients the sample sought for.

Data analysis: Descriptive Statistical Techniques used were means and standard deviation. Inferential Statistical Technique used to analyse the data collected was Pearson Product Moment Correlation. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.
Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between Family Life Education and Involvement of Teenagers in Teenage Motherhood.

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between Family Life Education and Involvement of Teenagers in teenage motherhood.

Table 1: Correlation between family life education and involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>r-cal</th>
<th>r-tab</th>
<th>Remark</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family life education</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.0630</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in teenage motherhood</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P>0.05

Table 1 shows r-calculated - 0.0630 and r-table - 0.195. Null hypothesis is accepted, since r-calculated is lesser than r-table. However, there is no significant relationship between Family Life Education and Involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between parental Marital Status and the Involvement of Teenagers in Teenage Motherhood.

Table 2: Correlation between parental marital status and the Involvement of Teenagers in Teenage Motherhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>r-cal</th>
<th>r-tab</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental marital status</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.3827</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in teenage motherhood</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.05

Table 2 shows r-calculated - 0.3827 and r-table - 0.195. Null hypothesis is rejected, since r-calculated is higher than r-table. Therefore there is significant relationship between Parental Marital Status and the involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: The result of this study shows that there is no significant relationship between Family Life Education and the involvement of teenagers in teenage motherhood. This finding supports the earlier report of Birch [20] which asserted that where girls are exposed to Family Life Education, they are less likely to have early sex because they are move likely to have more information as well as good sense to be sexually responsible as where there is no satisfactory sex information forthcoming from Parents or from school, the relied sources are friends and hearsay.

The result in hypothesis 2 show that there is a significant relationship between Parental Marital Status and the involvement of teenage girls in teenage motherhood. This finding is in agreement with the report of Sosina [21] who found out that women whose mothers gave birth to them as teenagers are twice as likely as daughters of other mothers to begin their own childbearing early.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the world over today, child bearing among teenagers has increased in recent years, their behaviour is inevitably a reflection of adult social life, adults are direct models for teenagers and sexual stereotype are reinforced by the human behaviour that teenagers experience at home in particular, at school, on television, in books and in the society at large. It is generally portrayed and accepted by both sexes that girls are expected to become mothers and thus it is assumed that this is what they wish; but most teenagers who have children have limited education, limited job opportunities and limited choices for the future and a high degree of dependency. For teenagers, mistimed pregnancy can be catastrophe, such pregnancy almost always mean the end of formal schooling or training and restriction to future opportunities to improve their status. It is however difficult today for the teenage mother who was forced out of school by pregnancy to return to school. Both school and community will not openly allow it for fear that the teenage mother will become a bad influence in school. If she manages to get back to school, she may have to put up with a lot of ridicule from her colleagues, in most cases school girls who became pregnant rarely return to school after giving birth because they must care for the child.

The unprecedented increase in teenage motherhood in our society today has been a source of concern to the general public which calls for adequate counselling to all stakeholders. Based on the results of the study, it is recommended, that parents, schools and other agents of socialization should provide for teenagers facts and information at early and appropriate age regarding their sexual functioning and the consequences of sexual activity. This must be reliably and sensitively given from a sound and confident source.
The teaching of moral instructions and family life education otherwise known as sex education should be given a place in Nigerian schools right from primary to institutions of higher learning.

Couples should endeavour to keep their marriage to serve as model to their children because traditional conjugal family where couples live together with mutual understanding help to socialise the children because they are builders of the children's self-concept as embarrassment needs to be overcome in the early years and parents can help in by being good example of affectionate and responsible people.

REFERENCES