



## ABSTRACT

This study highlights the challenge of sex education in family settings among the Umuenyere Alayi people of Eastern Nigeria within the purview of John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* (FC), 37. The study observes that in African cultures, issues relating to sex is seldom talked about among family members which makes the African child vulnerable to all sort of sex education. Two methodologies are employed in this study; first, a critical analysis of the notion of sex education and second, is the use of orature, in form of formal and informal interviews in order to elicit information

# THE RELEVANCE OF SEX EDUCATION IN JOHN PAUL II'S FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO 37: A PARADIGM FOR UMUENYERE ALAYI CULTURE

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## Introduction

Fulton J. Sheen once remarked that the day we stop learning, we start dying. Hence, learning is an on-going process in life. We learn everywhere and every time at everywhere, however this learning process ought to begin from the family. No wonder, it is often said that the family is the first school where a child should learn everything basic to his/her life. This means that the family cannot fail in this fundamental role in the life of a child. Should they fail in this their basic role as first educators, a vacuum would be created in the life of the child, that may be filled with all sort of education, and if care is not taken, ill-education. When parents fail to build this basic foundation in the life of a child as it relates to teaching them basic values, then, the child will have a faulty or no foundation at all, foundation once destroyed, what can the righteous do (cf. Ps. 11:3).

While parents have the task to teach their children generally, this study, highlights an aspect of this education that is often neglected especially within the African cultural context, that is, sex education. This study, thus will enumerate the abandonment of sex education in family among the Umuenyere Alayi people of Igbo extraction. Among the Umuenyere Alayi people, it is *aru* (abomination) for a child to dare mention the penis, or vagina. Parents within this culture talks to their children/wards about religion, culture, arts, career, profession, etc., but little or nothing on human sexuality, sex and other sexually related issues. Few who does, will only emphasize to the girl-child the dignity of remaining a virgin until marriage and the danger of pregnancy outside marriage; how this can be achieved or avoided is rarely spoken about because it is uncultural and to do so would mean to be corrupting the child. This study is therefore, an



from Umuenyere Alayi's natives regarding sex education in the culture. Research findings indicate that it is uncommon (uncultural) to give sex education to a child among the Umuenyere people. By this study, it is envisioned that the ignorance of the benefits of sex education in family among the people will be enlightened.

**Keywords:** Sex Education, Family, Culture, Human Sexuality and Morality.

attempt to critically interrogate this culture of 'no sex education' among the Umuenyere Alayi people in the light of John Paul II's assertion that the family remains the sole place for sex education to take place, that parents remain the first sex educator of a child.

### **Towards an Understanding of Human Sexuality**

The concept human sexuality is fast losing its meaning. In day-to-day discussion, people often reduce the meaning of human sexuality to sex or genitality. This understanding limits and in fact, says just an aspect of what human sexuality entails. Pontifical Council for Family in *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* gives a vivid meaning of sexuality as "a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feelings, of expressing and of knowing human love"<sup>1</sup>. In line with this view, Reginald Nwamadi avows that "Human sexuality is the manner in which human beings in their individuality experience and express their incompleteness as well as their relatedness to each other as male or female"<sup>2</sup>. Human Sexuality is all encompassing: it embraces the whole man and woman. It permeates the whole person, determines one's actions, the way one thinks, behaves and feels. Human sexuality is a holistic or comprehensive gift.<sup>3</sup> From this view, one realizes that the issue of sexuality is not a mundane discussion, rather a significant issue to assist one to live a better life because it has to do with the entire being of a person. And how we relate with one another: "Sexuality is the mode or manner by which humans experience and express both the incompleteness of their individualities as well as their relatedness to each other as male and female..."<sup>4</sup>

Concerning the origin of human sexuality, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria in 'Called to Love' holds that "sexuality is God's sacred gift of energy to us (humans). It is by means of human sexuality that one goes out in relationship to God and to one another"<sup>5</sup>. It further states that sexuality is God's created energy in mankind, which impels one to action, it is the root of our humanity. Therefore, sexuality is the root of love, joy, friendship, desire, anger, sadness and hate. Thus, human sexuality is the cradle of the full range of (our) human emotions and feelings.<sup>6</sup> It can

<sup>1</sup> Pontifical Council for Family (2009 Reprint). *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Reginald C. Nwamadi, *Sexuality and Marriage, Sexuality and Marriage*. Nekede: CLACOM p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Reginald C. Nwamadi, *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Faith Human Sexuality," n. 1 in Vatican Council II: More Post-Conciliar Documents, Mumbai: ST PAULS, 2014, p.530.

