

## POPULATION AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION NEEDS OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS (ADULT AND ADOLESCENT) IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The study is to find out the Population and Family Life Education Needs of Community Members in Plateau State, Nigeria. To achieve this purpose one research question and one null hypothesis were postulated to guide the study. A cross-sectional research design was utilized for the study. The population for the study consisted of all community members (adolescents and adults) which is estimated at two million one hundred and seventy-six thousand one hundred and thirty-eight (2,176,138) that is males 1,079,902 and females 1,096,236. A sample size of 802 community members was drawn from the population using a multi-stage sampling procedure for the study. The instrument used for data collection for the study was Questionnaire. Descriptive statistic of frequencies and percentages was used to analyze the data collected and presented in Table. Chi-square statistic was used to test hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that majority of community members indicated that all the items identified were their population and Family Life education needs. There was no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents regarding the population and Family Life education needs according to age. Based on the findings, discussion of findings and conclusion, it was recommended that Teachers of Health Education, Public Health Educators in conjunction with Community Development Officers, Adult Education Officers and Agricultural Extension Workers should organize and mount seminars and workshops for community members to acquire knowledge, build positive attitudes, skills, values and abilities in providing their population and Family Life needs.*

**Keywords:** Population, Population Education, Family Life Education, Community

### Introduction

In order to both survive and thrive, plants require certain soil nutrients and atmospheric conditions and certain amount of water and sunlight, without which each of these in proper amounts, plants will eventually wither and die. Similarly, in order to both survive and thrive well physically, mentally and socially human beings must have certain Population and Family Life needs such as safety and security of themselves and their properties, access to sufficient sources of water supply, clean air to breath, food to eat and employment to work and earn a living

Population refers to all people who live in a particular area. Beresford, Parvaneh and Patricia (2005) defined population education as a study of population situation and its implications for the family, community, nation and the world, with a view to developing in the people responsible attitudes, values and skills through the process of rational and informed decision making for better quality of life of the present and the future generations. International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF,2005) explained Family Life Education as an educational process designed to assist young people in their developmental stages (physical, emotional and moral) as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, parenthood and ageing as well as their social relationship in the socio-cultural context of the family and society. Population and Family Life education developed as an educational specialty around the turn of the twentieth century in response to the social changing conditions of the time in America. Lewis-Rowley, Brasher, Moss, Duncan and Stiles (1993) stated that changes such as urbanization, industrialization and globalization resulted in increased population and Family Life education needs of the community members. Population and Family Life education is important to assist people to understand and acquire knowledge, build up positive attitudes and skills to cope with changes in their lives and in the society in which they live. It is as well important in assisting the youth to develop and acquire knowledge, build up positive attitudes, skills, abilities and values which

are necessary in meeting their needs in adulthood, marriage, parenthood, ageing as well as participating in community life activities (Population & Development Cell Central Board of Secondary Education-P&DCCBSE, 2002).

Need is a strong feeling that someone has for something or somebody or a strong desire to achieve targeted goals or objectives. National Guideline Task Force (1996) spelt out community needs such as: access to age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, access to protective measures to prevent teenage pregnancy and spread of sexually transmitted infection including HIV and AIDS, protection from violence against adolescents and sexual abuse, accurate and comprehensive information on their sexuality, access to a range of youth-friendly services to promote their sexual and reproductive health, pure air to breathe free of airborne infective agents of diseases, adequate potable water supply free of water borne infective agents of disease, adequate balance diet that contains all the nutrients to replace the worn out tissues and build up the body to protect it against infection, security for themselves, their children and properties. Population and family life education needs of community members according to Population and Development Education Cell Central Board of Secondary Education-PDECOSBSE (2002) are clean environment, adequate and descent house accommodation, adequate land to build houses upon and space for children to play, proper waste collection and disposal system, good road network to facilitate free movement of community members, knowledge and skills acquisition through training. Population and family life education needs according to Huisman and Zoomers (2009) safe sex life, sexual relationship without fear of pregnancy and infections, sexual fulfillment, selection of marriage partners, need to have children, freedom to decide the number and space of their children, need to access safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choices, need to access appropriate health care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and child birth and to have a healthy infant, authentic information about the process of growing up, sex and sexuality. The population education needs of the community members according to UNESCO (2013) are protection from violence against adolescents and sexual abuse, accurate and comprehensive information on their sexuality, access to a range of youth-friendly services to promote their sexual and reproductive health, access to education, pure air free of airborne infective agents of diseases, adequate potable water supply free of water borne infective agents of disease, adequate balance diet that contains all the nutrients to replace the worn out tissues and build up the body to protect it against infection and security for themselves, their properties and their children. United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA, 2013) stated that countries with high rates of child marriage and adolescent-girl pregnancy, and low levels of satisfied demand for family planning should consider a multi-pronged approach across sectors that encourage delayed marriage and motherhood for girls. Such approaches should include the enforcement of laws against child marriage, including the enactment and enforcement of statutes that raise the minimum age at marriage to 18 for both girls and boys. Ansar (2001) defined community as a group of people who live in particular geographical location and work for the common goals rather than for specific interest and generally have communalities like language, expression, habit, religious rituals, social customs, behaviours and norms to meet their population needs; and in this case, in Plateau State.

