

Assessing Student Awareness towards the Effects of Unintended Pregnancy: The case of Female students' at Mettu College of Teachers Education.

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Abstract

Many Researches have been conducted to investigate the attitude, knowledge and practice of students towards sexual issues in higher education of Ethiopia. However, neither of the research has been given attention to female students of Mettu College of teachers' education (MCTE). This study intends to investigate female students' awareness towards the effects of unintended pregnancy at the College under study. The study also attempts to identify some qualitative and quantitative forms obtained through official document analysis, questionnaire, focus group discussion and interviews with key informants who were purposively selected from students and other concerned bodies. Data analysis was made quantitatively and qualitatively. As the findings demonstrate, abortion was significantly prevailed among students of the college. The evidence obtained from Mettu Karl hospital abortion care and compressive room indicated 497 students of the college terminated pregnancy (abortion) in the year of 2013. All of the participants described that, there is no a designed program that creates awareness towards sexual issue in the college. Majority of the respondents perceived that unanticipated sexual intercourse and to gain academic or economic benefit might be the major factors exposing students of the college to unintended pregnancy. All of the key informants and FGD participants thought that "...Students may read or heard from Medias about the outcome of unintended pregnancy, but this is not adequate they should need more understanding concerning to sexual health issue, because they have knowledge of limited information, they may not be fully aware of the consequences of the problem...".

Thus, intervention strategies should be instituted to prevent the negative consequence of unsafe sex. Finally, the researcher has a strong belief that these findings could address the problem of the issue to the concerned bodies, and create awareness about unintended pregnancy.

Keywords: Unintended pregnancy, Awareness, Unsafe sex.

1. Introduction

The Ethiopian government provides special attention to female education to enable them to compete and actively participate in the political, economical, cultural, and social development of the country. In order to achieve this desired goal, a number of female students have been given the chance to be part of higher education. The strategy has also applied in college of teachers' education; female students account 52 % of the total population of college students. However, in terms of their academic performance they are less than male students (Wakgari and Teklu 2012).

Therefore, it is important to investigate things which hinder female success in their education achievement after they join higher institutions. To fully achieve the desired participation this study focuses on the negative effects of unintended pregnancy at MCTE.

Mostly, students attending their education at higher institutions are actively involved in searching and discovering, including sexual experimentation. For this reason, students often engage in unsafe sex, which places them at a higher risk for side effects such as STIs, (including HIV/AIDS,) as well as unwanted pregnancies. (Abler and Sedlacek 1989),

In addition, unwanted pregnancy is the highest cause for female students dropping out from school and poses serious health, social, and economic problems for students. Similarly, they reported that adolescent pregnancy is a major cause of interrupted and discontinue education.

Different factors affect the occurrence of unintended pregnancies: - poverty, ignorance of the parents on sex education, peer pressure in the school etc. According to (Meddinus & Johnson 2007), the causes of teenage pregnancy include the crave for money and materialism; inadequate or absence of sex education, influence of pornographic materials, ignorance among teenage girls on the use of contraceptives, and the general moral laxity in the country.

To combat the negative effect of unintended pregnancy, creating awareness of the problem is essential. This is due to the fact that the knowledge which they gain from friends, books, and elsewhere, is usually inadequate. Similarly (Vundule, et al 2001) stated that most teenagers do not have knowledge on the nature of sex and

reproduction, mainly due to the absence of experience or maturity. In fact, some of them may have access to contraceptives but have little information on how to use them correctly.

Apparently, at Mettu College of teachers' education the effect of unsafe sex was also prevailed. For instance, the evidence obtained from Mettu Karl hospital abortion care and compressive room shows that in the year of 2013, 497 college students had terminated a pregnancy (conduct abortions). It is the intention of this study to enhance students' awareness in order to eliminate the problem.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education contributes to social, economical and political development of countries by endowing individuals with the means to improve their health, skills, knowledge and capability for productive work. There is no doubt that women's involvement in development will multiply the social benefits. Nevertheless as it has been suggested by various researchers, there are many factors which hinder female students' educational achievements after they join higher

institutions. For the sake of the research objective attention is given to on the problems of unintended pregnancy and associated factors, which the investigator found made it difficult for female students' to continue their education. (Hofferth 2001.) Reveals that, unintended pregnancy exposed students to, psychological stress, low self esteem, drop-out,(withdraw), poor scoring, and inability to graduate which are, some of the academic consequences of the issue.

