



Abortion in Okpokwu and its Socio-Religious and Moral Implications

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Abstract. This research, examined abortion in Okpokwu, a Local Government Area in Benue State, Nigeria and its socio-religious and moral implications. It considered the reasons why young adults opt for abortion when unwanted pregnancy occurs among them in the community, despite the prevailing religious and moral givens. Procuring abortions comes with dire consequences, including stigma and the loss of human lives of both the fetus and the mother. Researchers have established that individuals' religious, social and moral position influence one's attitude and general outlook on live issues including abortion. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the work asserted that, abortion is not just a medical issue; it also has ethical, religious and social dimensions. This work found out that various contextual and structural factors could shape the abortion decision by women who conceived before marriage. This includes the influence of globalization and social media. The study further identified that socio-religious and structural constraints made no much impact in discouraging abortion; rather, people continue to procure abortion due to wrong advise, shame, fear, peer pressure and the availability of abortion drugs in patent medicine shops. The work advised that religious, political and traditional leaders in Okpokwu, should rise to the occasion to nipping in the bud, this menace of abortion, which has claimed myriads of young and adolescent lives in the community.

Keywords: Abortion, Religion, Morality, Okpokwu

1. Introduction

Women, all over the world, have experienced unwanted pregnancy at one time or the other. When this happens some of these women usually, seek to terminate the pregnancy by safe medical means, while others, due to ignorance engage in harmful means of

pregnancy termination. The termination of pregnancies most generally known as 'abortion,' is a universal phenomenon occurring throughout all levels of societal organization within recorded history. Techniques implemented are highly varied as are circumstance under which it is practiced. Abortion has been described by various views, especially, the religious groups, as a vice affecting every nook and cranny of the society (Jeje, 2021).

The Center for Human Development, Ile-Ife in conjunction with UNICEF (2000), declared that over 50% woman in Nigeria are pregnant by the age of 20. This number may be higher in some quarters. Out of this number, only 21-28% give birth, between the age of 15 and 17, and 40% are mothers by the age of 18. There are various reasons for abortion among young adults. Some of which are: poverty, illiteracy, incompetence, fear of the societal or religious stigmatization and so many others.

Abortion and problems relating to pregnancy are leading causes of death in women of child bearing age, with complications from abortion consistently increasing by the day. Studies have shown that in every 100,000 abortions in Africa, 680 die (UNPE, 2000). Many African laws, including Nigeria, make abortion a criminal act to perform or seek for, except it is for the purpose of saving the woman indulging in the act and the people demanding for it. Abortion is still secretly practiced by medical practitioners and is still on the high side especially among young adults.

Religion, generally conceived, is one of the agents of social integration and personality formation. It has the capacity to modifying ideas, feelings and conditioning actions. The Nigerian society especially, the people Okpokwu Local Government are a religious people in every of their outlooks. Collaborating this stance, Oduyoye, (2021, pp. 4-6), affirmed that, "Africa

“culture” is imbued with religion and religion is used to under-gird and validate culture. Religion also, has affinity with morality as it is difficult to divorce religion from morality in Africa.

Abortion in Africa has both social, religious and moral implications. While agreeing with this, sociologists, however, have further discovered that other factors, such as age grades and parental upbringing have more influence on pregnant teens, when it comes to abortion matters, than religion (Cooper, 2014). This work concerns itself with discussing these issues on abortion matter in Okpokwu, in essence. In what follows, the researchers, shall examine some key concepts that formed the nexus of the work.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Churches and religious bodies are rapidly springing up everywhere in Okpokwu Local Government Area; unfortunately, there is an outrageous rise in cases of abortion in the communities that make up the Local Government. Thus, confirming the fact that religious activities and moral education emanating from the Churches, have not adequately addressed the dangers of abortion on reproductive health and the entire society generally. The religious attempt to reduce and control sexual activities in the society was not wholly effective, as the approach to the control and discourage premarital sex was only carried out through suspension. Some religious norms regard sex education and discussion as morally unhealthy. Spirituality and sexuality have been separated, and thus, encouraging sex education, is seen as a means of increasing the knowledge of sex among the members of Christian community. Labeling sexuality talk ‘a taboo’, by most religious folks, the adolescents took advantage of this to explore the social media for sex education and information. Hence, many have fallen prey of some unhealthy contents regarding the subject matter, resulting in the constant rise on abortion procurement by the young people in Okpokwu. These problems fueled the motivation for this research.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

