SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PREMARITAL SEX IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE, NIGERIA.

MATTHIAS OLUFEMI DADA OJO (PhD)
Department of Sociology
Federal University, Gashua, Yobe State.
E-mail: femfemy@gmail.com;
+2347037951643

GLORIA DEBRAH AKAZUE
Department of Social Sciences
Crawford University
Igbesa, Ogun State.
+2348034791839.

Abstract
The problem of premarital sex in Nigeria is very worrisome. However, the studies on premarital sex were concentrated in the southern parts of the country with only few of them carried out in the northern parts. The study was conducted, therefore, to bridge the gap. The study utilized survey design with implementation of qualitative method. Fifteen interviews schedules were conducted across seven wards within Gashua community, the fifteen respondents who participated in the study were sampled through convenience sampling method under non-probability sampling technique. The study made use of content analysis to analyse the data collected from the interview schedules but simple percentages were used to analyse the set of bio-data collected from respondents. The findings show that 53.3% of respondents were male and 46.7% were female. Sixty percent were Muslims and 40.0% were Christians. The research findings revealed that premarital sex is a social problem because it is very high and it negates the values and norms of the society. Poverty, lack of sex education, curiosity about sex, bad parental care, indiscipline and media were identified as causes of premarital sex in Gashua community. Bad reputation, deterioration of physical appearance, teenage pregnancy, single motherhood, complications during child birth, unsafe abortion, disrespect to parents, likelihood of infidelity in marriage, unnecessary independence for the youth and spread of sexually transmitted diseases were all discussed by respondents as effects of premarital sex. The study recommends sex education within family, school and community, organized family structure, total abstinence from sex before marriage and strictness to religious rules and values.

Keywords: Premarital Sex, Young People, Sex Education, Sexually Transmitted Diseases Gashua Community.
SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PREMARITAL SEX IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE

Introduction
There is sanctity in the institution of marriage in African societies. Therefore, premarital sex is a sacrilegious thing to practice before marriage. Every African society discourages sex before marriage. However, premarital sex has become a social problem in every society of the present day world. This study, therefore, investigates the problem of premarital sex in Gashua community of Yobe State. The study probes the opinions of some community residents on the problem of premarital sex. The views of those residents were represented in this study.

It is very imperative to investigate the problem of premarital sex in this community because it is an African society and a religious one where the sanctity of sex and marriage is expected to be highly respected but grossly violated.

The objectives of the study are:
1. To investigate reasons premarital sex is a social problem.
2. To find out from respondents the causes of premarital sex.
3. To examine the opinions of respondents on effects of premarital sex.
4. To investigate how the problem of premarital sex can be solved.

Review of Related Literature
Sex is a motive force created by nature. It brings two people together intimately. Such may be for a brief moment or lead to long last relationship in their lives (Arunkumar et.al n.d). Many societies frowned at sex before marriage because sex is created for married couples and supposed to be done within a legal marriage. In the light of this, premarital sex is an act of total deviation and departure from norms in the society that call for disapproval and strict negative sanctions (Abdullahi and Umar, 2013).

There are strong cultural prescriptions and norms which forbid young girls to engage in premarital sex and there are firm expectations that women who go into marriage should be sexually inexperienced about sex when they marry are still wide spread (Subaiya, 2008 and Podhisita, et al, 2001).

Prevalence of premarital sex
Researchers conducted show that every society of the world is passing through sexual revolution. The opinion of Wang et al (2005) is that sexual revolutions are occurring especially among youth. Greenwood and Gunner (2010) argued that social change is in tandem with sexual revolution that occurred during the 20th century. In 1900 no unmarried teenage girl indulged in sex before marriage but by 2002, roughly 75% had engaged in premarital sex (Greenwood and Gunner, 2010). The argument of Makatjane (2002) also supported this. His findings show that prevalence of premarital sex has more than doubled between 1977 and 1992 in the country of Lesotho and unmarried women living in cities are more likely to be sexually experienced than their fellow women living in rural areas of the country.