In addition, the problem leads to the termination of pregnancies which pose a multiplicity of problems on the academic achievements of female students. It can also result in the student experiencing post-abortion stress symptoms that force them to be absent from class or drop out from their education.

The data obtained from, Mettu Karl hospital abortion care and comprehensive room statics shows, a number of student from Mettu college of teacher education terminate pregnancy (had abortion) despite the availability of free contraceptive service.

The following research questions are raised as the fundamental basis for this study;-

- ✓ How do female students of the college perceive the causes and effects of unintended pregnancy?
- ✓ How to prevent the problem among female students of the college?

1.3 Objective of the study

General objective;-

- ✓ To examine the extent of females' awareness towards the effect of unintended pregnancy and to address the prevalence of the issue.

Specific Objective;-

- ✓ To investigate female students' awareness towards the effects of unintended pregnancy.
- ✓ To identify the major probable factors contributing to unintended pregnancy and related problems in the college.
- ✓ To identify available strategies to protect or tackle the problem in the college.

1.4 Significance of the study

For so long, the issue of gender disparity has been the major problems of Ethiopian education enrollment. Now days, the problems related with gender disparity in academic career in general and college enrollment in particular are mostly solved. Perhaps, female and male student enrollment is likely reaching at the same status.

Nevertheless, the academic performance of females has not developed with males. This is due to different reasons; specifically females are the victims devastating outcomes of sex. Indeed, unnecessary pregnancy is one these effects in general and in MCTE in particular.

Therefore, this research is conducted to investigate those problems related with female students' awareness about the impacts of unnecessary pregnancy. It also helps to assess some problems which hinder females' personal decision on sexual issues. Finally, it is also vital to

Come up with new facts that will create better understanding about the problem under study. Hence it is not only assisting to address the problem, but it will also help future researchers as a source of information.

1.5 Scope of the Study

As it has so far been stated, the research was desired to make extensive investigation on the awareness of female students' towards unnecessary pregnancy at Mettu College of teachers' education with a strong belief that it could create knowledge about the subject.

The study area was delimited to Mettu College of teachers' education of Oromia Regional State which is probably located 600 kilometer, south west of Addis Ababa. The study also emphasized on assessing the awareness of female students towards the effects of unintended pregnancy. It was conducted between Dec, 2013 to Jan, 2014.

Review of Related Literature

Today, unintended pregnancy is a major public health problem both in developed and developing countries of the world. One of the most traumatic and devastating effects of unwanted pregnancy is influence on girls' education performance and success. Drop-out rates, repeaters, poor scoring and inability to graduate are some of the academic consequences of unintended pregnancy (Lynette 2005).

Teen pregnancy may result due to different reasons such as customs, traditions, adolescent sexual behavior which may also be influenced by alcohol and drugs; lack of education and information about reproductive sexual health including lack of access to tools that prevent pregnancies; peer pressure to engage in sexual activity; incorrect use of contraception; sexual abuse that leads to rape; low self esteem; low educational ambitions and goals; and poverty, exposure to abuse, violence and family strife at home (<http://aje.oxfordjournals.org/content/154/3/212.full>).

In addition to the above statement many factors can lead to unintended pregnancy including: neglecting to use condoms with each act of intercourse; unplanned sex without the availability of contraceptives; incorrect use of the chosen method of contraception, not using contraceptives because of a lack of information on their availability and how to use them; not using an available contraceptive method because of some misconception (e.g. concerning its safety (Vundule, et al 2001)). In addition poverty and the need to survive sometimes force women into risky sexual behaviour, for example, prostitution and multiple partners. Furthermore, (Baiden and Awini 2002) revealed that unwanted pregnancy among the female adolescents in school constitute a growing public concern among many African Countries.