Population and Family Life Education is an important aspect of training that is capable of assisting the community members to acquire knowledge, build up positive attitudes, skills, abilities and values to meet their needs such as access to decent accommodations, food and nutrition and potable water supply. Others are adequate security, protective measures against teenage pregnancy, early marriage and spread of sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS.

However, these Population and Family Life Education Needs are not met in Plateau State as observed and revealed by the study findings that there are prevailing circumstances such as lack of adequate population and family life education or awareness that should prepare them for shouldering adequate responsibilities in adulthood, marriage, parenthood, ageing for the provision of decent accommodations, food and nutrition, and potable water supply for their families.

Inability to meet the above mentioned responsibilities led to early marriage, teenage pregnancy, frequent births, overpopulation, overcrowding, child abuse and neglect, rape, poverty and adolescents' dropout from schools. These prevailing population and family life situations are worrisome and unacceptable which create disparity that justifies the need for this study in Plateau State, Nigeria.

The purpose of the study was to find out the population and family life education needs of the community members. One research question was formulated for this study and one hypothesis was postulated to guide the study and tested at .05 level of significance.

### **Research Question**

What are the population and family life education needs of the community members?

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the mean percentage responses of the respondents' regarding the population and family life education needs of the community members based on age.

### **Significance of the Study.**

This study is significant to the parents, family members, teachers of population education, public health educators, and population and family life policy makers in the field of population and family life education and the general public to acquire knowledge, build up positive attitudes, skills, abilities and values on population and family life issues and apply them to provide population and family life education needs for themselves and their families.

### **Scope of the Study.**

The study covered community members (adolescents and adults) in the three Senatorial zones of Plateau State. It identified the population and family life education needs of community members such as accurate and comprehensive information on their sexuality, support and skills to postpone early sexual intercourse, protective measures against teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS, protection against sexual abuse and exploitation. Factor capable of influencing the study such as age was examined.

### **Method**

Cross-Sectional survey research design was employed for this study. Cross-sectional research design is the one that produces a 'snapshot' of a population at a particular point in time. Mukul and Deepa (2013) explained Cross-sectional research design as a representative sample of the population consisting of individuals of different ages, different occupations, different educational level and income level, and residing in different parts of the country or state where information are collected for the study under investigation. The study was carried out in Plateau State. Plateau State is one of the thirty-six States of the Federation, located at the North Central Region of the Country. It has seventeen (17) Local Government Areas, eighty-five (85 ) Districts, three hundred and twenty-five (325) Wards and two thousand two hundred and sixty-one Villages (2,261) with a population of 3,206,531 million (male: 1,598,998 and female: 1,607,533) according to National Population Commission-NPC,2006. The people of Plateau State are predominantly farmers; few are business people and civil servants. Agricultural products are produced on large scales which include: acha, potatoes, ground nuts, vegetables of various types which attract influx of business men and women from far and near to Plateau State. Majority of the families are polygamous and few are monogamous.

The Population for the study consisted of all community members (adults and adolescents) in Plateau State, which is estimated at about two million one hundred and twenty-three thousand seven hundred and seventeen (2,123,717), that is adolescents (10-24years) was 1,024,181 and adults 1,099,536 according to National Population Commission-NPC, 2006.

The sample size for the study consisted of eight hundred and two (802) community members, in the three Senatorial zone of Plateau State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to draw up this sample size for the study. The instrument used for data collection for this study was questionnaire.

Advocacy visit was paid to the community leaders of the sampled Districts/Wards/Villages to sensitize them, which created an enabling environment for smooth and accurate collection of data for the study. Six (6) research assistants were used, who were trained on the modalities for the administration, supervision, and interpretation of the instrument to illiterate respondents and retrieving the completed copies of the questionnaire at the end of the specified time period.