In Nigeria, Olaore et al (2013) opined that sex before marriage is listed among behavioural problems very common among Nigeria Youths- an area where erosion of traditional value is obvious. A revolutionary change in our present generation is the acceptance of sex before marriage in a loving relationship.
Reasons for premarital sex

Many reasons featured in literature as to why sex before marriage is now prevalent in our society. Wang et al (2005) argued that fast economic reforms which break down our societal norms which lead to greater mobility, rapid urbanization and the undue influence of mass media and incitement of Western culture led to spread of more liberal attitudes towards sexual behavior. Subaiya (2008) supported the same view. The author opined that mass media promoted sex before marriage and that social and economic changes brought into existence globalization which increased exposure of youth to western culture. This has, accordingly, changed the moral attitudes towards sex before marriage. Arunkumar et al (n.d) opined that explicit music, dance and various performances on television programmes, cinemas, videos and internet have contributed a lot to the problem of premarital sex. Moreover, urban centres encouraged premarital sex through wider availability of information on it (Futurochman, 2003). In the nutshell, ideas from the western world, rapid urbanization and industrialization do promote sex before marriage (Sridawruang et al, 2010).

In the argument of Mensch et.al (2001), premarital sex is encouraged by schooling and employment chances available to young men who received greater freedom from their families and sexual access to young women. Young boys possess strong expectations and demand sex from girls away from the watchful eyes of their elders. Puberty also raises likelihood of engagement in premarital sex for young women (Biddlecom et al, 2007). Peer group influence and pressure are other factors which encourage sex before marriage because young people always face great pressure from their peers to engage in sex before marriage because information on sex normally come from peers of the same sex who may themselves lack adequate information or are wrongly informed (Ayodele et al, 2012). Wy (2009) also supported the above view. He noticed that growing peer pressure on premarital sex exercises a significant role in sexual decision making among young people. In many societies of the world, sex talk is taken to be a taboo and therefore, forbidden to be discussed openly among people. Unfortunately, it makes young people to look for information on sexual behaviour form wrong places and people Alo and Akinde (2010) for instance, argued that culturally, Nigeria is a conservative society. Topics on sex are considered not to be discussed between parents and children. Very saddened enough, children learn about sexual behaviours in a wrong manner instead of learning proper sex socialization.

Abdullahi and Umar (2013) observed the same that value system in Nigerian societies created impediment between parents and their children in issues relating to sex. Religious leaders will preach against other social problems but hardly talk about sex education. Seme and Wirth (2008) also gave the same observation that as a result of cultural prohibitions, young people in many developing countries hardly discuss sexual issues openly with their parents and this eventually exposed them to sex before marriage. Other factors presented by Seme and Wirth (2008) are: the economic needs of the young unmarried people, drugs and clothing which opens up the body to opposite sex. Stack (1994) highlighted five factors which facilitated premarital sex or sex before marriage. They are: cutting of the ties to the extended kin, erosion of the social control mechanism, heightened demand for social control, loneliness and sexual arousal.

In conclusion, Kumar and Tiwari (2003) were of the opinion that improved nutrition and better health care make puberty to start at an early age and consequently increases the possibility to engage in premarital sexual intercourse. Loneliness is another factor cited by Kumar and Tiwari (2003). Children are being left alone as a result of working status of both parents.
parents, and overcrowded housing with less privacy for couples cause sudden early exposure to sex or sexual activities of the young people.