Many female students do not discuss the issue related with sexual intercourse with their partners due to different reasons. This leads females to rash into unprotected sex, in fact, most people are aware of the consequences of unprotected sex in one way or another. But, the culture of using a contraceptive is not deep rooted among the community of the college under investigation yet.

This might be probably due to the fact that, female students were not well informed about the serious effects of unprotected sex and only have knowledge of limited information. According to the Guttmacher Institute,(1999) about half of teens between the ages of 15 to 19 have had sex at least once in a year. It has been found that teens who are sexually active but do not use contraceptives have 90 percent chance of getting pregnant in one year.

A high incidence of unwanted pregnancy is indicative of unprotected sexual exposure as well as non-usage of contraceptives. The consequences of unprotected sex, such as unwanted pregnancy, sexual transmitted diseases and unsafe abortion can be prevented through access to contraceptive services. For example a study conducted amongst South African youths, appears to conclude that at least 50% of young people are sexually active and at the age of 16, and 50%–60% of the youth are sexually active and neither of them use condoms. (Anderson 2006). Here in Mettu College of teachers' education similar problem has been occurred in terms of youth awareness towards unprotected sex.

Female students have abortion for many reasons, fear of dropping out of their education, a wish to avoid bringing shame and not having the financial ability to support and grow their child (Baiden F, and Awini E 2002).

Generally, important tips to follow in order to help students from becoming pregnancy such as: counseling program should be established and extended to the grass root by professional health care sectors to protect unintended pregnancy, contraceptives should be made available to everybody especially the adolescents in order to prevent unsafe abortion and other effects of unprotected sex; introduction and teaching of sex education in higher education by the teachers, health educators and at homes by parents were essential to prevent the problem.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design, with the assumption that, it could help to get essential information about the problem under investigation. This includes data gathering techniques (questionnaires, interview, focus group discussion, and from official documents), Sampling procedures and the data analysis techniques describing the causes and effects of unintended pregnancy on female students' social, psychological and educational success. Examination (Evaluation) of information or data was also employed by cross checking (triangulation) to increasing the validity of the findings, through seeking evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing findings from these different sources.

3.1 Source of Data and Sampling Procedure

Third year female students, Principals of the college, official documents, obtain from Mettu Karl hospital and representative of student council, and representative of police office of the town were the sources of the study. Books, journals and unpublished documents related to the problem were reviewed to have background information for the problem.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

Female students of the college were the target population of the study. They selected purposefully as the basic source of the study, the reason is their long stay in the College might have made them clearly understand towards the problem under investigation.

Different sampling techniques were employed to select participants of the study. In this respect to select female students a systematic sampling method was used based on proportion to size of each department, then through simple random sampling from biology 29 ,physics 14, chemistry 9, mathematics 18, English 6, Afan Oromo 6, civics 7, history 6, , physical education 5 generally 100 students 'were selected. In this approach from the total population 32% of respondents were taken. Key informants were also selected purposively by thinking them as rich sources of information based on their closeness to student's service and observing their real life through various aspects

3.3. Data Gathering Techniques

For this particular study questionnaire, Interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and official document was used. Each techniques and procedure is discussed below.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

To capture data relevant to the studies objective and research question, open and closed ended questionnaires was conducted for female students. The questionnaires were first prepared in English and then translate to Afan Oromo with the assistance of language teacher. Respondents were requested to sit alone, to avoid influencing others. Two health workers (female nurses) assigned to distribute and collect the questionnaires from respondents this is to gain relevant response freely from students.

Data collectors were trained on the objective and significance of the study. Informed consent was obtained from every participant before the questionnaire was distributed. To check the validity and accuracy of the questionnaires pre-test was take place.

The data collectors inform participants it is voluntary, confidential and can withdraw at any time during the process if they felt uncomfortable. They were requested to be truthful and objective in their response.

