

Premarital sex in adolescence



In modern world full of technologic innovations and a wide range of possibilities for young people the problem of premarital sex is considered one of the most important issues that has an enormous impact on life of future generations. An increasing number of single-parent homes contribute to the problem as the teenager is left alone and is becoming immersed into the atmosphere of loneliness while losing previously established life priorities such as family and parent-child communication. Several decades ago kissing each other on the first date was a debatable issue, which determined the development of the potential relationships between two partners. Nowadays, however, modern youth is concerned with the question whether to have intercourse with a recent passing acquaintance. The issue of premarital sex in adolescence is taking a turn for the worse as numerous mass media sources attack young people with inappropriate images, provocative songs, and outrageous role models. Associate Professor of Philosophy from University of Dallas Janet E.

Smith (2004) argues that sex in most cases has lost its previous value, and therefore is taken as a quick way to get pleasure, which is enhanced by many external factors. A plenty of young men and women justify their actions by saying that sex is the most convenient and available way to express love for each other. Read about In fact, the actual intercourse does not require any additional preparation and may be carried out with no preliminary conversation or introduction. (Smith 2004).

The abstinence among young people has been deeply rooted in the culture of previous generations when ...In the 1960s, 25 percent of young men and 45 percent of young women were virgins at age 19” (Smith 2004). Following

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the next two decades, the number of those who had had sexual relationships made about 18%. Experts say, that in the mid-20th century approximately 90% of women used to stay away from premarital sex, and seldom lived with their potential partners, while the number of those who choose to be aware of sexual relationships before the actual marriage has been multiplied up by three times. Smith 2004).

Premarital sex is traced back to traditional outlook when “ saving yourself for your significant one” was the point of honor especially for the young girls. In fact, it used to be the main characteristic according to which the overwhelming majority of girls were evaluated by their future husbands. The situation, however, has changed in the course of time as more and more people are now being involved in civil marriage that obviously requires premarital sex. Generally, the latter enhances the level of closeness between two partners and may serve as a key point, which does not necessarily involve vitally important personal characteristics such as kindness, responsibility, and intellectuality. Therefore, according to statistics, an increasing number of those who live together having premarital sex prior to the marriage tend not to marry for love, but rather for the feeling of “ perfect match”, which comprises sexual compatibility. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that young people who start living together are put face to face with the problem of divorce.

According to Bumpass and Sweet (1995) in future they are more likely to get divorced with their spouse than those who live separately before the marriage. The mentioned above psychologists also claim that those couples that live together do not appreciate their relationships, and are disappointed

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with their lifestyle. Sexual relationships before marriage pose a potential threat to young people due to their low awareness about the consequences of the intercourse. Sociologists claim that such negative social phenomena as an illegitimate child, abortion, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are caused by poor sexual education.

Regardless of all preventive measures taken by parents together with social and governmental institutions, the unintended pregnancy is a long-standing question. According to Centers for Disease Control about 94% of pregnant adolescent girls did not plan to have a child, because there is a strong tendency among young parents who are more likely to raise their children in poverty. (Arnold, Smith, Harrison, & Springer, 1999). Many psychologists believe that the key factor, which influences the future sexual behavior of teenagers, is the relationships inside their families and the level of contact among family members (Holtzman & Robinson, 1995). Teenagers from two parent families with a mother and a father are less likely to report having premarital sex than from single parent households.

In spite of the fact that there are numerous projects on premarital sex and sexual behavior among teenagers, parents still have a good reputation among their children, which allows them to effectively inform their children about the potential danger of casual relations. The well-organized communication among parents and their children is helpful in overcoming the issue of generation gap and sex education. (Holtzman & Robinson, 1995). Although the majority of couples are informed about the significance of their child awareness on the topic of premarital sex, 5 out of 10 parents

experience difficulties in meeting the crisis of delicate topic. (Centers for Disease Control).

This occurs because they have not completely habituated themselves to the idea that their children undergo natural and inevitable stage of mental and physical development. Psychologically most parents still perceive their children as little kids and therefore avoid the issue of sexual relationship in adolescence. (Harris & Franklin, 2004). According to the point of view of Pistella & Bonati (1998) and Raffaelli (1998) there exists a number of obstructions that make it impossible for parents to get into contact with their children. They are the following:

- Oftentimes parents experience psychological inconvenience when communicating with their teenagers on the topic of premarital sex and sexual relationships in general. In most cases adults see the sexual behavior of their children as inappropriate.

