

Islamic Sexual Education: A Necessity for Imparting Sexual Modesty

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Abstract

In the world today there is a perennial controversy about teaching sexual education among adolescents, as some have said teaching it is a taboo and some said teaching it will be beneficial to adolescents. Consequently, this causes a dilemma and confusion in the mind of some Muslim adolescents. Therefore, it is necessary to solicit information from the experts in the area of Muslim experts in the area, about their awareness of the issue of sexuality and their view on it. Hence, this study wishes to explore the appropriate ways and methods of introducing and teaching sexuality education from the Islamic perspective. Based on this, the study embarks on qualitative research where semi structured interviews were conducted on 5 Muslim scholars. The findings from the study reveal that the perception of the Muslim scholars on sex education, is greatly centred on inculcation of sexual purity attitudes, sexual modesty training, understanding limitations that exist between the opposite sexes and preparation for a fulfilling marital life. The present findings are implicated for Islamic curriculum on sexual education especially in this era of social media influx.

Keywords: *sex education; sexual purity; adolescent; muslim adolescents; modesty*

Abstrak

Di dunia saat ini pengajaran pendidikan seksual di kalangan remaja masih menjadi hal yang kontroversial, karena beberapa pihak berpendapat bahwa mengajarkannya adalah tabu dan ada pula yang justru berpandangan bahwa mengajarkannya akan bermanfaat bagi remaja. Akibatnya, hal ini menimbulkan dilema dan kebingungan di benak sebagian remaja muslim. Oleh karena itu, perlu digali informasi dari para ahli di kalangan umat Islam di daerah, tentang kesadaran mereka mengenai masalah seksualitas dan pandangan mereka tentang hal tersebut. Studi berikut juga ditujukan untuk mengeksplorasi cara dan metode yang tepat untuk memperkenalkan dan mengajarkan pendidikan seksualitas dari perspektif Islam. Penelitian berikut merupakan penelitian kualitatif di mana wawancara semi terstruktur dilakukan pada 5 cendekiawan Muslim. Hasil penelitian mengungkap bahwa persepsi cendekiawan Muslim tentang pendidikan seksual sangat berpusat pada penanaman sikap kemurnian seksual, kesopanan seksual, pemahaman keterbatasan yang ada antara lawan jenis dan persiapan untuk kehidupan pernikahan yang membahagiakan. Temuan ini berimplikasi pada kurikulum Islam pada pendidikan seksual terutama di era masuknya media sosial ini.

Kata kunci: *pendidikan seks; kemurnian seksual; remaja; remaja muslim; kesopanan*

A. Introduction

The current nature of the world as a global village has made information easily accessible to all and sundry, unless they are not under the internet coverage, although this is considered proportionately low to those who have access to it. Desired information is received at the finger tips of the observer; by just a click of a mouse. By this, adolescent learn many things, most of the time without guidance and moderation from adults. They have access to information that is both desired and undesired as well as those that require more explanations from adult. The most sensitive aspect of information they could receive is sexual information. Meanwhile, the perennial argument within the context of sexual education arises from conflicting moral ideals for what is right and wrong for adolescents, leading to an ideological pluralism of sexuality education, also differentiating between permissive and restrictive ideologies as the primary rivals in this debate. While to some Muslim parents sex is perceived as a dirty word and this is how they portray it in the mind of their children, conversely, these children have access to it through other means, such as the internet and peers.

As a result, some Muslim adolescents are in a dilemma as regards the issue of sex education. Hence, it is desirable to resolve this perpetual ambiguity concerning the issue in the mind of our Muslim adolescents so that they have clear understanding

about the matter, and make a beneficial decision on their understanding of the concept in order to have a fulfilling life.

Sex education means different things to different people. Explanation on this subject is given based on religious, cultural and societal experience. That is why Basso¹ explains that culture is a way of life that predicts, to a large extent, human behavior. It is patterned, learned, shared and adaptive and is transmittable from one generation to the other. It therefore has strong influence on human sexual behavior. More so, Greenberg et al posits that religious and spiritual beliefs influence feelings about morality, sexual behavior, pre-marital sexual behavior, adultery, divorce, contraception, abortion and masturbation². Meanwhile, a comprehensive definition was given by AHI³ that sexuality education is a programmed and planned process of education that enhances the acquisition of factual information, the development of encouraging attitudes, beliefs and values as well as the cultivation of skills to cope with the biological, psychological, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects of human sexuality.