**Consequences of sex before marriage**

There are numerous effects of sex before marriage. Choe and Lin (2001) observed that young women were more affected than young men. Sex before marriage creates large number of young and unmarried who are becoming pregnant as reported by Wy (2009). Subaiya (2008) also cited the same implication for girls who engage in premarital sex, that is unwanted or premarital pregnancy. Though, there are wide spread uses of contraception which also reduces but incapable of eliminating risk of unwanted pregnancies (Kaczor, 2002). Rena (2005) posited that premarital sex results into unplanned pregnancies and that analyses from statistics show that a baby is born to an unmarried mother in every 26 seconds and that in 24 hours (a day), 2795 under age girls will become pregnant. One notable consequence of this is that adolescent motherhood causes devastating problems to a new born as observed by Lwelamira et al (2012). High child mortality rate is another problem of premarital sex. Makatjane (2002) argued that unmarried women have a higher risk of mortality and that complications related to underage pregnancy are leading causes of death among teenage mothers throughout the world.

Teenager who becomes pregnant exposes herself and her unborn child to risk. Her body may not be able to handle child birth safely (Alo and Akinde, 2010). Abortion is another notable effect of sex before marriage (Subaiya, 2008) and in some cases high occurrences of incomplete abortions (Makatjane, 2002). Such occurrences have become a main public health issue (Wang et al, 2005). Sex before marriage also leads to child abandonment. There are rising incidences of abandoned babies which glaringly indicate unplanned and unwanted births (Wy, 2009). It is a problem that is worsening every year (Makatjane, 2002). The spread of sexually transmitted diseases is another effect of premarital sex (Hamdani, 2012). Premarital sex has escalated the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among unmarried teenagers (Arunkumar et al, n.d). HIV/AIDS are common health effects of sex before marriage (Wang et al, 2005; Makatjane, 2002 and Kaczor, 2002). Emotional damage is another effect of premarital sex. A strong physical and emotional bond occurs when two are involved in sex. If a partner cut off the relationship against the wishes of the other, such severed relationship may result into mental and emotional burn out. In summary sex before marriage causes emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual problems (Rena, 2005).

It also affects the quality of the future marriage, lack of openness in marriage and marital infidelity (Ogunsola, 2012). Sex before marriage can also affect the educational development of the teenage girls involved. Marriage and child bearing among teenagers limit formal schooling and reduce early training and work opportunities among teenage girls. Unwanted pregnancy truncates their educational careers and lack of proper preparation for their future (Ogunsola, 2012). In many school systems, pregnant women are not allowed to attend school and there is no possibility that they will return to classes after they have given birth to their children. The few ones among them who return to school may not be able to pay their school fees and their parents may not be able to assist them (Faturochman, 2003).

**Ending the problem of sex before marriage**

The most effective way to prevent sex before marriage is to observe the true sex freedom before marriage (Mast, 1990). Total abstinence from sex before marriage will totally prevent consequences of premarital sex (Mast, 1990). Religion is another vital tool to wage war against
sex before marriage. It gives sanctions against premarital sex and sex outside marriage. It preaches that premarital sex is morally wrong and various researches have shown that religious roles assisted in abstention, delaying or limiting sex before marriage among teenagers (Wy 2009; Barkan 2006 and Sundan et al, 2012).

Finally, sex education is very important. Proper introduction of sex education in our schools will prevent premarital sex among teenagers. Exposure to early sex education will focus on clarification of core values related to premarital sex, prevention of the risky behaviours involved through parental involvement and prioritizing schooling among girls (Wamala, 2012). School based sexuality programmes should be made available that will provide students with accurate information about pregnancy, contraception and diseases that are transmitted through sexual intercourses (Arunkumur et al, n.d)

Methodology
The study adopted survey design. This involved the collection of information from a sample of respondents (Schutt, 2004). Qualitative method was adopted for the study. The study area was Gashua community in Bade Local Government area of Yobe State. The entire adult population was targeted to be population of study. However, the entire population of study cannot be contacted for this study. Sampling therefore was necessary. Non-probability sampling technique was adopted and convenience method under it was used. Fifteen adults were selected across seven quarters or wards in Gashua community, namely: Zango, Katuzu, Sabon-Gari, Babuje, State Low Cost, Kara and Angon-Yankaba. A total of fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted among the adults selected for the study.