<sup>5</sup> Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (2012). *Called to Love: Ethical Standards for Clergy and Seminarians in Nigeria*. Abuja: Digital Frontiers Solution Ltd., p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 1.



rightly be said that human sexuality makes man human. Nwamadi opines that human sexuality is a twine gift that must be appreciated and respected.<sup>7</sup>

Kelvin O'Neil and Peter Black contend that it is because our sexuality touches all the vital areas of our lives that it is so powerful and precious a gift from God the creator. Human sexuality is part of human identity, and understanding it will help in living a better and fulfilled Christian life.<sup>8</sup> It is from human sexuality that a better understanding of sex education emerged since sex is an aspect of human sexuality. Hence, this work turns to elucidate on the meaning of sex education.

### **True Meaning of Sex Education**

Before delving into the meaning of sex education, proper knowledge of education is necessary. On this, Paulinus Ezeokafor explains that in the broad sense, education embrace all those experiences of the individual, through which knowledge is acquired, the intellect enlightened, or the will strengthened; this explanation covers the whole knowledge of informal education, the type inculcated in African families.<sup>9</sup>

Sex simply refers to a person's biological status as male or female, it is different from gender in that gender to the social construct wherein certain elements are assigned to either males or females. It can be understood as the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationships and intimacy. It aims at developing young people's skills in a such a way they can make informed choices about their behaviour and at the same time confident and competent about making moves on these choices.<sup>10</sup> Sex education otherwise known as sexuality education in Muhammed Bello's view is a positive and wholesome attitude towards sex (2) He further presents the view of Turner to have held that sex education is an education for hygienic living with matters relating to sex. He contends that, it is the preparation for family living for the young one; and affirms that, it is the responsibility of parents to answer children's questions about sex. <sup>11</sup> This explains the vital role of families to help their children to understand themselves, as well as their body changes to avoid ugly mistakes due to parent's failures. Sex education is to help the young ones to know about their bodies, and to live their moral life well as they relate to others.

Furthermore, Ohaka avers that sex education entails learning about the anatomy, physiology and bio-chemistry of the sexual response system which determines identity, orientations, thoughts and feelings as influenced by values, beliefs, ethics and moral concerns. He also holds that it is the art of learning how to conform to a certain art of living by being able to reason, examine and monitor oneself in clearly defined terms.<sup>12</sup> From all these varied views on sex education and its importance in the life of the young ones, it becomes clear that every child has a right to sex education; it must not be viewed from the angle of a privilege. It hence, behooves on parents to make sure they

<sup>7</sup> Reginald C. Nwamadi, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Kelvin J. Oneil and Peter Black (2006). *The Pastoral Care of Marriage and Family Life in Nigeria*. Ibadan: St. Pauls, p. 222.

<sup>9</sup> Paulinus Ezeokafor (2009). "Parents as the First and Chief Educators of their Children" in *Church and Family in Africa*, John Ekei, John Anosike & Joseph Nwanna eds. Awka: AFab Educational Books, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ijezie, Ignatius Chika (2012). *Bio-Medical Ethics: Foundation and Contemporary Issues*. Aba: Rex Printing Press, p. 275.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammed Bello, *Family and Sex Education* p. 4.  
[https://www.academic.edu/27411542/relevance\\_of\\_sex\\_education\\_toward\\_family\\_and\\_societal\\_Development](https://www.academic.edu/27411542/relevance_of_sex_education_toward_family_and_societal_Development),

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Christopher Nyeche Ohaka, "Girl-child Sex Education: The Colossal Onus of the Family" in [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344726229\\_The\\_Recipe\\_for\\_Girlchild\\_Sex\\_Education\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Abuse/citation/downloadp](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344726229_The_Recipe_for_Girlchild_Sex_Education_and_Sexual_Abuse/citation/downloadp). Accessed: 15/05/2022



soundly educate their children in matters relating to their sex identity and health. Good sex education enables young people to understand how to manage their sexuality and provides them with the needed information on the purpose of sex, which is unitive and procreative within the marital setting and chastity in whatever state of life.