Meanwhile, Chris et al in their study find that sex education among Muslim youth is likely to be ineffective given the rigidity of sexual norms in Muslim society⁴. In addition, they also identified new barriers to sex education among Muslim youth. This could be due to the cultural disposition of people, as Erin Noelle Chapman posits that many people think that teaching sex education could bring two cultural taboos that could contribute to the marginalization of female sexuality, those being the taboo of sexual awareness and the taboo of female sexuality, desire and pleasure⁵. But this is also applied to their male counterpart. As a result, Saburo Omura, Michael Hills and Jane Ritchie suggest the need for culturally appropriate approaches to improve Asian male students' access to sex education and health services. Equally Moazzam et al,

¹ Michael A. B. *the Underground Guide to Teenage Sexuality*. Fair view Press, eBay Product 2012 Bowker, 1997,

² Greenberg, J., & Baron, R.A. (2000). *Behavior in organizations*, 7th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

³ Ann, S. (2003) African Highland Initiative (AHI) Empowering Community to regenerate Livelihoods and Landscapes P.O. Box

⁴ Chris S.; Herman S.; Kok, G.; Suzanne, M. and Jos P. (2009), *An exploratory study of Muslim adolescents' views on sexuality: Implications for sex education and prevention*, MC Public Health. 2010; 10: 533. Published online 2010 September 5. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-10-533PMCID: PMC2940920

⁵ Chapman, E. N. (2009), *From Object to Subject: Young women's experience of sexuality education within sex-negative taboos*, UMI Dissertation Publishing ProQuest LLC789 East Eisenhower Parkway P.O. Box 1346Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

supported the fact that there is dire need for sexual and reproductive health education for male's adolescents⁶.

The issue that arises here is, from which quarter it is more appropriate to teach sex education? Jaycee et al., found in their study that there should be more sensitive supports and materials to help families deal with the sexual development of their offspring⁷. However, some authors posit that, parents alone cannot handle this complex issue concerning their adolescents, so there should be support from other related angles. Adedokun et al states that there is a need to assure parents and teachers as well as health workers that providing appropriate information to adolescents will not increase promiscuity but will actually promote responsible choices and sexual behavior⁸. After establishing the importance of sex education, it is suggested by Maura et al that implementation of sex education for adolescents requires funding and technical assistance in program development concerning sex education, as well as selection adaptation and evaluation of such programs. Despite the agitation for integration of sex education into mainstream education, some others identified religion as one stumbling block toward its implementation. Diane et al explains that the rise of religious rights in the 1970s marks the period of waning of sexual rights which result to a continuous poor sexual health and serious inequities in sexual expression and reproductive health⁹. However, Ifeoma et al reported that despite the fact that sex education was given to students at all levels of education, some teachers reported that the majority of students are sexually active¹⁰. Finally, from all the issues addressed in the literature, we are yet to see how Muslim adolescents view and perceive the issue of sex education, which is

⁶ Moazzam A.; Mohammad A. B. and Hiroshi U., (2004), *Reproductive Health Needs of Adolescent Males in Rural Pakistan: An Exploratory Study* Department of Developmental Medical Sciences, Institute of Intentional Health, The University of Tokyo 113-0033 and Islamic International Medical College, Rawalpindi, Pakistan Med, 2004, 204, 17-25

⁷ Jaycee, D. P.; Andrew J. and Richard P. H., (2012) *Sexuality and Sex Education of Adolescents with Intellectual Disability: Mothers' Attitudes, Experiences, and Support Needs Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* 2012, Vol. 50, No. 2, 140–154.

⁸ Adeokun LA.; Ricketts O.L; Ajuwon A.J. and Ladipo OA, (2009) *Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge, Behaviour and Education Needs of In-School Adolescents in Northern Nigeria*. African Journal of Reproductive Health, Vol. 13, No. 3, Dec, 2009, pp. 37-49.

⁹ Diane di, M. & Carole J. (2007), *The Religious Right and the Reshaping of Sexual Policy: An Examination of Reproductive Rights and Sexuality Education*. Sexuality Research & Social Policy Journal of NSRC <http://nsrc.sfsu.edu> March 2007 Vol. 4, No.1.