The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews conducted were analysed through content analysis. Data analyses and interpretation were done within the social environment which shaped the problem of premarital sex in Nigeria.

Conclusively, the study observed ethical issues in research. Respondents consent was sought before the commencement of the study. Anonymity of the respondents was strictly followed and the information they supplied were kept confidential and only used for the purpose of the study.

Results and Discussions
This section deals with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-bio data</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Age range</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey, 2019.
The findings show that 8 of the respondents (53.3%) were male and 7 respondents (46.7%) were female. Both sexes were fairly represented in the study. The next bio data was the age of the respondents. The findings show that 2 respondents (13.3%) were between 20 years – 24 years of age; the same was applicable to respondents between 30 years – 34 years of age and 35 years – 39 years of age. Five respondents (33.3%) were between 25 years – 29 years of age which is the highest in the distribution; three respondents (20.0%) were between 45 years – 49 years and only one respondent was between 40 years – 44 years which is 6.7% of the respondents. Finally, the religions of the respondents were taken into consideration. Six respondents (40.0%) were Christians and nine respondents (60.0%) Practice Islam as religion. The community is predominantly Muslim community.

Respondents on premarital sex as a social problem
All the respondents agreed that premarital sex is a social problem within Gashua community of Yobe State. However, the reasons premarital sex is a social problem vary among respondents.

The first reason was that premarital sex in Gashua Community has become wide spread and something that occurs on daily basis. A respondent commented thus:

Premarital sex is a social problem in Gashua community because there are many cases of its occurrence everyday
IDI/Male /Muslim/ 30 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

Another respondent supported this view:

Premarital sex has become a social problem in Gashua community because the young people in every quarters of the community engage in it. They do not wait for marriage before they started having sex. They are not aware of its consequences. They thought it is a fun and it is for satisfaction.
IDI/ Male/Muslim / 48 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

The excerpts above show that premarital sex is a social problem in Gashua community. It is not a problem only in this community but in many communities in Nigeria which is an expression of sexual revolution as explained by Wang et al (2005). It was estimated that 75% had engaged in sex before marriage (Greenwood and Guner, 2010) and the occurrence had doubled between 1977 and 1982 (Makatjane, 2002). Other reasons the respondents considered that make premarital sex a social p

A respondent asserted thus:

Premarital sex is a social problem in Gashua community which is predominantly Muslim community. Premarital sex is against our religion (Islam), societal norms and values. IDI/ Male/Muslim / 40 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

Another respondent concurred on this point:

Premarital sex is a social problem in Gashua Community because it is a taboo in many cultures and traditions. It is considered a sin by a number of religions. There is no possibility that the duo who engages in it will eventually get married.
IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 35 years /Gashua/ 20-02- 2020

The above views expressed by respondents show that erosion of norms, values and religious standard is what makes premarital sex a big social problem of the day. Abdullahi and Umar
SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PREMARITAL SEX IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE

(2013) observed that premarital sex is a total deviation and departure from norms in our society. It is an area where erosion of traditional value is obvious.

Finally, the overall effect that premarital sex has on the entire community is another reason cited by respondents. Such has affected many lives and the entire community one way or the other.

A respondent asserted thus:

When we look at some areas in Gashua like: Katuzu, Kabalan, Kara, Abasha and some other areas, there is a wide spread problem of premarital sex. It has become a social problem because it has serious effects on all the community.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020

One of the characteristics of social problem is that its effects are on large number of people living in the society. The effects are not individually felt but collectively felt in the society; otherwise it will be individual problem not social problem.

The entire society pays for the problem of premarital sex. For instance it creates large number of young unmarried women (Wy, 2009); increases unwanted pregnancies (Subaiya, 2008 and Kaczor, 2002) it also increases high maternal and child mortality rate (Makatjane, 2002) encourages abortion (Subaiya, 2008 and Makatjane, 2002) which has become public health issue (Wang et al, 2005).