- Examine the socio-religious and moral implications of abortion in Okpokwu Local Government Area
- Investigate which of the institution’s weakness that pave way to a continual abortion incident in Okpokwu Local Government Area

- Understand the reasons why young girls opt for abortion when unwanted pregnancies occur
- Proffer possible recommendations that would prevent abortion related vices affecting the future of adolescents in Okpokwu Local Government Area

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions have been framed to elicit reasons and factors responsible for the rising cases of abortion in Okpokwu Local Government Area:

- How do young adults have access to means for abortion as is the case in Okpokwu Local Government Area?
- How were they educated on the possibilities of abortion either safe or unsafe means?
- Who do you think is to be held responsible for making abortion decisions?
- Is abortion morally acceptable by the societal norm today?

2. Definition of Key Concepts

Nwankwo (2017, p.117), citing Ekennia (2003, p.148), said, “abortion derives from the Latin infinitive *aboriri*, which means to perish.” Literally, it means the loss of a foetal life. Abortion is usually defined as the intentional destruction of the foetus in the womb, or any untimely delivery brought about with intent to cause the death of the foetus (Peschke, 1978).

Religion on the other hand is etymologically, derived from the Latin word *religio*. This was thought to have originated from the root *leg* or from another Latin verb *relegere* which meant “to re-read, or to ponder, or to take up, count or gather.” Such a root would suggest that ‘religion’ is “to observe (or gather) the signs of divine communication” (Iwuagwu, 1998). Nmah (1998, p.65) said, “in religion there are man’s efforts in satisfying emotional needs by establishing and maintaining cordial relations between himself, the super sensible world, and his fellow man.”

According to Obilor (2003, p.172), religion means: the whole complex of attitudes, beliefs, practices, gestures, rituals, emotions, convictions, and institutions through which we express our deep fundamental relationship with Reality and not excluding the created order.

‘Morality’ in the words of Obaje (2002, p.22), in Kudadjie et al. (2002), “is usually considered as a way of regulating the conduct of individuals in

communities.” In other words, human conduct must be guided in order to avoid chaos in the society. Morality is further defined as “the quality of conforming to the principles of good conduct, moral or virtuous conduct” (Obaje, 2002). This boils down to the fact that morality covers good or bad, right or wrong principles of human behaviour. That is why we can say some of human actions are bad, some are morally good, and some are immoral.

2.1 Understanding the Socio-Religious Concept and the Morality of Abortion

In considering the subject matter, ‘abortion’ and its morality among the people of Okpokwu Local Government Area, the study first of all looked at the approaches of the people from where abortion law operates at parallel between the society and religion. This would help in giving a right judgment as to why religion may not have had a total control of abortion decision making in the focal area, considering the fact that sex related matters are not openly discussed by religious institutions in Okpokwu.

Religion and abortion are closely connected to political and social discourses in many parts of the world. Some major world religions express doctrinal disapproval of abortion and this condemnation is reflected in individuals’ stated beliefs (Amy, 2013). Research has demonstrated a strong connection between individual religiosity and negative abortion attitudes (Alvarez and John, 2008). Recent research shows that 47% agreed that abortion was morally wrong, with only 13% respondents saying that abortion was morally acceptable, and 27% stating that abortion is not a moral issue. At least 58% of Protestants, and Catholics were said to believe that abortion is morally wrong and only 20% of those who without an affiliation held this belief (PEW Forum, 2018). It was discovered that higher population women with religious affiliation, do obtain abortions irrespective of doctrinal restrictions of the practice (Jerman et al, 2016). Furthermore, studies have shown that religion has an inconclusive and context-specific influence in women when the issue of whether to terminate a pregnancy or not arises (Williams, 1982).