It is good to note that, many African cultures are missing out in this aspect of education as any discussion on 'sex' is seen as a taboo. These societies where this culture of not educating children in matters of sex under the pretext of it will corrupt the child, we notice an exponentially growth in sexual immoralities. Therefore, a throbbing heart will question: what good has not talking about it does for the society? and how long do such societies employ the Ostrich style?<sup>13</sup>

From the foregoing, the role of parents as first sex educators becomes clearly indispensable. They have it as a matter of duty to explain to their children/wards the things they need to know about their bodies as sexual beings. From their early childhood, parents have the obligation to educate their children in true chastity as treasured by the Abrahamic religions as well as typical African traditional cultures. This education in chastity must strive to achieve these three objectives:

- a. To maintain in family a positive atmosphere of love, virtue and respect for the gifts of God, in particular, the gift of life
- b. To help children to understand the value of sexuality and chastity in stages, sustaining their growth through enlightening word, example and prayers
- c. To help them understand and discover their own vocation to marriage or to consecrated virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven in harmony with and respecting their attitude and inclination and the gifts of the Spirit.

### **The Concept of Family**

The concept 'family' though popular and used almost everywhere means different things to different person and also have different contextual meaning; for instance, we talk about family as it relates to a national (national familyhood), a people (example, Igbo family), religion (Christian family), and then the most common of it, as it relates to bloodline (extended or nuclear family). Our discussion here will be within the context of the last.

Family as it relates to bloodline is both a divine and natural institution. The divine origin is obvious as God relates us his people in family terms. He is the Father of Israel, thus, he will protect, provide and guide them (cf. Is. 64:8; Ps. 3:3; 18:2; 103:13; Matt. 7:11), like a mother does not forget her suckling child, he will not forget them (cf. Is. 49:15-17). Jesus Christ his Son, God made man is the bridegroom of we the Church (cf. Jn. 20:17; Eph.3:14; 5: 24ff), we are adopted children of God (cf. Rom. 8:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:2). Thus, it was apropos for Frederick K. C. Price to insist that "the whole plan of God for mankind is centered around the family structure; remove it, and you remove the basic ingredient of the purpose of God for establishing the human race".<sup>14</sup>

The Greek philosopher Aristotle, for instance, held that the family is one institution where every human being is born, nurtured, gets his/her identity, name and above all attains intellectual development. For him, the family is the elementary school of virtue where children learn lessons

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<sup>13</sup> It is said of the Ostrich that whenever danger is coming to them, they hide their heads in the sand as though the danger does not exist. Whereas, sometimes, this danger comes to harm or kill them.

<sup>14</sup> Frederick K. C. Price (1996). *The Christian Family: Practical Insight for Family Living*. California: Faith One Publishing, p. 195.



of quality such as cooperation, love, tolerance and sacrifice. He further states that, it is the collection of families that makes a village and villages come together to form the State. He regards the family as the primitive community that exists for the sake of life.<sup>15</sup> And Fagothey opines that, the only group of human beings that has the right to be called a society is the family.<sup>16</sup>

Making allusion to the Vatican II Council, Ekennia underscores that the family is “the first and vital cell of society, which is characterized by experience of communion and sharing”.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, John Paul II in Letter to Families, no. 11 regarded the family as that community of person oriented to the full development of personhood in each member, through love. It is a place where individual can exist for himself/herself through the sincere gift of self. Family remains a social institution that can never be replaced. It is the “sanctuary of life”.<sup>18</sup> This view expresses the importance of family in human life, growth and development.

About the mission of the family, Anthony Gbuji explains that the family has a delicate and fundamental mission in the society since it has the task of imparting the very first education to children, giving form to their personalities, shaping their consciences and imparting wholesome life values to them.<sup>19</sup>

God establishes marriage and through marriage comes family. In a family, one sees the husband, wife and children as a nuclear family. However, in most African cultures especially among the Igbo people in Nigeria, the concept of family goes beyond the nuclear family understanding of the Western world. The traditional Igbo family comprises a progenitor grandfather with all the nuclear families of his children, and they all live in one big compound called *Ezi*<sup>20</sup> in my own village – *Amaokwenta Umuenyere Alayi*, people were known by their *Ezi*; as my great-grandfather Eze Okorie (A warrant chief) was named after our own *Ezi* (*Ezi ndi Okorie*).