This happens because of the fact that parents usually ignore the spectacular path of growth of modern society, which has become less limited than before.

- Some grown-ups are not updated on the issue of premarital sex and give their children free hand.
- Many parents are not aware of sexual relationships of their children. Therefore, one of the most common mistakes made by parents is the discussion of the question of abstinence only. A number of adults focus their attention on those problems that they have encountered in the past.

As the majority of them have never had STDs and only in some cases faced the challenge of abortion, these questions are oftentimes omitted.

- There is a strong tendency among parents to skip the issue of contraception as it

involves practical instructions that parents prefer to omit. Research findings claim that young people with low self-esteem are more likely to be involved in sexual relationships before marriage than those who enjoy wide popularity among peers. Teenagers with strong personal characteristics are in search of other ways to express their feelings and thoughts. Unlike those who try to become immediately close to their partners, more abstinent young people take an active part in social activities, are characterized with high grades at school, and are considered to be diligent children at home.

However, some parents have no opportunity to spend much time with their children because of the amount of tasks they are to accomplish at work. Therefore, they tend to fill the empty space of parent-child communication by greater financial support (presents, pocket money) and giving freedom to their child. Such behavior oftentimes leads to an increasing number of intercourses among young people due to the lack of love and care parents should give their children. This results in low level of trust among adults and children especially in single-parent families.

(Smith 2004). When a couple gives birth to a child, both of them must take care of him/her and protect from potential external threat, i. . infections, accidents, etc. Experts say, high percentage of teenagers living in a single parent home have a strong tendency to start sexual relationships with their partners as they are being in constant search for intimacy and trust relationship due to the absence of a parent who is supposed to be giving his/her child efficient attention required for the psychological health.

(Focus on the Family). Usually, a single parent is forced to do greater amount of work that he/she used to sharing the responsibilities with the child. This contributes to the problem as household duties take much time and do not allow the parent to be close to his/her child. "...And the divorce and desertion that sometimes lead to a one-parent home can make teens uncertain about the value of marriage as the setting for sexual activity and about the role of sexuality in parental relationships." (Focus on the Family) Another study by McLanahan 1998 has shown that young women are more likely to search for males and start serious relationships with them.

Unlike young girls, 45% of young boys look for sexual partners and not relationship commitment. According to the research girls born in a single-parent family have a tendency to twice as much give a birth to an illegitimate child than those who have both parents (McLanahan & Sandefur 1994). Also, children who have no mother or father at home more often than not are characterized by having psychological and emotional problems while communicating with their peers and other people from their surrounding environment (Zill & Schoenborn 1990). Girls from single families are more likely to become pregnant before completing high school than teenagers from two parent families.

Several studies show that the percentage of young girls that get pregnant until they reach eighteen is 2 to 3 times higher than the number of those young women who were brought up by two parents. (Zill & Schoenborn 1990). Living in a two-parent family provides the child with low risk of sexual abuse. According to Popenoe (1996) ...the chances of a daughter being sexually abused by her stepfather are at least 7 times greater than by her

biological father. One-parent home makes a child vulnerable not only to premarital sexual relationships, but also to smoking, alcohol, and drugs. He is as well exposed to playing prohibited computer games and watching R-rated TV programs, which oftentimes promote and provoke indecent behavior establishing improper role models.

(Smith 2004). Many psychologists agree that the presence of non-biological parent is better than the situation when only one parent is bringing up the child. (Popenoe 1996), as both boys and girls unconsciously demand the role model to follow. Teenagers from single families are more likely to contract sexually transmitted diseases than those from two parent families (Focus on the Family). As it was stated above, young people from single parent homes tend to be more sexually active than those who live with both parents.

Consequently, lacking the necessary attention and care they try to find it somewhere out of their homes not taking into account the fact that casual relations are the main source of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Institute of Medicine, 66% of young people that get STD are under the age of 24 years and are mostly from single parent families. The sample frame of the studied topic includes the residents of the USA, who are young people between 15-24 years old. The paper includes convenience sampling, due to the fact that it is the most widely used method. The sample size does not coincide with the sample frame and the population as the first may not be entirely evaluated. The completion rate the research shows that such negative social phenomena as illegitimate child, abortion, and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are caused by poor sexual education and the lack of

one parent. Also, girls born in a single-parent family have a tendency to twice as much give a birth to an illegitimate child than those who have both parents.

According to the provided data on premarital sex in adolescence, there is a strong tendency among teenagers to get STDs, get divorced, and have an illegitimate child.