In Nigeria, abortion is a debatable and controversial topic wherever it is raised. Abortion in Nigeria is governed by two laws that differ greatly depending on geographical location. Northern Nigeria, where Okpokwu belongs, operates the penal code and Southern Nigeria is governed by the criminal code (Police Order, 2014). The only legal way to have an abortion in Nigeria is if having the child is going to put the mother's life in danger (UNPD, 2014). Many

Nigerian women seek unsafe abortion methods to avoid criminal and social penalties leading to abortion-related complications and increasing mortality and morbidity rate in the country.

In a joint study carried out by the society of gynecologists and obstetricians of Nigeria and Nigeria’s ministry of health, the number of women who engage in unsafe abortions was estimated at 20,000 each year (Raufu, 2002). Researchers have revealed that only 40% of abortions are carried out by doctors with a better health facility while the remaining percentage are performed by non-health experts (Henshaw, 2015). Throughout history, Nigerian abortion laws have galvanized several groups and interests with opposing views regarding the liberalization of abortion laws and the championing of women’s right.

3. Socio-religious Approaches and its Consequence on the Rate of Abortion in the Society

Christians’ views on abortion have been that of a long and complex experience. Churches’ opposition and condemnation of abortion goes back to the 1st century with texts such as the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of Peter (Frank, 2017). Some Christian writers have at one time or the other, argued that abortion was acceptable under certain conditions, especially when it aimed to save the life of the mother. However, this view did not become an accepted norm until some denominations change their views in the 20th century. The Bible itself does not contain direct references to abortion. It is true that the church has always condemned abortion, but the issue that concerns the ensoulment of an embryo, have led to changes in the Canon law when it comes to the classification of the sin of abortion (Ana et al. 2010).

Despite the secular perception on abortion in various quarters, systemic and socio-cultural barriers have restricted access to abortion services. Attitudes that relate to abortion emerge in policy making system, and at the level of the community (Kumar, 2009). Stigmatization of those who have procured abortions has a way it can influence people’s ability to exercise reproductive autonomy. Scholars are of the opinion that stigma confounds a woman’s decision to terminate a pregnancy due to fears about judgment. This includes isolation, safe-judgment, and community condemnation. Limiting legislations could be additional barriers to abortion access, where one desires to do so (Forthwith and Coleman, 2018).

3.1 Abortion: An Exit Door to Religious Stigmatization

In Nigeria, Okpokwu inclusive, women with abortion history are socially and religiously stigmatized. This may lead to experiencing difficulty in getting married by such victims. This is so because of the perception about them as being promiscuous and as potential victims of secondary infertility. Among the many factors that may be responsible for this stigma around abortion, religion remains arguably the most prominent (Oyediran, 2020).

It is a thing of wonder why people in a religiously and culturally valued society like Nigeria, will opt for abortion, an act that have so overtly been condemned. The only possible answer to this might be that women, usually shift from their religious views and go for abortion when faced with the reality of an unwanted pregnancy. This position is so because unwanted pregnancies have numerous socio-economic consequences that could make women jettison religiously held beliefs. This remains unclear because no known study has investigated the influence of religions on sexual and reproductive health care, utilization and behaviour of women (Arosell and Carlbom, 2016). However, Frohwirth (2018) showed that religion has no significant effect on abortion decision.

Many Nigeria people are well educated, which arguably help people escape the grip of religious “fanaticism that places religion above human life.” A case in point is the theory of secularization by Stijn and Guide (2015), which posits that, “religious beliefs are of nominal value when individuals experiencing socio-economic challenges make important life decision or willingness to keep a pregnancy.”

4. Cultural Beliefs towards Sex related issues in Okpokwu

Okpokwu is a local Government Area in Benue State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Okpoga, located in the south of the town of Ugbokolo, in the Local Government Area (Atim, 2010). It has an area of 731km² and a population of 176,647 at 2006 census. Okpokwu has three districts which includes Edumoga, Okpoga and Ichama. It has a projected population of 253,500 in 2022 with the adolescents (aged 10-19) 39.155 per cent population. The people are predominantly famers with citrus fruits, maize, cassava and groundnuts as the main produce from the area (National Population Census, 2006).