This pattern of family setting helps in child upbringing; as Igbo people have an adage that ‘*ofu onye ana-ghi azu nwa*’ – a child is not trained by one person. It means that this duty of family to train their children in proper way belongs to all in that family (nuclear and extended). It therefore calls the attention of parents and all adults in any family setting to be clear of their role or duties in educating their children holistically which includes sex education and all it involves. In line with this: “the family is the bedrock of authentic formation for chaste celibate living. Education in Sexuality and formation for chastity constitute one of the major areas in the training and upbringing of children. It is in the family that each child discovers the meaning of human love. It further states that the family is the primary cooperator and most natural setting for formation in celibate living”.<sup>21</sup>

### **Umuenyere Alayi: People, History, and Culture**

Umuenyere Alayi is a community in Alayi town (urban area) under Bende Local Government Area, and it belong to Abia North Senatorial district in Abia state, Nigeria. Umueyere Alayi people belongs to the Igbo tribe; and they speak Igbo as a language, though they have their own native dialect

<sup>15</sup>Frederick Copleston (1993). *A History of Philosophy. Volume 1: Greece and Rome – From the Pre-Socratics to Plotinus*. New York: Image Books, p. 351.

<sup>16</sup> Austin Fagothey (2000). *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice*. North Carolina: TAN Books, p. 358.

<sup>17</sup> Justin Ekennia (2009). “The Family Perspective of the Church” in *Family in Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> Justine Ekennia, *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Anthony Gbuji (2006). *The Pastoral Care of Marriage and Family Life in Nigeria*. Ibadan: St. Pauls, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Justin Ekennia, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> CBCN, *Call to Love*, *op. cit.* p. 11.



called *Alayi*. For instance, in Igbo, 'good morning' is '*ututu Oma*', while an average Umuenyere Alayi person will say '*I bola chi? / I bozikwaru?*'; to mean the same thing. Another example that shows slight dissimilarities among the *Alayi* dialect and the Igbo language is that in *Alayi* 'weldone', is '*Jokwa woo* or *Saa-anyaai* or *zoobuu*' while in general Igbo, one can say '*Jisie ike*'. Umuenyere Alayi people are mostly farmers, their life style depends solely on farming, though, there may be other hand work and means of living; but farming supersedes.

Umuenyere Alayi believe in familyhood and marriage. They have families (nuclear families and extended) that makes a compound (called *Ezi*) which they are known for. This *Ezi* or compound which is always named after the great grandfather is seen as a family, bigger family and this forbids them from inter-marrying themselves. This reflect in the brief history of Onyirimba (Umuenyere) kingdom, where it was traced how the people of Umuenyere came to settle in *Alayi*. Their father was Onyirimba who came with his family and settled in this part of *Alayi* and multiplied and become a big community with numerous villages. Umuenyere Alayi people are Christians and traditional worshippers. They are peace loving people as their forefather "Onyirimba" was known as peaceful man.<sup>22</sup>

#### **Abhorrence of Sex Education among Umuenyere Alayi People**

The concept of sex education or the discussion of sexuality or the mention of sexual parts of human body especially by children is seen as a taboo or abomination (*aru*) among the people of Umuenyere Alayi both at the nuclear and extended family levels.<sup>23</sup>. For an average Umuenyere Alayi parent, a child has no right to discuss his\her sexual life\part – sex education; if such a child does that, he\she will receive a scolding if not a good beating of his\her life. A good example was when I was 10 years old; some families brought a case of sexual immorality among teenagers to my father to settle. At the process of explaining what happened, the boy said he touched the private part of the girl (*ike*); my late father raised his voice and asked the boy to keep quiet and not to mention that part again. This is a typical Umuenyere Alayi parent. In an interview with Elder S. E James, he corroborated that sex education is not accepted among the Umuenyere Alayi family systems.

