

The International Debate on the Perception of the Itaukei and Indo-Fijian Women on Pre-Marital Sex

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Human nature explains that man has an inborn appetite for sex. Teenagers today are vulnerable to committing sexual acts. The study aimed to examine the perceptions of the Indo-Fijian and iTaukei women on the practice of pre-marital sex. The paper also identified the factors that affect the respondents' perception on premarital sex. A descriptive design of research was utilized in the study. The survey questionnaires were distributed to 10 iTaukei and 10 Indo-Fijian females as respondents. The study was conducted at the University of Fiji. The results of the study revealed that iTaukei and Indo-Fijian women have different perception on pre-marital sex. There are many factors that affect their perception such as religion, mass media, educational attainment, friends and family background. The research showed that students need some information on comprehensive sex education to minimize the problem of teenage pregnancy, abortion, promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases.

Human nature and life explains that man has an inborn appetite for sex. Human sex is not confined to genitals or even to purely physical contact. Dr. Agustín Fuentes a famous Psychologist mentioned human sex can be discuss over the phone, while dancing, over a well cooked meal, in one's mind, as well as physically between two (or more) people. For humans, sex is a seriously complicated and totally bio-cultural act. It is never just about biological processes, ever. Sex for human beings, in addition to being biological and social, is deeply cultural and thus extremely psychological.

Teenagers today are vulnerable to committing sexual acts. Practicing any sexual activity at an early age, may lead to social problems such as teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. One of the peer challenges of the teenagers are facing is the practice of premarital sex. It is defined as sexual ac-

tivity practiced by people who are unmarried. The traditional culture forbids the practice of premarital sex and it was considered as a sin to several religions. A woman should remain virgin until she gets married. Virginity is the only precious gift that a wife can offer to the husband on their first night of marriage. However, in the nineteenth century it was gradually accepted mostly in Western societies. One disadvantage of premarital sex as revealed in one study that many women have lost their interest in having sexual intercourse with their partner after marriage as they have got fed up and tired of having intercourse with the same partner even before marriage. In some cases, there are also some males who have witnessed the same issues very frequently. And also several health related issues which may occur during premarital sexual intercourse. There may be problems during the period of life after marriage such as loss in erection, getting fulfilled quicker than usual and several other similar issues that are related to intercourse which occurs either before or after marriage affecting the future marriage life.

Man is created as sexual animal; sex is an essential element of being human for the preservation of human species. There are many factors that affect one's perceptions depending on their age, gender, educational background and social norms. Moreover, people have different views on the morality of sexual intercourse between unmarried couples. Some people based it on their religion and cultural practices in the society. Some strongly disapproves while some regards marriage is completely optional. Many evidences presented regarding negative effects of premarital sex. Various researches are presented relating to this issue indeed, this has proven a lot of things. This issue needs an attention from the parents and other responsible persons. The study on Trends in Premarital Sex in United States, 1957-2003

concluded that majority of the Americans are having sex before marriage [1]. In fact in the data presented by Palatino [2] revealed that almost 20% of high school students are practicing premarital sex without using any contraceptives.

The Bible teaches us not to engage in any forms of sexual intimacy before marriage. The society found it morally wrong to have sex without the benefit of marriage. St Augustine on his account about the relationship between men and women, pointed out that sex is important because it has always been included in God's plan. People will set standards based on their personal values. Sexual intercourse is defined as the transference of the semen into the vagina. Sex is a personal choice and sexual involvement entails personal responsibility. Parental guidance and involvement is necessary in dealing adolescent stage.

Premarital sex is forbidden in some Muslim countries, despite of strict laws. Many are still involved in premarital sex. Fiji is a country occupied with multicultural system, the Indo-Fijian and iTaukei people. These two groups have different views on sex and marriage. One of the social problems that Fiji is facing nowadays is teenage pregnancy and the increasing number HIV/AIDS victims. This research will provide some information about human sexuality to minimize the problem of teenage pregnancy, abortion, promiscuity, STD, HIV and homosexuality. As a social science lecturer in University of Fiji, I have observed students in this prestigious institution need more information on human sexuality and exposure to formal sex education. The University of Fiji has not offered any social sciences courses that focus on human sexuality and sex education and based on my research this is the first study conducted in Fiji regarding the perception on premarital sex.

The practice of premarital sex is an individual choice;

it is the decision of the parties to engage on it. The result of the study shows that Indo-Fijian and iTaukei women have different views on premarital sex. The respondents' ethnicity, religion and cultural beliefs are the factors that affect their perception. The iTaukei women considered premarital sex acceptable in the society while Indo-Fijian women still promoting abstinence of sex before marriage. Based on this finding, the youth today need the necessary information for them to be safe once they become sexually active. Comprehensive sexuality education is necessary for the young people to protect their health and well-being. The students can think critically about sexuality and relationships which can help them develop a good decision making skills that they can use throughout their lives.

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