The Idoma, of which Okpokwu belongs, is an ethnic group largely found in Benue State, Nigeria. They

have a rich cultural legacy that is intimately woven into their daily life. The Alekwu (ancestral gods) belief system promotes social norms and values by enlightening individuals about the consequences of going against them. Tamale (2023), explores the impact of cultural and religious beliefs on women’s sexual and reproductive rights in Africa. She argues that the belief in Alekwu (ancestral gods) punishing women for perceived sexual transgressions, contributes to the construction of women’s sexuality as source of moral concern and control. Thus, restricting their autonomy and decision-making power. The belief in Alekwu can be enforced on a woman’s infidelity as well as to a man or woman aiding abortion decision of their unmarried young women.

The power and the fear of the Alekwu, in enforcing punishment on sexual offenders cannot be over emphasized. Sexuality was seen as a sacred discussion and so it is not publicly spoken of between parents and youth or between sexual partners (Baker and Rich, 1999, Ajala, 2007). Sexual matters are not discussed in the public or at all between parents and their children, as this is seen as a taboo. When sexual issues are mentioned at all, they rather use euphemisms for body parts and activities. This has been noted to lead to confusion and communication difficulty, all in a bid to avoid discussing explicitly sexual matters. (Izugbara, 2005, Ojo, 2005).

Furthermore, the issue of abortion as is obtainable in Idoma culture, tends to punish the adults who contribute either financially or morally in aiding abortion of their children, and also the issue of adultery. Hence the issue of punishment for the offense of abortion is not totally held on the adolescents who commit such by the Alekwu (gods) of the Idoma. Therefore, sexual misbehaviour of the Idoma teenagers was not properly put under control when they come to the understanding of this reality (Wukari, 2023).

5. Factors Influencing Abortion Decision Making

The decision on how to terminate a pregnancy is influenced by a variety of factors at different levels and given circumstances. At the individual level these factors include: marital status, whether they were victims of rape or incest; economic independence and level of education (Gbagbo, 2015). Furthermore, interpersonal factors include: support from partners and parents. While social factors include: social norms and values, religious views, stigmatization as a result of premarital or extra-marital sex, social status, and freedom within society (Kabiru, Mutua and Izugbara,

2016). On the other hand, the organizational factors include: knowledge of sex education, availability of health care system, and abortion laws. These influence the decisions when abortion matters arise. All these factors are related to power and gender inequalities. They obstruct young women’s freedom and make them vulnerable to pressure.

Another important factor has to do with the effect of globalization in Africa. This has created an unprecedented cultural deviance, thus, eroding traditional African sexual values. According to Saliman, Akor and Abdullahi, (2021, p.47), “globalization has brought controversial issues in relation to human biological and social determinants, affecting their images and functional societal roles.” The incursion of western cultures and values into African, has come with it all forms of sexual orientations and consequent vices which are strange, such as, homosexuality, bisexuality, pan sexuality, asexuality and other sexual vices including abortion (Mehra et al. 2019).

These factors have given rise to sudden interest in the mainstream media and digital media, such as radio, television, computers, newspapers, journals, books, bill boards, theatre, recordings, films, and the internet. These have all negatively affected traditional African values through their content and development. Since sexuality is fundamental to human existence and widely regarded as the pulse of civilization by all Africans, regardless of tribe or religious affiliation, globalization rapidly redefines traditional African views and beliefs. Ojo and Fasubaa (2005, p.111), argue that, “sexual orientation and identity in Nigeria, especially teenage sexual activities, are significantly

changing from what they previously were.” Young adults usually leverage social media for information on sexual issues, rather than their parents or experts. The result of all these is usually catastrophic and regrettable.

Research Methodology

The study is based on the ex-post facto research design. It refers to the studies which investigate possible cause and effect relationship by observing an existing condition and searching back in the time for possible factors. Data for this study were generated using the qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative approach, involves collecting data from oral interviews and documents like textbooks, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet materials. The quantitative approach through the use of structured questionnaire, which were analyzed in tables, using simple percentage.