The spread of sexually transmitted diseases is another public effect (Arunkumar et al n.d) and it is a problem that is worsening every year (Makatjane, 2002).

The findings from the authors cited above show that premarital sex is a social problem which affects the entire society not only young people who engaged in it. Hence, the assertions from the respondents that premarital sex affects the entire society are justified.

Causes of premarital sex

The second objective of the study is to find out from respondents the causes of premarital sex from their own opinions. The first cause identified during the study is poverty. Poverty lures young girls into premarital sex

A respondent discusses this view:

Poverty is one of the causes of premarital sex because young girls who engage in it come from poor families. Engaging in premarital sex is a source of getting income for survival.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

Another respondent corroborated thus:

One of the causes of premarital sex in Gashua is poverty. Some young girls considered it as a business and a way of getting money and other benefits because their parents are not taking responsibilities over them.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 26years/Gashua/20-02-2020.

Another respondent asserted the same view:

Premarital sex is caused by covetousness, greed for money, wealth and positions. Some ladies want money at all cost and are ready to use their bodies to get it by sleeping around with men before they eventually get married.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 32 years/ Gashua/ 20-02- 2020.

It is very glaring that poverty and the needs to survive are one of the main causes of sex before marriage. Peer group influence was also cited by respondent as cause of premarital sex in Gashua community. A respondent opined thus:
Pressure from friends, peer groups and the girl’s future partner can eventually lead to premarital sex
IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

Another respondent concurred thus:
The friends that young girls move about with may push them into act of premarital sex which can later turn to serious problem, because they may find it difficult to quit because of the material benefits they derive from it.
IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020

Another respondent gave similar opinion on thus:
Friends’ influences encourage premarital sex. Such friends may be in support of free-sex for all syndromes.
IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 20 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020

Finally, another respondent also asserted the same view:
Wrong association has led many into sexual destruction. Many girls engage in premarital sex because their friends do the same. ‘Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are’ is a popular saying that supported this.
IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 32 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020.

Peer or friend influence can lead to sexual corruption among young people. Adeoye et.al (2012) argued that peer group influence and pressure from such group can encourage sex before marriage and Wy (2009) noticed that growing peer pressure on premarital sex plays important role in sexual decision making among young people which may prompt them to engage in sex before marriage.

Lack of sex education and non-awareness of the problems inherent in pre-marital sex are other causes of sex before marriage. One respondent commented thus:
Lack of sex education has led many youth into premarital sex. Many went into it not knowing what they were doing

Another respondent termed it lack of awareness on sex education. The respondent concurred with the respondent above as follows:
Some teenagers do not know anything about sex but wish to experience it. If parents do teach their children all they need to know about sex, most teenagers will not go into premarital sex.
IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 23 years/ Gashua/ 20-02-2020

Another respondent supported the same view thus:
A number of teenage children in Gashua community lack sex education and due to that, there is high number of teenagers with sexually transmitted diseases, emotional and psychological problems and many bear children out of wedlock.
IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020

Finally, another respondent also concurred to the same reason:
Ignorance and lack of sex education in Gashua community have led many youth into premarital sex. The problem came from their parents who believe as Muslims, sex education is inappropriate to be discussed to their children.
Ignorance or lack of awareness of sex education is considered one of the cogent reasons for escalation of sex before marriage in our society as enunciated by respondents. The same is recorded in literature. Akinde (2010) observed that our society is a conservative one which does not allow parents to discuss sex education with their children. Therefore, children learn about sex in wrong ways and manners. Abdullahi and Umar (2013) also concurred to the same. They argued that our value system impedes parents discussing sex education with their children.