No typical Umuenyere Alayi child dares mention of '*ikpu*' (vagina) or '*utu*' (penis), '*ahra*' (breast) or even '*otula* or *ike*' (buttock); that child will be in serious trouble. Even, his fellow children will lead the reporting and such a child will be tagged as rotten\lost child (*Onye furu efu* | *onye mebi* | *lara niyi*). Thus, according to the formal and informal interview and as an indigene who grew up in this culture, it can be said that there is no teaching of sex education among Umuenyere Alayi family setting, if there is, probably, those living outside the community\town, it may be 5\10 rate. This calls for urgent enlightenment on the people to include the idea of sex education as part of family training to reduce child sex abuse.

#### **Effects of Lack of or Poor Concept of Sex Education among Umuenyere Alayi Family System**

Cor Iesu holds that every human at a particular stage undergoes a process of initiation into the guiding norms and skills for livelihood. This process designed and implemented by more mature or

<sup>22</sup> Ezinna O. E. Uzor (2021). *History of Onyirimba Kingdom*. Makurdi: Seron Press, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> S. E. James (15<sup>th</sup> May, 2022). *Oral Interview*.



adult members of family/society to effect the desirable changes in the younger ones can be known as education<sup>24</sup>, if this is not done, it would not be without its negative effect. This is so true about the topic at hand in relation to the people under study.

Poor attitude of most parents in Umueyere Alayi towards the discussion of sex education among the children has led growing presence of sexual immorality such as teen pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases among child, sexual abuses, abortion, promiscuity, child prostitution among others. This supports Izugbara Chimaraoke's opinion that poor sexuality knowledge among the young is the major reason for increase in triple tragedy of HIV/AIDS, unwanted teenage pregnancy and unsafe induced abortion.<sup>25</sup>

Evidently the failure of most parents in Umuenyere Alayi to fulfill their parental roles properly in terms of helping their children to understand their body as sexual beings has forced the children to learn this necessary knowledge from the wrong people and places and sources. For instance, when a girl child notices some changes in her body but could not really discuss it with her parents especially the mother, the tendency of someone who will in the process of teaching or listening to her take advantage of her may come to play, and in fact, it comes to play among the Alayi people. Children need to be guided in all areas of life that is why they are children and depend on their parents to acquire the necessary knowledge in life. For this reason, the parents among the Umuenyere Alayi people ought to harken to the view of Izugbara as he asserts that "To facilitate young people's access to accurate sexuality knowledge (sex education), it has been suggested that parents in Africa (Umuenyere Alayi) need to break the cultural silence surrounding sexual matters in the home and assume the responsibility of talking to their children about sexuality (sex education)".<sup>26</sup>

### **Familiaris Consortio 37: Textual Exegesis**

Scriptures is full of instances where God desire that children be educated in all aspects of their lives that will lead them to holiness. An example is in the book of Deuteronomy 11:18-21, the Lord instructed his people to teach His commandments to their children. Also, in the book Proverbs, we read: "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray" (22:6). These passages of Old Testament (OT) scripture remind the parents of their responsibility to train their children properly and in the ways of the Lord. To leave out this aspect of educating the child is to go against God's divine injunction. Furthermore, in the New Testament (NT), St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians 6:4, parents were reminded to discipline their children properly without provoking them to anger. It states: "And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord".

One notices the same trend among the Church Father; St. John Chrysostom who urges parents to carry out their duty of training and educating their children in all areas, also in virtue and piety. He sees this act as a sacred duty and holds that those who transgress or neglect this sacred duty are branded children's murderers or killers. He states: "By the duty of raising them, I mean not only

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Cor Jesu Maria Ijeoma Eke (2014). "Healthy and Balanced Ecosystem: Implications for Improving Higher Education in Nigeria" [622-80] in *African Journal of Higher Education Studies and Development [AJHESD]*, vol. 2:1, pp. 62-3.

<sup>25</sup> Chimaraoke, O. Izugbara (2008). "Home-Based Sexuality Education: Nigerian Parents Discussing Sex with their Children" [575-600] in *Youth & Society*, vol. 39: p. 575.