Results and Discussions

Research Results

Responses from the 15 questions structured questionnaire copies are given below as reflected in the area of the study.

Tables of Sampled Results

Key to the Tables

Ben Poly: Benue State polytechnic, Ugbokolo

ICSS: Ichama Community Secondary School, Ichama

WHS: Wesley High School, Ojapo

GSS: Government Secondary School, Okpoga

ATR: African Traditional Religion

Table 1: Religious affiliation of Respondents

Sampled group	Christianity	ATR	Islam	No Affiliation
Ben Poly	24%	1%	1%	0%
ICSS Ichama	25%	0%	0%	0%
WHS Ojapo	25%	0%	0%	0%
GSS Okpoga	24%	0%	1%	0%
Total percentage	98	1	1	0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 showed that Christianity, with 98%, indicated her dominance in the area

Table 2: Institution where abortion related issues are discussed

Simple Percentage (%)				
Sampled group	Religious group	Among Friends	Home	Media
Ben Poly	0%	5%	2%	15%
ICSS Ichama	2%	12%	3%	8%
WHS Ojapo	2%	10%	4%	9%
GSS Okpoga	1%	11%	3%	10%
Total percentage	5%	41%	12%	42%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 indicated that abortion discussions are mostly done within Friends 41%, Internet/Media 42%, at home 12% and religious gatherings 5%. Therefore, teenagers mostly get information about abortion from the internet and friends.

Table 3: People responsible for the abortion of adolescents

Simple Percentage (%)				
Sampled group	Gov. institution	Private Institution	Drugs sellers	Self means
Ben Poly	0%	8%	15%	2%
ICSS Ichama	0%	5%	17%	3%
WHS Ojapo	0%	8%	16%	1%
GSS Okpoga	0%	6%	18%	1%
Total percentage	0%	27%	66%	7%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows that 66% of abortion among adolescents are carried out by quacks and patent drug sellers. As such this results in complications due to unprofessional handling. Private clinic with 27% are also promote abortion. Government hospitals do not promote illegal abortion with 0% assistance.

Table 4: Sexuality and sexual relations among teenage

Simple Percentage (%)			
Sampled group	Increasing	Decreasing	No difference
Ben Poly	9%	5%	11%
ICSS Ichama	7%	6%	12%
WHS Ojapo	8%	4%	13%
GSS Okpoga	10%	5%	10%
Total percentage	34%	20%	46%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows that sexual activities among the people of Okpokwu is high. Premarital sex among teenagers is increasing with 34%, decreasing rate at 20%. Others believe that the remained constant at 46%.

Table 5: Initiators of Abortion Decision making

Simple Percentage (%)			
Sampled group	The pregnant girl	The boy who impregnated her	The parent of the pregnant girl
Ben Poly	18%	6%	1%
ICSS Ichama	21%	3%	1%
WHS Ojapo	17%	6%	2%
GSS Okpoga	16%	7%	2%
Total percentage	72%	22%	6%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5: Abortion decisions are mostly done by the pregnant girls 72%, their boyfriends, 22% and their parents 6%. Each of these players have reasons for such decisions.

Table 6: Type of drug for abortion in the community

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Pharmaceutical drug	Herbal drug
Ben Poly	22%	3%
ICSS Ichama	23%	2%
WHS Ojapo	24%	1%
GSS Okpoga	24%	1%
Total percentage	93%	7%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6. Here pharmaceutical drugs (93%) are mostly used for abortion in Okpokwu. Though local means (7%) are also available.

Table 7: Effectiveness of the common drug used for abortion

Simple Percentage (%)			
Sampled group	Effective	Have complications	To some, it is effective and to others it have complications
Ben Poly	5%	3%	17%
ICSS Ichama	2%	2%	21%
WHS Ojapo	2%	1%	22%
GSS Okpoga	2%	3%	20%
Total percentage	11%	9%	80%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7. It would also be interesting to note the accessible means of abortion in Okpokwu have 50% chances of effectiveness and complications. This effect can be immediate or later. The table gave 80% responses to uncertainty of abortion effectiveness.