¹⁰ Ochiogu, I. N.; Miettola, J.; Ilika A. L. & Tuula V. (2010) *Impact of Timing of Sex Education on Teenage Pregnancy in Nigeria: Cross-sectional Survey of Secondary School Students* Published online: 7 October 2010 Springer Science+Business Media, LLC 2010 J Community Health (2011) 36:375–380 DOI 10.1007/s10900-010-9318-6

considered as a gap in this present issue. Therefore, the present study wishes to explore the level of awareness as well as the views of Muslim adolescents on sex education.

The subject of this study is Muslim adolescents, while the area of concern is their disposition toward sex education, and one of the theories that is considered to be suitable for this is Anna Freud's theory of adolescents. She believes that the physiological process of sexual maturation begins with the functioning of the sexual glands, which ultimately commences during the period of adolescence. She asserts that this sexual development plays an important role in influencing the psychological realm. The interaction between the physiological process of maturation and psychological realm will result in the reawakening of libidinal forces, thereby making adolescents sexually inquisitive, which must be fulfilled so that this internal conflict will not cause psychological disequilibrium¹¹. The implication of this theory on the study is that adolescents need awareness and orientation during this period, which must be supplied by whoever possesses the information. If this information is not given to the adolescent during this period, it may have an adverse effect on their sexual behavior or total well-being.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative research design. This form of research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, judgments, and behaviors of a particular population¹². This is why the study is embarking on an exploratory study on Muslim adolescents' awareness and views about sex education.

C. Result and Discussion

Data was collected through semi-structured interview, whereby five Muslim scholars specialized in marriage counselling with 10 years of experience were interviewed, two males and three females from International Islamic University Malaysia. The conversations from the interviews were recorded using an MP3 recorder which was later listened to repeatedly, transcribed and read as well, to obtain an overall

¹¹ Muuss (1975), *Adolescence: overview History Theories Kings' Psychology network* www.psyking.net/idi83.htm Retrieved November 8th 2012.

¹² Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. 2000. 'Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research', in N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, 1-29. Second Edition. California: Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

understanding of the respondents' view. In fact, in the words of David Lodge, cited in Gorman & Clayton¹³, "the aim is to identify with the subjects, to experience the milieu as they experience it..." Thus the data collection was achieved through staging of interviews, using the available archives and publications as well as digging deep into the websites. Therefore, semi-structure interviews were conducted.

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data¹⁴. It may involve coding, content analysis or ethnographic analysis following a nonlinear process. Though, it may look messy, ambiguous and time consuming, but it is indeed a creative and fascinating process after all. The themes in these particular interviews were extracted and analyzed according to the research questions and issues identifiable from literatures as well as on the field revelations (thereby inculcating the participants' view).

This study employs qualitative approach, where five Muslim adolescents were interviewed in order to gain in-depth conception and perception of these adolescents on the issue of sex education. The interview themes were coined out from the statements of the respondents. In this aspect, themes were outlined in headings and sub-headings in order to foster proper discussion and analysis. Therefore, the themes generated from the interview are as follows:

- Meaning of sex education based on Islamic perspective
- Proposed method of teaching sex education according to Islamic worldview
- Whose responsibility is it to teach sex education?
- Criteria for teaching Islamic sex education
- Avenues to develop sexual purity and fulfilling married life
- Islamic restriction on sex education

1. Meaning of sex education based on Islamic perspective

There are different meanings given by the respondent on sex education, but they are quite similar, these meaning are coined as sub-themes by the researcher based on the statement of the respondents. Under this heading the following sub-themes were generated:

- Sexual modesty training

¹³ Gorman & Clayton, (2005). *Qualitative research for the information professional A practical handbook* Facet Publishing, 7 Ridgmount Street London WC1E 7AE, 5.

¹⁴ Rice-Lively, M. L., (2004). *A Qualitative Research for Information Professional: A practical Hand book* by G. E. Gorman Book.

- Orientation for prevention before marriage and preparation for marriage
- Learning about limitations involved in gender relationship and marital orientation.

a) Sexual modesty training

According to one of the respondents, sex education means training about giving mutual regards for both opposite sexes, by avoiding anything that can cause illicit relationships between the opposite sexes, he asserts in his response 6 (P) thus:

“Sex education is about how we male and female have mutual respect for one another, avoid intercourse, know his limit, before the marriage”.