3.3.2. Interview

Key informants for the interview were selected purposively. They include principals of the college, representative of student council, and representative of police office of the Mettu town were interviewed. The interview was conducted both in English and Afan Oromo as it is suitability to the study population. It was conducted in the form of friendly dialogue. This friendly dialogue (conversation) enabled the informants felt free, relaxed and confident.

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was used to obtain information from female students and help to suggest relevant supplementary opinions to the issue. Two female students from each department were selected based on their willingness. Six focused groups each consists five individuals. Generally 30 female students participated in the discussion. The researcher led the discussion and strived to investigate the views and ideas of each representative. The discussion covered hypothetical and real-life situations which highlighted students' inclination to put themselves at risk of unwanted pregnancies and hence, the subsequent need to suggest preventive measures to avoid the problem.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

Data obtained through interview and focus group discussions were analyzed qualitatively. It used to support the findings obtained through a questionnaire. Data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed by using tables with percentages. The percentage is dominantly used to indicate the magnitude of respondents' opinion and assumption against each statement.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

In this chapter the result of the study are presented. The data collected from female students, key informants, and focus group discussions were analyzed and interpreted.

4.1 Characteristic of Respondents

One hundred female students were randomly selected out of 315. A questionnaire was distributed to 100 respondents out of which 88 or (88%) were completed and returned effectively. Furthermore datas obtained from key informants and FGD were also presented under this chapter.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristic of Respondents (Female students).

The above table reveals that, the majority of the respondents were in the age group from 18-20 (45.5%) and 6.8% of them 23 years and above. Nearly all of the respondents (97.7%) were unmarried. More than half (65.9%) of them had already begun having sexual intercourse. The median age at first sexual intercourse was 18.8 years. From sexual active students 42 (47.8%) of them had begun sexual intercourse after they join the college. From this it can be concluded majority of the teenagers were sexually active.

The findings of the qualitative study also supported the quantitative one. FGD participants depict similar ideas; they say that numbers of sexual partners among the students become increased from time to time. Concerning to

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Categories		
Less than 18	29	32.9
18-20	40	45.5
20-22	13	14.8
Above 23	6	6.8
Marital Status		
Married	2	2.3
Unmarried	86	97.7
Sexual Status		
Sexual active	58	65.9
Sexual inactive	30	34.1

the reasons to sexual encouragements, there are different opinions. Majority of the respondents says, to gain academic or economic benefit, due to this they are living with male students as husband and wife. Particularly to share house rents and other expenses together to survive. Whereas, others responded that few students were considering as having a sex partners as a sign of modernity and fashionable due to this number of sex partners were increased in the college campus.

Table 2 Program of Sex education at MCTE.

	Response	Freq	Percentage (%)
To what extent the college offers sex education	High	----	----
	Medium	----	----
	low	14	15.9
	Not at all	74	84.1

The above table reveals that 74 (84.1%) of the respondents reported the college doesn't offer sex education. While 14 (15.9%) of them responded occasionally the college provides sex education for students of the college. All of the FGD participants agreed that special attention was not given for sex education. A 23 years old female student describes that " ... I stay in this campus almost for three years. Throughout this the issue of sexuality was not discussed freely in the college, it is ignored while many problems exist among female students. For instance,

prevalence of unintended pregnancy, abortion, even I heard informally from the society when female students of the college get a birth and left their babies on the street or at hidden areas.

Furthermore, she explained educational institutions were responsible to keep students healthy”. Since majority of them were teenagers and `were not matured enough. Generally, they says there is no any designed programs that teach students concerning to sex education at the campus even there is no a permanent counseling program at the college structure. Whereas the principals of the college states the college provides sex education through a gender office of the college, when different discussions held with female student.

Respondents were asked to list down the negative consequences of unintended pregnancy in general that they know well. Then both sexual active and inactive respondents point out the following negative outcomes of the problem.

- ✓ Exposed to unwanted expenses to undergo abortion.
- ✓ Getting birth and exposed to economical dependence (crisis) to grow up infants.
- ✓ Harm social value.
- ✓ Stress and pain were mostly listed by students.