Table 8: Position of religions on abortion among the adolescents

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly	0%	25%
ICSS Ichama	0%	25%
WHS Ojapo	0%	25%
GSS Okpoga	0%	25%
Total percentage	0%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 8 shows that religion is 100% against abortion.

Table 9: Motivational factor to premarital sex

Simple Percentage (%)			
Sampled group	Money	Name tagging/pressure from friends	Sexual enjoyment
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	16%	7%	2%
ICSS, Ichama	21%	4%	1%
WHS, Ojapo	17%	6%	1%
GSS, Okpoga	19%	5%	1%
Total Percentage	73%	22%	5%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 9. Premarital sex in Okpokwu is controlled by money at 73%, name tagging/pressure from friends 22% and sexual pleasure 5%. Economic and social issues are leading causes of premarital sex that induce the pressure of abortion in Okpokwu

Table 10: Morality of abortion in the community

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	0%	25%
ICSS, Ichama	0%	25%
WHS, Ojapo	0%	25%
GSS, Okpoga	0%	25%
Total Percentage	0%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 10. To find out the morality of abortion in Okpokwu, our respondents agreed 100% that abortion was morally wrong.

Table 11: The effectiveness of the government in enforcing abortion law in the community

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	0%	25%
ICSS, Ichama	0%	25%
WHS, Ojapo	0%	25%
GSS, Okpoga	0%	25%
Total Percentage	0%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 11 shows that Government commitment in the control of abortion practices received 100% failure. This fact is coming from the respondents' opinion.

Table 12: Accessibility of drugs for abortion in the community

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	22%	3%
ICSS, Ichama	17%	8%
WHS, Ojapo	19%	6%
GSS, Okpoga	13%	12%
Total Percentage	71%	29%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 12. The drugs for abortion are accessible at 71% and inaccessible at 29%. People who are confronted with abortion decisions can easily opt in due to the ease in acquiring the drug.

Table 13: Affordability of abortion drug by adolescents

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	8%	17%
ICSS, Ichama	12%	13%
WHS, Ojapo	14%	11%
GSS, Okpoga	13%	12%
Total Percentage	47%	53%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 13. Affordability of abortion drug stands at 47% and 53% unaffordable. Meaning that almost half of the people can buy the drug. And so, abortion decisions could be easy to take.

Table 14: The attitude of religious body to sex education campaigns

Simple Percentage (%)			
Sampled group	One to three times/year	Four to Ten times/year	Not at all
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	20%	0%	5%
ICSS, Ichama	18%	0%	7%
WHS, Ojapo	17%	0%	8%
GSS, Okpoga	19%	0%	6%
Total Percentage	74%	0%	26%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 14. Sex education campaign responses indicated that more needed to be put in place by religious bodies to be able to address adequately the trends from the internet/social media.

Table 15: Religious stigmatization/punishment and adolescents’ quest for premarital sex test: (effects on adolescents’ sexuality)

Simple Percentage (%)		
Sampled group	Yes	No
Ben Poly, Ugbokolo	3%	22%
ICSS, Ichama	2%	23%
WHS, Ojapo	1%	24%
GSS, Okpoga	4%	21%
Total Percentage	10%	90%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 15. Shows that stigmatization and suspension by religious bodies gave 10% success and 90% failure. Indicated that abortion decisions are not directly corresponding to individual's religiosity.

6. Discussion of Research Results

The discussion of this research attempted to give a general overview of the socio-religious and moral implications of abortion in Okpokwu. Morality is subjective and selective in nature base on the perspective of individual players. Abortion on the other hand, is a vice that is controlled by so many factors and variables: interpersonal and intra-personal; as well as organizational factors. Religion as one of the organizational factors was considered in this study. In the study of human behaviour, a lot of factors are considered to be able to give a fair judgment on the reason while certain behaviour is always seen. That is why in research analysis, so many variables and a

control is set in order to note the angle from where the change or issue in focus is coming from.