This value or cultural prohibition which prevented parents from discussing sex education with their children eventually exposed such children to premarital sex (Seme and Wirth, 2008). Curiosity is another factor mentioned by respondent which encourages premarital sex. A respondent has this to say:

Young people in Gashua community engage in sex before marriage because they were curious, thinking they were looking for reality without knowing the implications of their actions.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020

Bad parental care was also mentioned by another respondent thus:

Many young people in Gashua community were not well brought up, especially the female among them. This is the reason they fall into wrong hands.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 25 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020

Very similar to bad parental care is indiscipline on the side of the young people involved in premarital sex. A respondent put it thus:

Lack of discipline on the side of the young people is another reason. Lack of self discipline or self control has led many into sex before marriage which has eventually pushed them into pit of destruction.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 32 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020

Finally, media was also mentioned by one respondent as a factor which contributes to premarital sex. The respondent explained thus:

Another factor which aids premarital sex is electronic/ print media like television, video clips, radio, magazines and books which encourage young people to be aroused sexually.

IDI/ Male/ Christian/ 35 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020

Wang et.al (2005) mentioned the influence of the mass media in spreading premarital sex among young people.

Effects of premarital sex

The third objective of the study was to seek the opinions of respondents on the effects of premarital sex as applicable to Gashua community which was the area of study. The first effect of premarital sex mentioned in the study is bad reputation it causes to the young people who engage in it. One of the respondents discusses it thus:

Premarital sex may result into bad reputation to both people committing it and their parents. The act gives them bad label in the community. It causes them to be subjects of rumor or gossip within their community.

IDI/ Male/ Muslim/ 48 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020

Physical changes in the appearance were other consequences of premarital sex.
A respondent had this comment to give:

People who engage in premarital sex experience physical changes in appearance. They begin to look old and worn out in their physical appearance.


Teens pregnancy or unwanted pregnancy is a major consequence of premarital sex. Hence many of the young girls who engage in premarital sex may end up becoming single mothers. A respondent corroborated this thus:

Premarital sex is a serious social problem in Gashua community. Many young girls end up becoming single mothers as a result of it. This was as a result of unwanted pregnancies caused by premarital sex.

IDI/ Female/ Christianity/ 39 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020.

Another respondent gave the same view as follows:

Premarital sex can lead to teenage pregnancy. This is a common phenomenon in Gashua community. It is a serious problem because the teenage girls involved may not have physical strength and biological capabilities to cope with challenges during pregnancy and child birth delivery.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 20 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020.

The opinions of respondents corroborated the findings in the other researches. Subaiya (2008) argued that girls who engaged in premarital sex may end up having unwanted or premarital pregnancies. Choe and Lin (2001) explained further that this eventually creates large number of young unmarried women in our society. Rena (2005) also shares the same opinion. This problem of teenage pregnancy is compounded by a higher risk of mortality and complication related to underage pregnancy (Makatjane, 2002).

Abortion is another effect of premarital sex. Abortion has led to many premature deaths of many young girls who engaged in premarital sex. A respondent noted this during the interview thus:

Apart from unwanted pregnancy, premarital and unprotected sex can lead to unsafe abortion and its heavy prolonged physical and mental consequences. Sometimes it can even cause untimely death to the underage mother.


Another respondent share the same opinion on this:

Another effect of premarital sex is abortion. This is often done in hidden places in the community. It is done in unhygienic conditions leading to loss of life.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 20 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020.

Unwanted pregnancy may lead to the procurement of abortion. Our country has strict law on abortion this makes abortion very difficult to procure and as a result, there are many quacks who carried it out illegally far away from the purview of law.

The opinions of respondents were in tandem with the findings of Subaiya (2008) who argued that abortion is common effect of sex before marriage and in many of the occasions such abortions were incomplete, leading to bleeding and other health complications (Makatjane, 2002).