The copies of the completed questionnaires were crosschecked for completeness of information. The data collected for the study was analyzed using descriptive statistic of frequencies and percentages ranges from 0-39% are not community needs and 40% and above are community needs, and were presented in Table. The chi-square statistic was used to test hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

### Results

Data in Table I show that majority of the community members indicated that their population needs included knowing/determining the objectives and importance of population education (92.3%), rationale for population education (88.2%), reading materials on population education (85.7%) and concept of population (82.7%)

Data in the Table further show that the community members indicated that their population growth needs were knowledge on the determinants of population growth (91.2%), education on planned population growth (Planned Parenthood) (91.3), information on concept and consequences of overpopulation (89.4%), education on benefits of small family size and welfare (89.0%) and information on benefits of delayed marriage (76.3%)

The Table further shows that majority of the community members indicated that their population changes needs were having information on the effects of population growth on economic, social and political life of the community members (93.4%), education on consequences of population changes upon the quality of life of the individual, family, nation and the world (90.9%), information on relationship between unemployment and crime (88.7), information on structure and composition of population (85.7%), information on the causes of urbanization and its related problems (e.g. overcrowding, pollution and traffic congestion) (85.2%).

Data also show that majority of the community members indicated that their food and nutrition needs were education on concept of balance diet and its importance on healthy development (95.1%), information on benefits of food and nutrition services (93.3), education on difference classes of nutrients (92.3%), education on nutrition counseling services (91.0%) and education on effects of family size on food quantity and quality (90.2%).

Data show that majority of community members indicated that their good housing and water supply needs were education on the importance of provision of potable water supply and its effects on human health (95.9%), information on good housing/environmental practices and its effects on health (94.5%), education on criteria for healthful housing and housing standards (91.2), information on overcrowding in housing and its effects on human health (90.9) and information on the importance of provision of sanitary conveniences in housing and its effects on human health (85.6%) and education on good housing to live in (91.2%).

Table 1

#### Responses on Population and Family Life Education Needs of Community Members (n = 802)

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Decision
		f	%	f	%	
1	Concept of population	664	82.7	139	17.3	Need
2	Objectives and importance of population education	741	92.3	62	7.7	Need
3	Rationale/needs for population education	708	88.2	95	11.8	Need
4	Reading materials on population education	688	85.7	115	14.3	Need
5	Knowledge on determinants of population growth (e.g. fertility, mortality, migration)	732	91.2	71	8.8	Need
6	Information on concept and consequences of overpopulation	718	89.4	85	10.6	Need
7	Education on planned population growth	733	91.3	70	8.7	Need
8	Information on benefits of delayed marriage	614	76.3	189	23.5	Need
9	Education on benefits of small family size and welfare	715	89.0	88	11.0	Need
10	Education on consequences of population changes upon the quality of life of the individual, family,	730	90.9	73	9.1	Need

	nation and the world.									
11	Information on the effects of population growth on economic, social and political life of the community members	750	93.4	53	6.6					Need
12	Information on causes of urbanization and its related problems (e.g. overcrowding, pollution, and traffic congestion).	684	85.2	119	14.8					Need
13	Information on structure and composition of population	688	85.7	115	14.3					Need
14	Information on relationship between unemployment and crime	712	88.7	91	11.3					Need
15	Education on difference classes of nutrients	741	92.3	62	7.7					Need
16	Education on concept of balance diet and its importance for healthy development	764	95.1	39	4.9					Need
17	Education on nutrition counseling services	731	91.0	72	9.0					Need
18	Information on benefits of food and nutrition services	749	93.3	54	6.7					Need
19	Education on effects of family size on food quantity and quality	724	90.2	79	9.8					Need
20	Information on good housing/environmental practices and its effects on health	759	94.5	44	5.5					Need
21	Education on criteria for healthful housing and housing standards	732	91.2	71	8.8					Need
22	Information on overcrowding in housing and its effects on human health	730	90.9	73	9.1					Need
23	Education on the importance of provision of potable water supply and its effects on human health	770	95.9	33	4.1					Need
24	Information on the importance of provision of sanitary conveniences in housing and its effects on human health	687	85.6	116	14.4					Need
25	Education on good housing to live in	732	91.2	71	8.8					Need

### Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents regarding the population and family life education needs of the community members based on age.

Table 2:

### Results of Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) Analysis of No Significant Difference in the Mean Responses of the Respondents Regarding the Population Family Life Education Needs of Community Members Based on Age (n=802).