Abortion is such a dynamic and controversial issue in social sciences and religion. It has generated so many contributions in an attempt to give a possible solution to the vice as it affects the entire humanity. These contributions range from imposition of abortion laws enacted to stop people from the act and giving a waiver for some unavoidable conditions like as to when the mother’s life is in danger. Notwithstanding, the incidence still recorded a steady growth.

The proof of religious activities on the issue of abortion in the society’s moral institution was identified in this study. The finding shows that religion makes no much impact on the rate of abortion in Okpokwu. This does not mean that religion has totally failed, the findings indicated that some other factors are responsible for this resistance from the pro-abortion advocates.

Researchers like Cooper; Forhwirth; Stijn and Guido (2018), were recently on the stance, claiming the shift of religious relevance on abortion due to religious restrictiveness. They opined that other factors like age grades, parents' sex education and other social and economic factors are now responsible for teenage abortion decision-making. These researchers came to align with the above claims considering the fact of the socio-religious loopholes as observed from both cultural and religious ways of addressing sexual issues in the study.

Firstly, Christianity and also the culture of the people of Okpokwu rooted in African traditional religions, sees sexuality as a taboo in both social gatherings and private discussions. This was the principles used to take away the attention of the young people of the community from sexual related issues. But nowadays, teenagers are more inquisitive to know virtually everything that comes to mind, hence a shift of attention of teenagers from the laid down societal norms and values to the global world for sexual information.

Secondly, the Alekwu belief system is seen to punish the adults, as expressed by Tamale's research. The knowledge of this reality in the lives of teenagers, who are faced with sexuality issues, tends to play down the belief as an excluded group in the game. Therefore, the teenagers now use the opportunity to tap into other alternatives available in satisfying their sexual related issues.

Thirdly, the non-inclusiveness of sexuality in religions' discusses was the main reason why teenagers opt for other means of expressing this feeling. For religion, abstinence was the teaching but the other underlying feeling that youths face during adolescence will get an answer from the secular or media sources. This answer may be right or wrong but because the hood of morality (religion) is not ready to provide answers that are helpful, by not talking about sexuality, whatever comes their ways are acceptable.

The questionnaire responses were loud enough to speak the same language as to the complexity of sexuality and abortion related issues in Okpokwu. These factors range from the availability and accessibility of drug for abortion, availability of quacks all over that facilitates abortion, social factors that press hard on the teenagers or sometimes their parents inclusive, are forcing them to take the hard decision of aborting their pregnancies; made is so complex for a general conclusion on the where to point actually. People's understanding about this facts of abortion differs as the condition that led to someone's

abortion decision making, might not be the same with another person's condition.

Still from the questionnaire as observed in number 15, the alarming responses of the respondents showed that suspension approach taken by the religious bodies and stigmatization labeled on abortion, was not a lasting solution to solving the issue of abortion and sexual misconducts among the adolescents.

There are some key players that tend to model the contemporary adolescents. These players according to this work identified pregnancy stigmatization, globalization, social realities and host of others as contributing factors. The inconclusive debates among abortion advocates and the prolife groups makes the choice on the morality behind abortion so ambiguous. Therefore, the morality of abortion now lies on individual judgments despite the restrictive laws and norms in operation in Okpokwu.

Nevertheless, the role of religion in the modeling of behaviour would still come to its relevance if aggressive sex education receives an urgent attention from the religions bodies.

7. Conclusion

In reference to the above findings, it is worthy of note, that religion has lost its place in the sex life of the community, as the customary way to addressing sexual offenders no longer yield positive results. The global world and social realities have now assumed the place of religion in the lives of our young women. It is also to be understood that sexual issues are natural issues and religion must not run away from it. If religion must get the attention of the young and sexual deviants, she must be ready to address their corresponding natural or sexual issues.

8. Recommendations

This study thus recommends that:

- Religious bodies should embrace the line of counseling to deviant members before pronouncing disciplinary measures to sexual offenders.
- Aggressive sex education should be advanced as a measure to solving the issue of sex related vices in Okpokwu
- Appropriate arms of government and traditional leaders should wake up to their responsibilities in the control measures to abortion laws at all spheres.

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