The statement made us know that sexual activities are a need for all human beings, but what Islam is saying is that, one should satisfy this need through lawful and appropriate means. This is why Imam Faisal states when explaining the meaning of sex education that, sex education means informing a young man and woman about how to satisfy sexual desires innate in them according to the laws established by Almighty Allah¹⁵. Even in the Quran Allah commanded Muslims to guard themselves from unnecessary interaction between opposite sexes in Quran 24 verse 30 and 31 that:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts and not to show off their adornment except that which is apparent.....”

The statements above, including the verses from the holy Quran, are pointing to the fact that sex is natural in human beings, but one should find an appropriate way of gratifying it. Having explained this, one shall move to the next definition given by the respondents about sex education.

b) Orientation for prevention before marriage and preparation for marriage

One of the respondents went a bit further in his explanation, by saying that sex education is not only prevention training but also training given in preparation for marriage, he stated in 31(P) that:

“Sex education in Islam is to learn how to relate between female and male before and after marriage.”

¹⁵ Faysal M. & Abdul Majeed S. (2012) *Sex Education from an Islamic Perspective*, <http://www.geocities.com/IslamAwareness/Sex/perspective.html> Retrieved November 8th 2012

In addition to this Sheikh Abdul Majeed asserts that: young people need to be educated regarding sexuality prior to their marriage such that they know what to expect and can consider their options for birth control prior to consummating the marriage¹⁶. Meanwhile, there is another meaning of sex education given by one of the respondents which shall be discussed below.

c) Learning about limitations involved in gender relationship and marital orientation

The Islamic worldview enables us to understand that the nature of male and female are not the same in terms of biological, physical and emotional disposition, hence we should not treat ourselves as the same thing in the aspect of these qualities. As a result, the respondent believes that sex education wishes to teach us how to identify the characteristics of both male and female. From these characteristics each sex will identify how far he/she can go with respect to gender relationships. This will bring about mutual regard and respect between the opposite sexes and prevent obscenity and sexual molestation. She explains in her statement 64(P) that:

“Sex education is the understanding of limitation or like socialization among man and woman.”

That is why Rasulullah (SAW) said, "Whenever a man is alone with a woman the Devil makes a third." (Al-Tirmidhi 3118,) this is talking about limitation, as knowing ones limitations will enable one to be conscious about it and not commit excesses. Therefore, the meaning of sex education according to the respondent must possess the following attributes: based on the Islamic worldview, education about sexual modesty, orientation for prevention, preparation for marriage life and limitations setting in gender relationships. From the above explanation it shows that there are differences between western conceptions and Islamic conceptions about sex education, hence there is a need to identify the appropriate method to be used in implementing sex education in an Islamic setting.

2. Proposed Method of Teaching Sex education

All the participants agree that sex education is essential to be implemented into the Muslim education stream. But the methodology to be employed in implementing it

¹⁶ Faysal M. & Abdul Majeed S. (2012) *Sex Education from an Islamic Perspective*, <http://www.geocities.com/IslamAwareness/Sex/perspective.html> Retrieved November 8th 2012

must be based on an Islamic worldview. From their statement, the following themes arise on the aspect of methodology:

- Gender separation
 - Exhortation before education
 - Limitation should be outlined according to Islamic worldview
- a) Gender separation

It is believed that the issue of sex education is very sensitive to both genders, most especially in an Islamic setting. If is not managed well it can promote what is purported to prevent. Therefore, it is suggested that both sexes should be separated during sex education sessions due to the fact that human's level of maturity are different, while some are outspoken, some are shy, especially when asking a very sensitive question in the presence of the opposite sex. Whereas education is designed to cater and be useful for all and sundry, even the nature of male is female is different, thus the topic of discussion for females might be different from males. Other matters they are supposed to know could be taught in biology class, but the issue of sex education is sensitive and should be cautiously handled. In explaining this, one of the respondents asserts 22 (P) thus:

“But for sexual education I think the teacher better have them separate between boys and girls”.