<sup>26</sup> Chimaraoke O. Izugbara, *ibid.*, p. 576.



allowing them to die of hunger as people often limit their obligation towards their children to doing. For this ... I am speaking of the concern for educating children's heart in virtues and piety – a sacred duty which cannot be transgressed without thereby becoming guilty of the children's murder, in a certain sense"<sup>27</sup>. In addition, St. John Chrysostom on his view on sex education of children, (youth) expresses the need to tame them down at the early stage of their lives. They are to be guided in all they do. He notes that chastity must be preserved and children must be taken care of so that the evil one may not steal them away. He suggests the need to pay closer attention to what they do so that, they (children) can walk in the right path.<sup>28</sup>

The issue of parents educating their children adequately also becomes the concern of the Church's Magisterium. Vatican II teaches in *'Gravissimum Educationis'* (GE) that children should be given adequate education proper to them in their development. It states that "As they grow older (adolescent) they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex (GE,1). Equally, GE holds that, it is the duty of parents, not only to give life to their children, but to be principally responsible for their education in all areas. This role of parents cannot be substituted adequately (cf. GE, 3).

In addition, to further emphasize the utmost importance of parents educating their children holistically for their own good and that of the society; the following views are displayed. Thus, from the Church's *Charter of the Rights of the Family*; it conveys the primary and inalienable right of parents to educate their children. It states: "parents have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions, in line with the cultural traditions of the family which favours the good and dignity of the child..." (art. 5a). It further accrues that: In particular, sex education is a basic right of the parents and must always be carried out under their close supervision and controlled by them, at home or other places (art. 5c). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) no 2206 explains the need for spouses to cooperate as parents in their children's upbringing. In line with this, the family is seen as the community in which from childhood, one learns moral values, begins to honour God and make good use of freedom (CCC, 2207). It means that, in the family, through the help of parents, children are guided in a proper way to become responsible in life. More so, from the document on *Educational Guidance in Human Love, on Outlines for Sex Education*, nos. 34-53, observe the need to inculcate the knowledge of human sexuality, under sex education to the young. It opines that as other part of education is necessary, the young require to have a clear knowledge of their bodies and its development since the body through baptism in the Risen Christ has been vivified and purified by the Spirit (no. 43). It equally avers that education in the first place, is the duty of the family, and it says that family is the best environment to accomplish the obligation of securing a gradual education in sexual life (no 48). Thus, John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* (FC) no. 37 reaffirms this point made above by emphatically emphasizing the particular importance of sex education to children and insisting that the family is the most appropriate place for that to take place, and by the parents as first and sole educator of their children. FC, 37 explains the need for parents to educate their children in the essential values of human life. Since it has been noted that family is the first school for every child, and parents are

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Stanley Anyanwu (2015), "St. John Chrysostom on the Education of Children vis-à-vis the Contemporary Family Crisis in Africa: Towards a Return to the Fathers of the Church" in *Theology and Family in the African Context*, Ferdinand Nwaigbo, et al eds. Port Harcourt: CIWA Publications. Pp. 417-418.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Stanley Anyanwu, *ibid*, pp. 422-23.





their first educators; it follows that, parents in educating their children in the essential values of human life, sex education is very important because, every human person is a sexual being and deserve to have the knowledge about his/her sexual nature in line with his/her age in life. It states: “Education in love as self-giving is also the indispensable premises for parents called to give their children a clear and delicate sex education” and he continues that this training from parents in the area of sex education should be truly and fully personal. The Holy Father proceed to explain that, sex education which is a basic right and duty of parents to their children must be carried out under their attentive guidance at any point/place (cf. FC,37). This clearly shows the vital place which the knowledge of sex education occupies in the lives of everyone especially children, as well as education in the areas of human life.

From all the views presented here, it is obvious that FC,37 is of paramount importance in the present day, if the increase of sexual immorality and abuses are to be reduced. Nevertheless, the fact that the Church equally affirms the duty of parents in assisting their children on the need of understanding of sex education in a proper manner, it calls on the people of Umuenyere Alayi especially parents to take a leaf from FC, 37 and other views to carry out their task of educating their children on sex education appropriately and on time.