S/ N	Population Education Needs	Age						$\chi^2$ - cal	df	P- value	Decision
		Below 20		20-40		41 and above					
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No				
1	Population education needs	125	19	418	20	198	22	7.23	2	.109	Fail to reject
2	population growth needs	129	15	397	40	205	16	3.76	2	.347	Fail to reject
3	Population changes needs	128	16	407	31	194	26	1.94	2	.480	Fail to reject
4	Food and nutrition needs	132	12	407	30	209	12	1.45	2	.178	Fail to reject
5	Good housing and water supply needs	134	10	412	25	212	9	2.67	2	.460	Fail to reject

6	Family life needs	133	11	390	47	194	27	4.70	2	.250	Fail to reject
7	Family Relationship needs	130	14	415	23	208	12	3.04	2	.300	Fail to reject
8	Family responsibility needs	126	18	415	22	205	16	4.39	2	.220	Fail to reject
9	Reproductive health and sexuality needs	119	25	406	31	195	26	14.25	2	.008	Reject
10	Family planning information and services Needs	121	23	387	50	190	31	3.59	2	.206	Fail to reject
11	Prevention and management of STIs, HIV and AIDS Needs	108	35	415	23	204	17	2.19	2	.369	Fail to reject
12	Marriage Needs	135	9	419	18	211	10	7.08	2	.230	Fail to reject
	<b>Cluster x2 value</b>							<b>4.69</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>.26</b>	<b>Fail to reject</b>

Table 2 shows the grand calculated chi-square value of 4.69 with the corresponding value of .26. This implies that there was no significant difference in the mean responses regarding population and family life education needs of the community members according to age. The Table 2 further shows the calculated chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) values for the following components of population and family life education needs with their corresponding P-Values: Population education needs ( $\chi^2 = 7.23$ ,  $P = .109$ ), population growth needs ( $\chi^2 = 3.76$ ,  $P = .347$ ), Population changes needs ( $\chi^2 = 1.94$ ,  $P = .480$ ), food and nutrition needs ( $\chi^2 = 1.45$ ,  $P = .178$ ), good housing and water supply needs ( $\chi^2 = 2.67$ ,  $P = .460$ ), family life needs ( $\chi^2 = 4.70$ ,  $P = .250$ ), family relationship needs ( $\chi^2 = 3.04$ ,  $P = .300$ ) and family responsibilities needs ( $\chi^2 = 4.39$ ,  $P = .220$ ). The Table further shows the Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) calculated values and the corresponding P - values for family planning information and services needs ( $\chi^2 = 3.59$ ,  $P = .206$ ), prevention and management of STIs, HIV and AIDS needs ( $\chi^2 = 2.19$ ,  $P = .369$ ) and marriage needs ( $\chi^2 = 7.08$ ,  $P = .230$ ). Since the P-values are greater than .05 level of significance at two degrees of freedom the null hypothesis for these dimensions of needs was accepted. This implies that these needs were the same for all the age groups of the community members.

The Table further shows the calculated Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ ) value for reproductive health and sexuality education needs with a corresponding P-value of .008, which is less than .05 level of significance at two degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected for this dimension. This implies that the reproductive health and sexuality needs differed according to age categories of the community members.

### Discussion

Findings in the Table 1 show that population education, population growth, population changes, food and nutrition, good housing and potable water supply were the needs of the community members. These findings were expected and because they agree with the findings of National Guideline Task Force (1996), Development Education Cell Central Board of Secondary Education-PDECOBSE, 1999 and UNESCO (2013) which revealed that decent houses, balance diets, clean environment and potable water supply were the population needs of the community members. The findings are also in line with that of Huisman and Zoomers (2009) and United Nation Population Fund-UNFPA, 2013 which revealed that safe sex life, sexual relationship without fear of pregnancy, freedom to decide the number and space of their children, longer birth intervals to reduce overall level of fertility and protection against child marriage and adolescent-girl pregnancy were the population and family life education needs of the community members.

Evidence obtained from Table 2 shows that there was no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents' regarding the population and family life education needs of the

community members based on age. This finding was surprising and therefore not expected. This is because in population education matters, age plays a vital role. For instance, the decision making concerning when to marry, whom to marry, when to have children and the number of children to have are depended on the age of an individual. Age also plays vital role in the choice and use of family planning practices to be used. However, this finding disagreed with UNESCO (2002) which revealed that adolescents (10-24), adults (25-44) and aged (45-74) expressed their population and family life education needs differently. The implication of this finding is that more research should be carried out into this dimension to ascertain why the needs did not differ according to age categories.

### **Conclusions**

Twenty-five population and family life education needs were identified. There was no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents regarding population and family life education needs of community members based on age except for reproductive health and sexuality needs which differed according to age categories of the community members.

### **Recommendation**

Teachers of Health Education, Public Health Educators in conjunction with Community Development Officers, Adult Education Officers and Agricultural Extension Workers should organize and mount seminars and workshops for community members to acquire knowledge, build up positive attitudes, skills, values and abilities and apply them to meet their population and family life education needs.

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