Other effects of premarital sex are that it turns young people to be disrespectful and to be unnecessarily independent. A respondent had this to say on it:

Premarital sex causes the young people who engage in it to be disrespectful to their parents. It gives the unnecessary independence because when they experience premarital sex they no longer stay at homes.
Such experience may even cause instability in their future marriage. This is explained below from the excerpt from the above respondent:

Premarital sex may lead to young people finding it very difficult to stay in marriage. Young people who practice premarital sex have high possibility of engaging in infidelity when they marry.  

Premarital sexual intercourse has serious health implications on the young people who engage in it. For instance, it encourages the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among young people. One of the respondents had this to say:  

Premarital sex causes sexually transmitted diseases which can lead to life time damages like infertility and other reproductive problems, both in the young boys and young girls who indulge in it.  

Another respondent discussed the health implication of premarital sex in area of transmission of HIV/AIDS. The respondent asserted thus:  

The effect of premarital sex on the community is that it spreads the transmission of HIV/AIDS and makes it very difficult to control.  

It is very glaring that premarital sex facilitates spread of sexually transmitted diseases. The same opinions of respondents on this are corroborated in the existing literature. Hamani (2012) mentioned sexually transmitted diseases as effect of premarital sex. Such diseases are well escalated among unmarried teenagers (Arunkumar et al n.d). Hence, HIV/AIDS is a common health effect of sex before marriage (Wang et al, 2005; Makatjane 2002 and Kaczor, 2002).

Solutions to the problem of premarital sex

The ways to solve the problem of premarital sex start from homes. These were recorded in the responses offered by respondents on how to solve the problem of premarital sex. Parents should be awakened to their responsibility in area of giving sex education to their teenage children at home and telling them the problems inherent in premarital sex. A respondent responded on this thus:  

The way premarital sex can be minimized is for the parents to perform their responsibilities by teaching sex education to their children at home. They need to explain problems in premarital sex to their children.  

The same view was supported by another respondent as follows:  

Premarital sex can be minimized if parents take their time to create awareness on what sex is all about and teach their children sex education to prevent them learning in wrong ways.  

Another respondent asserted the same thus:  

Sex education should be encouraged among young people living in Gashua community because they do not understand what sex education is all about and the benefits of it. It will prevent unwanted pregnancies.
Very similar to sex education in the family is sex education at the school level and in various media. A respondent had this to say:

Sex education should also be included in school curriculum and programmes on sex education should be featured on television, radio, newspapers and social media. This will go a long way to address problem of premarital sex

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 23 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020.

Community guidance and counseling where sex education will be handled was also suggested by one respondent. The suggestion is captured below:

Gashua community needs to organize guidance and counseling centres to teach young people sex education. Young men and women should be encouraged to attend so that they can be taught how to avert the problem of premarital sex.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020.

Wamala (2012) advocated for sex education that will focus on clarification of core values pertaining to premarital sex. School based sexuality will also provide young people the accurate information about sex before marriage and the effects of it (Arunkumur et.al, n.d). Hence, the responses of the respondents are in agreement with the existing literature on how to solve the problem of premarital sex.

Organized family system was also suggested as a way of limiting premarital sex. A respondent suggested thus:

An organized family creates a healthy structure and gives the opportunity for growth and development of children. The role of family on sexual socialization cannot be underrated.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 45 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020.

Abstinence from premarital sex and anything that may cause its temptation were also suggested by a respondent as a way of solving the problem of premarital sex. The responses are captured below:

Young people should be taught to abstain from premarital sex. They should not be in a lone place with opposite sex, they should not read any sexually suggestive books, magazines, photos or website that will arouse their sexual desires.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 23-02-2020.

Author of literature have argued that abstinence is the best way to prevent premarital sex. It is say ‘no’ to premarital sex (Mast, 1990). Total abstinence from premarital sex will prevent its bad consequences.

Respondent also suggested strictness to observation of religious rules as a way to prevent premarital sex. A respondent suggested thus:

Young people should be encouraged to build good relationships with religious friends and older persons that can help them overcome sexual temptation and assist them maintaining their sexual purity. This will prevent sex before marriage.