This indicates that students of the college do not fully aware the effects of the problem. Because they are not mention the negative effects of the problem on their academic achievement and on their psychological impacts. All of the key informants and FGD participants thought that “Students may read or heard from Medias about the outcome of unintended pregnancy, but this is not adequate they should need more understanding concerning to sexual health issue. Because they have knowledge of limited information, they may not be fully aware of the consequences of the problem”.

In addition, a representative of students’ council states that “.....Students of the college do not aware very well the effects of unintended pregnancy. Because, I know very well, students withdraw from their education due to the problem of unwanted pregnancy. Even few of them getting birth and they put themselves in financial crisis to grow up their babies and for other expenses...” Concerning to the effects of unanticipated pregnancy, Mettu town police office representative states that, “...sometimes we informed by the society when female students of the college left their babies after getting birth at hidden areas like at toilet rooms...”.

Table 4 Major causes might expose College students to unintended pregnancy. (Female Students’ perception).

Probable Causes	Major causes		Minor causes		Never be a cause		Remark
	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	
Not using contraceptive methods	50	56.8	20	22.7	18	20.5	
cutting the use of contraceptive methods	64	72.7	20	22.7	4	4.6	
Unanticipated sexual intercourse	71	80.7	17	19.3	---	---	
Fearing the negative effect of contraceptive methods	32	36.4	24	27.3	32	36.3	
Lack of knowledge about unsafe sex	33	37.5	45	51.1	10	11.4	
To gain academic or economic benefit	69	78.4	18	20.5	1	1.1	
Pressure from friends and pornography films	58	65.9	18	20.5	12	13.6	
Raping	-	-	2	2.3	86	97.7	
Alcohol, Chat and other stimulants	32	36.4	39	44.3	17	19.3	

The above table reveals that the majority of the respondents admitted the major causes may expose to unanticipated pregnancy were:

- ✓ **Unanticipated sexual intercourse**
- ✓ **To gain academic or economic benefit.**
- ✓ **Cutting the use of contraceptive methods.**
- ✓ **Peer pressure.**

In addition, some of the respondents admitted that the following factors have had minor contributions to the problem under investigation.

- ✓ Lack of knowledge about unsafe sex.
- ✓ Fearing the negative effect of contraceptive methods. Majority of sexually active students reported that unplanned sexual intercourse and not using contraceptive methods were the major causes exposed students to unintended pregnancy.

Similarly, majority of FGD participants' perceived the major causes might be exposed to unintended pregnancy were failure of contraceptive methods (inappropriate utilization) and not using contraceptive methods may be the major factors. Few of them reported life outside the dorm exposed students for numerous challenges. For instance scarcity of money to survive increased the chance to meet with many young individuals and the institution can't closely follow up were some of its effects.

Table 5. Rate of abortion. Source Mettu Karl hospital abortion care and comprehensive room 2013.

Name of the institution	Frequency	Percentage
Mettu University	26	2.7
Mettu college of teachers education	497	51.7
High schools	126	13.1
Primary schools	312	32.5
Total	961	100

The above table indicates the rate of abortion conducted among four educational institutions. Accordingly the highest rate is reported among the college students which are 51.7%, followed by those primary schools which are a 32.5%. The lowest rate of abortion is reported at Mettu University which is 2.7%. From this it can be concluded that the problem is more series among college students which is cover half of the total rate of the problem.

5.1 Conclusion

The research has tried to assess the negative effect of unintended pregnancy and factors contributing to the problem.

Accordingly, the data indicated that 65.9% of college students were sexually active at the time of the study. This finding is greater than a study conducted amongst undergraduate students in Nigeria (54%), but lower than the findings in other African countries such as Madagascar (80%).The Majority of the respondents agreed that number of sexual partner among college students was increased from time to time. Concerning to the reasons to sexual encouragements the key informants and FGD participants thought different reasons, the major is, academic and economic dependence and considering having a sexual partner as a sign of modernity were the main reasons.