#### **Relevance of Sex education in family: Lesson for the Umuenyere Alayi People**

From all that have been examined, it is evident that just as His Holiness, Pope St. John Paul II has expressed in FC, 37, and with other supported views from Scripture, tradition and Magisterium, and other scholars; the importance of sex education in the lives of all children cannot be over-emphasized, neither is the necessity for it to take place within the family setting, carried out by parents can be denied. Hence, a need for an inculturation of this aspect of education becomes paramount, especially within the cultural practices of the Umuenyere Alayi people. Below are some of the benefits that sex education has to offer them:

1. *Reduce the increase in sexual abuses* – sexual abuses are prevalent in many societies these days and the Umuenyere Alayi people are not immune from this. Sex education therefore will help the child to be aware of signs of a predator, it will equip the child on methods to avoid such cases of abuse. If Umuenyere Alayi people begins to educate their children on sex education in line with their age development; it will help to improve their moral life and reduce sexual abuses. For instance, when a young girl understands her body and its changes, as well as the need to protect and preserve her virginity and the reason for this preservation, she will likely not be (easily) lured into early sexual act or pre-marital sexual intercourse.
2. *The sense of responsibility in sexual activity* – Some young married couples among Umuenyere Alayi people are not aware of their responsibility as parents and life partners. Thus, if parents can teach their children sex education with exemplary life; enlighten them (children) on the difference between a girl and a boy, both in their bodies and duties; when they become parents, they can discharge their duties as parents and life partners (husband or wife) very well. And be happy in their marital union.



3. *Appreciation, love and respect for One's body* – If most parents among Umuenyere Alayi people take up their duty to educate their children on sex education, it will reduce the issue of sexual immorality and abuses in the society. A child whose parents equip him/her with the knowledge about his/her body, will appreciate, love and respect his/her body, and even the bodies of others. For example, when a child knows the name, use and value of his/her genitals (sexual parts of body); he/she will not accept any sexual/verbal abuse from anyone neither will he/she do same to others. Such a child will cherish and respect his/her body as well as the body of the other person, even when someone tries to abuse him/her in any form, such child will report the matter.
4. *Sex education brings about the right sexual orientation cum behaviour* - Findings in this regard proves that a sound sex education aids in shaping the mindset of people towards sex, what it should really be used for as well as the ideal object of attraction. It follows that sex education is capable of reducing to the barest minimum the ugly instances of homosexuality, pornography, bestiality, necrophilia, premarital intercourse, lesbianism, homosexuality, etc., which are prevalent in our society today. This is to say also that proper sex education helps in correcting this nonsensical “*body no be firewood*” mentality among young people and even the old.
5. *To have a positive thinking* – When parents educate their children properly in all the essential values of human life including on sex education; it will help the children (youths) to be open in life and be positive in their thinking. It will also help to raise among the people of Umuenyere Alayi, youths with mature balance personality; who will value education; and various vocations in life and respect freedom.
6. *Sex education provides children with the needed confidence/conviction about matters of sex-* Young people who receive or have received sex education possess a better understanding of their body mechanism, the result of this is self-confidence. Consequently, they are open to their parents, wards or consultants when they have a problem. A child who grows where sexuality knowledge is considered a shame or mystery is often ashamed of discussing his/her sexual problems, abuses, and even medical challenges affecting the genitals with anyone including their parents. Such a situation makes a child timid and unable to put up a strong resistance or counter argument when their peers try to lure them into misbehaving sexually. With the instruction of parents, children are able to gain a commendable level of conviction which helps to approach challenges relating to sex with confidence. For instance, a child whose parents have convincingly taught that pornography, pre-marital sex, etc. are wrong will be more difficult to deceive or convince otherwise by others. Moreover, children tend to be more convinced about what their parents teach them. Such was the conviction of a parent who was engaged in a chat on this matter.
7. *Fosters healthy family relationship* - when a child is well educated in matters pertaining to sex, the child will have the confidence as mentioned above to relates with his/her parents on anything. It will foster communication and no secrecy; such will help the child to lay-bare all his/her problems and he/she will be helped. In such family relationship, avoidable mistakes will be avoided and purity in morals enriched.



## Conclusion

Based on this fact, FC, 37, the Church and all, have agreed that, sex education is important mostly at this time the world is obsessed with moral decadence. Therefore, the Church continues to encourage parents to help their children and save them from this evil menace. In like manner, most parents among the people of Umuenyere Alayi are to drop their cultural bias of shying away from teaching sex education to their children in the family; and never see it as a taboo but as a relevant aspect in children upbringing. Culture is dynamic, therefore, the culture of 'sex education' as *aru* among the Umuenyere Alayi people should become *omelala* (norm) for the good of the child, family and society at large.

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