In Islam free mixing between opposite sexes is not allowed. This prohibition has no other reason than to prevent illicit interaction between the opposite sex, even among family members, the Prophet encouraged Muslim parents to separate their children's beds when they reach a certain age. He said:

"Order your children to observe Salat when they reach the age of seven and spank them for not observing it when they reach the age of ten, and arrange their beds (for sleeping) separately." (Abu Dawud)

Parents are advised to do this when their children reach the age of moral reasoning. Therefore, if one is advised to separate children of the same family for prevention, it is more than necessary to separate them during such sensitive discussions. In Islam the issue of sex education is treated with caution. It is not something to be taught like other subjects, the respondents also state how the class should be commenced.

- b) Exhortation before education

It is not proper to go directly to teach sex education, as it is important for the teacher to explain the Islamic implications for sexual purity and advantages in it. One of the interviewees explains 70(P) that:

“But we teach them what is sex education and why it is dangerous and what are those things that illicit sex can lead to and then what are the things that will happen if we engage in this act”.

Children should know their limitations concerning this issue, as they need to know why it is wrong to commit illegal sexual intercourse. In Islam, punishment cannot be charged on a man unless he/she knows and understands the implications of his action. That is why it is necessary for exhortation before education. It is also important to let the students be aware in the class that discussion is based on the Islamic worldview and some standards will be highlighted, which will be discussed below.

c) Limitations outlined according to Islamic worldview

The teacher is also encouraged to set some limitations for him/herself and the student, according to Islamic principles; this will prevent the discussion from deviating from the Islamic perspective. This was mentioned by one of the participant 66(P) that:

“This limitation exists because there is a danger where we go without limitations there are like visible danger out of that”

Sanjakdar (2005) suggested that the teacher; Islamic sex education should set the following limitations for him/her and the children as follows:

Sexual health instruction and materials must not offend the Islamic principle of decency and modesty

Islamic law (Sharia) must be adhered to when making decisions about sexual health education

Marriage and family life should be promoted in studies of sexual health.

When these limitations are set, it will serve as a guide for both teacher and students and prevent them from deviating from the Islamic principles and thereafter, achieve the goal of education. It is a known fact that sex education is important for Muslim adolescents, which must commence at a certain age. The question that arises is, who is in the best position to impart this education on Muslim adolescents? This shall be dealt with in the next paragraph.

3. Whose responsibility is it to teach sex education?

As it generally believed that sex education is a very sensitive issue, most especially to our Muslim adolescents. The question of who will teach it that can make the teaching effective and assure the targeted goal will be achieved is the issue of concern. It is agreed that only parents cannot undertake the responsibility due to the level of their knowledge and the time available at their disposal, neither can only teachers handle the task due to the fact that early and some important period of children's time is spent with their parents. Therefore, they come to an agreement, that both parents and teachers could do the work effectively.

Collective responsibility of both parents and teachers

One of the challenges faced by the implementation of sex education in some Muslim communities is the issue of some conservative Muslim parents that do not understand the essence of sex education in Islam. These parents need to be enlightened, due to the fact that we are now in a global village, and the children can learn this unmonitored which is detrimental to their sexual purity.

From this it is imperative, that some Muslim parents need enlightenment, so that they could have a good conception about the term sex education. Meanwhile, all the respondents agree that both parents and teachers need to collaborate in the implementation of sex education for Muslim adolescents. Based on this one of the participants' asserts that:

“I think both parents and teacher need to play their role because working parent is 24/7”

While commenting on the role of the parents Odimegwu et al assert that teenagers with whom parents have discussed sexuality issues are less likely to be sexually active, which further reduces their risks of unintended pregnancies¹⁷. More so, Adeokun et al state that, there is a need to assure parents and teachers as well as health workers that providing appropriate information to adolescents will not increase promiscuity but will actually promote responsible choices and sexual behavior¹⁸. All these are pointing to the fact that if both parents and teachers rise up to the challenges of giving sex education to their children, this will go a long way in assisting our

¹⁷ Clifford, O. O. (2002) *Emergency Obstetric Conditions, Health Seeking Behavior and Spousal Role in Southwest Nigeria: Mothers' Perspectives*. Takemi Fellow, Harvard School of Public Health Boston, MA 02115

¹⁸ Adeokun LA.; Ricketts O.L; Ajuwon A.J. and Ladipo OA, (2009) *Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge, Behaviour and Education Needs of In-School Adolescents in Northern Nigeria*. African Journal of Reproductive Health, Vol. 13, No. 3, Dec, 2009, pp. 37-49.

adolescents to develop proper sexual behavior and have a fulfilling marriage life. Moreover, teachers and parents are the major actors in educating their adolescent on sex education, but they are not supposed to disseminate it haphazardly. As a result, there are some principles and criteria to be followed before and when implementing it.