74 (84.1%) of female students reported that the college doesn't offer sex education. All of the FGD participants agreed that special attention was not given for sex education; they state there is no any designed programs that teach students concerning to sex education at the campus even there is no a permanent counseling program at the college, generally the issue of sexuality was not discussed in the college; it is ignored while many problems exist among female students

From this it can be concluded that the issue of sexuality was not discussed at the college campus. This might be a reason for students to victimize by unsafe sex, such as exposing to abortion. Both research and everyday

experience shows that every young person needs at least one strong, authoritative, and dependable body for his or her life. For most young people, this will be parents, but some parents have great difficulty communicating with their own children, not just about sex, but about many issues. School personnel, such as teachers, guidance counselors, gender office, and other support staff, should play a significant role in helping to fill this gap, guiding young people and helping them to make responsible decisions about their futures life, particularly towards sexuality issues.

Concerning to students' knowledge that they know well towards the negative outcomes of unintended pregnancy all most all of the respondents point out the following points:-

- ✓ Exposed to unwanted expenses to undergo abortion.
- ✓ Getting birth and exposed to economical dependence (crisis) to grow up infants.
- ✓ Harm social value.
- ✓ Stress and pain were mostly listed by students.

This might be indicates that students of the college do not fully aware the effects of the problem. Because they are not mention the negative effect of the problem in all aspects of their life. For example on their education and on their psychological impacts were not considered by the students.

All of the key informants and FGD participants thought that "Students may read or heard from Medias about the outcome of unintended pregnancy, but this is not adequate they should need more understanding concerning to sexual health issue. Because they have knowledge of limited information, they may not be fully aware of the consequences of the problem". This indicated that it is important to inform them to understand more the effects of unsafe in order to prevent themselves from its impact and attend their education effectively.

In addition, concerning to the effects of unintended pregnancy, abortion was significantly prevailed among students of the college. The data obtained from Mettu Karl hospital abortion care and compressive room indicated that 497 students had abortion in the year of 2013. Whereas at Mettu University the rate of abortion is very low, only 26 students had abortion in the same year. From this it can be concluded that the rate of the problem was more series among college students. This result also shows how students of the college were victims of unsafe sex.

Mainly the problems related with abortion have a series impact on education of female students. This is supported by (Hofferth, 2001.) he reveals that termination of pregnancy poses a multiplicity of problems on the academic achievements of female students. It can also result in the student experiencing post-abortion stress symptoms that force them to be absent from class or drop out from their education. Consequently, to achieve quality of education it is essential to have health students those effectively take part in teaching and learning process.

The majority of female student perceived the major causes may expose to unanticipated pregnancy. These are: Unanticipated sexual intercourse and to gain academic or economic benefit.

Similarly, majority of FGD participants' perceived the major causes might be exposed to unintended pregnancy .Accordingly, involving in sexual intercourse without care and failure of contraceptive methods (inappropriate utilization) were the major cause leads to the problem. Few of them responded life outside the dorm itself exposed students for numerous challenges. For instance scarcity of money to survive, the chance to meet with many young individuals and it is impossible for institution to closely follow up were some of its effects.

Generally, based on the findings, it was recommended that:-

- ✓ Clearly, programs must be put in place to help students to prevent the effects of unsafe in general. The initial focus should be on counseling and education regarding relationships, sex and reproductive health decisions, including abstinence as an important option. It is important to include and inform male students in the program.
- ✓ Consolidating and instituting official counseling office and different clubs in the college that gives service in the area of sexuality and its effect. For instance, HIV/AIDS clubs.
- ✓ The gender office of the college should arrange a permanent meeting with female students by inviting model woman's to share ideas and discuss on different issues.
- ✓ The college staff should educate advice and discuss openly with their students on sexuality issues.
- ✓ For wellbeing and security of students the college should be institute student clinic and the dormitory in the college campus.
- ✓ Further research on the issue is needed in-depth in order to prevent the problem effectively.

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