IDI/ Female/ Muslim/ 26 years/ Gashua/ 25-02-2020

Another respondent offered similar response on this:

Premarital sex and sexual temptation should be talked about in churches and mosques to the youths in Gashua community. We need honest discussions to minimize them in our community.
Religion was advocated in the literature as a way of ending or minimizing premarital sex as equally suggested by the respondents. Religion is a vital mechanism of fighting sex before marriage. It teaches that it is wrong and that abstinence among teenagers should be encouraged (Wy 2009; Barkan 2006 and Sundan et al, 2012).

Summary of the Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of findings

In the findings of the study, all interviewees who participated in the study agreed that premarital sex has become a prominent social problem in Gashua community. The reasons cited are: its high rate of occurrences; it negates religious, social and traditional values and norms and the overall effects it has on the entire Gashua community.

The findings of the study as emanated from the interviews conducted with the participants identified poverty, peer group influences, lack of sex education or awareness of it, curiosity about sex on the part of the young people, bad parental care, indiscipline on the part of the young people, and sexual corruption from the electronic and print media as the causes of premarital sex in Gashua community.

For the effects of premarital sex, the respondents who participated in the study pinpointed bad reputation, rumor gossiping, deterioration in the physical appearance, teenage pregnancy, single motherhood, complications during child birth, unsafe abortion, disrespectful to parents, infidelity after marriage, unnecessary independence to the young people involved and spread of sexually transmitted diseases as consequential effects of premarital sex.

The findings from the study reveal that sex education within the family, school community and on media; organized family structure, total abstinence from sex before marriage and strictness to observation of religious rules and values were all mentioned by respondents as ways of minimizing or solving the problem of premarital sex especially in Gashua community.

Conclusion of the study

This study is concluded by affirming that premarital sex is a social problem in Gashua community. The respondents gave reasons for this affirmation. The causes of premarital sex as discussed by respondents were also in tandem with the existing literature the same were the effects and solutions to the problem of premarital sex. Hence, the study corroborated the existing ones that have been carried out before on premarital sex as enunciated in the literature.

Recommendations of the study

The study recommends that adequate sex education should be facilitated within the families, schools and the entire Gashua community. Young people in Gashua community should be well equipped with correct information on sex so that they will not be informed in wrong ways. Parents, irrespective of religions they practice should ensure they give adequate safe guiding information on sex to their children. Moreover, parents need to organized their families is such ways to properly and adequately socialize their children, especially in area of sex.
The young people in Gashua community should be taught and encouraged to engage in sexual abstinence and run away from premarital sexual temptations. These can be done at the family level, school level and community level. The community needs to campaign vigorously against premarital sex, especially in areas identified as ‘dark sports’ for premarital sex within the community.

The access to the media by the young people should be censored. Young people should not be allowed to have access to both electronic and print media that will arouse their sexual desires and thereby encourage them to seek for sex before marriage.

Finally, well meaningful people in the community can assist the less privileged people to alleviate their poverty lives so that the needs of the family can be catered for and consequential effects of premarital sex can be averted.

Finally, implementation of other recommendations in the existing literature together with the ones proffered in this study will go a long way in minimizing the problem of premarital sex in Gashua community and the entire Nigerian society.

References
Choe, Minja Kim and Lin, Hui-Shen (2001) Effect of Education on Premarital Sex and Marriage in Taiwan. Taiwan: East-West Center’s Asian Young Adult Reproductive Risk (AYARR).
SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PREMARITAL SEX IN GASHUA COMMUNITY OF YOBE STATE


Podhisita, Chai; Xenos, Peter and Varangrat, Anchalee (2001) The Risk of Premarital Sex among Thai Youth: Individual and Family Influences. Taiwan: Taiwan East-West Center’s Asian Young Adult Reproductive Risk (AYARR).