4. Principles for teaching Islamic sex education

As it has been said earlier that sex education is unique and sensitive in Islam and should be operated based on the Islamic worldview, according to what is gathered from the respondent, there are some points to be considered before and during implementation of this program. These are as follows:

- Proper orientation and enlightenment
 - Upholding religious teaching and ethics
 - Instruction should be given based on the age of the respondents
- a) Proper Orientation and enlightenment

When one is talking about orientation, it means that before the commencement of a sex education program, students should be given firsthand information, be encouraged towards it and made to have a positive disposition towards learning it, as well as to develop their interest towards it. Equally, parents should also be enlightened as to understand the essence of teaching sex education, which is aimed at developing their children's sexual purity. On this, one participant states P(12) that:

“all parent to improve on how they communicate this fundamental aspect of life to their children”.

Based on this, Shaid Athar encourages that parents should know that sex is not always a dirty word¹⁹. It is an important aspect of our life. God who cares for all the aspects of our life, and not just the way of worshipping Him, discusses reproduction, creation, family life, menstruation and even ejaculation in the Quran. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who was sent to us as an example, discussed many aspects of sexual life including sexual positions with his Companions. This kind of explanation should be given to parents before the commencement of a sex education program in order to carry them along and contribute their own input to the betterment of their children.

- b) Upholding religious teaching and ethics

¹⁹ Shahid A., (1996) *Sex Education: An Islamic Perspective*. Kazi Publication

The second principle as identified from the interview is that religious teaching and ethics must be maintained while implementing and dissemination the knowledge; no aspect of Islamic Sharia should be violated. On this aspect one of the respondents asserts 18(P) thus:

“If we stick to Islamic rules and regulation we will know what to do”

Equally, Sanjakdar asserts that: Islamic law (Sharia) must be adhered to when making decisions about sexual health education²⁰. One should not view sex education in the context of the western concept, for example teaching the ‘etiquettes of dating’ as it is currently practiced in much of the world²¹. This violates the strict moral code and Islamic principles of decency and chastity. Therefore, what determines how Muslims should implement sex education is the Islamic laws and principles as derived from the Quran and hadith.

c) The Instruction should be given based on the age of the participant

The more children grow, the more they develop in their thinking and attitudes to life. Telling little children some aspects of sex education might be a futile effort due to the fact that their brain is not ripe enough for such exercise. One of the respondents states on this aspect 35(P) thus:

“It better to explain to them based on their age”

Besides, what was mentioned above, it is discerned based on the hadith of the prophet that children should be separated based on gender when they reach the age of ten. Sheikh Abdul-Majeed asserts that concerning the age, such kind of sex education is to be given at the age of discretion when a child can distinguish between a male and female. Therefore, the age of students is one of the important factors to be considered in giving sex education according to Islam. This principle must be adhered to strictly, in order to have an effective and successful implementation of sex education within the Muslim community. Whereas, some avenues could also serve as good sources of sex education in Islam, these avenues will be discussed below.

5. Avenues to develop sexual purity and a fulfilling marital life

²⁰ Sanjakdar, F. (2005) *Teachers’ struggle for an Islamically appropriate sexual health education curriculum at their school*, The University of Melbourne 3010 Australia

²¹ Halim, A. I. and S. A. Guma'a, (1989). *Some aspects of the reproductive biology of Synodontis schall*(Bloch – Scheinder, 1801) from the White Nile near Khartoum. *Hydrobiologia*, 178: 243 – 251.

It has been mentioned that parents and teachers should be the basic sources of sex education, but there are other avenues which could be of immense help in developing the sexual purity of our Muslim adolescents, these avenues are as follows:

- Learning from Muslim religious scholars
- Learning from religious circles
- a) Learning from Muslim religious scholars

One of the best places to learn sex education is to learn it from righteous Muslim scholars, due to the fact that the companions both male and female learned some of these issues from the prophet. More so, prophetic hadith still exist till the present time, and contain all these issues, but they are in the custody of religious scholars who have better understanding about it and can give better explanations. When one of the respondents was commenting on this issue he asserts in 45(P) that:

“My Muslim cleric told me that before marriage you cannot do this and that, but after that marriage but can do something with your wife”

From the scholars one can have first hand information about this issue, that is why Allah mentioned in Quran 16 verse 43 thus:

“Ask those who know if you do not know”

Those who know in that contest are the religious scholars, as they will provide information that is not misleading and present clear understanding.

- b) Religious circles discussion

Peer influence is one of the major factors in the life of an adolescent, however peer group can either influence positively or negatively. In this context, there are some religious circles in the Muslim communities where groups of almost the same age come together to form a circle under the mentorship of a righteous elder. In this group they discuss a lot of beneficial issues, of which the issue of sexuality is part of. Meanwhile one of the respondents shed more light on it 84(P), thus:

“I think if adolescent want to learn from the Islamic circles it is somehow safe because you are not only exposed to it but also exposed to Islamic value”.

This gathering is a circle of knowledge comprised majorly of righteous Muslim youth; the discussion within the group is not the final. If they could not conclude a particular issue they will ask from their mentor or righteous scholars about it. That is why Allah exhorted the Muslim to always be among the righteous. These are the other avenues

that can be explored, however it should be noted there are some other avenues that are highly discouraged according to the respondents; these will be discussed below.

6. Islamic restriction on sex education

Some people claim that education is a process of acquisition of knowledge, therefore, wherever they find knowledge they will acquire it. It could be permissible and encouraged in the other fields of knowledge but in the aspect of sex education it is in line with others.

Despite the fact that we are in the era of globalization, when one can assess information at his/her fingertips by the clicking of a mouse, it is highly discouraged for young children or adolescents to learn sex education alone or from the internet. On this one of the respondents explains 49(P)

“But western books are dangerous for Muslim, equally, learning it from the internet is dangerous”

The children due to their level of thinking may see wrong information, and try to implement it. This is supported by the statement of Alex Zaharov (2012) who asserts that if kids themselves are saying that schools and parents are doing a good enough job, schools and parents need to find a way to do better, lest the unsupervised Internet teach our children the wrong lessons.

However, one is not saying that our kid should not surf the internet for information. What is being emphasized here is that they should not do that alone; it should be done under the supervision of elders. They will be able to monitor them and guide them whenever they are confused.

7. Findings

From the interview conducted, the analysis and discussion the study has come up with the following findings:

- The perception of Muslim scholars on sex education, is greatly focused on the inculcation of sexual purity attitudes, sexual modesty training, understanding limitations that exists between the opposite sexes and preparation for a fulfilling marital life.

- That it is normal to introduce and implement sex education into the mainstream education program in Muslim lands, but the methods, procedures for implementation and application should not in any way contradict Islamic principles.
- It is believed that sex education is a sensitive issue in Islam, thus its implementation and practices should be handled with care and caution lest it promotes what it is supposed to prevent, there by the aim of its execution is jeopardized.
- Early childhood religious training is a strong factor that assists the development of sexual purity among Muslim youths and adolescents.
- Vast majority of Muslim parents are lacking the correct understanding of the essence and importance of sex education in the life of their children.

D. Conclusion

Therefore, it is imperative for those who know to enlighten those who do not know, that sex education is not a new thing in Islam, as it is an integral part of the religion which is mentioned in the holy Quran and explained by the noble prophet in many situations in his life time. Parents should be aware of this and allow their children to receive this knowledge, as well as seeing it as their responsibility to educate their children about this matter. Therefore, this will go a long way in assisting young children and adolescents to develop sexual purity attitudes, prevent sexually transmitted diseases, sexual harassment and molestation and enable them to have a fulfilling marital life. Equally, Muslim countries and nations should also rise up to the challenge of incorporating sex education that is based on Islamic principles into the educational system of their countries. This will assist the youth and adolescents to develop a sexually modest life, prevent unwanted pregnancies that cause baby dumping, which becomes a burden to the government. Thereby the majority of the citizens will develop and grow to be goods citizen to their beloved countries.

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