

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Abortion is the ending of pregnancy by removing a fetus or embryo before it can survive outside the uterus. An abortion which occurs spontaneously is also known as a miscarriage. An abortion may be caused purposely and is then called an induced abortion, or less frequently, "induced miscarriage". The word abortion is often used to mean only induced abortions. When allowed by local law, induced abortion in the developed world is one of the safest procedures in medicine. Modern methods use medication or surgery for abortions (Fagbemi, 2001).

Since ancient times, induced abortions have been done using herbal medicines, sharp tools, with force, or through other traditional methods. Abortion laws and cultural or religious views of abortions are different around the world. In some areas induced abortion is legal only in specific cases such as rape, problems with the fetus, poverty, risk to a woman's health, or incest. In many places there is much debate over the moral, ethical, and legal issues of abortion. Those who oppose abortion often maintain that an embryo or fetus is a human with a right to life and may compare abortion to murder. Those who favor the legality of abortion often hold that a woman has a right to make decisions about her own body (George, 2004).

Approximately 205 million pregnancies occur each year worldwide. Over a third are unintended and about a fifth end in induced abortion. Most abortions result from unintended pregnancies. A pregnancy can be intentionally aborted in several ways. The manner selected often depends upon the gestational age of the embryo or fetus, which increases in size as the pregnancy progresses. Specific procedures may also be selected due to legality, regional availability, and doctor or a woman's personal preference.

Reasons for procuring induced abortions are typically characterized as either therapeutic or elective. An abortion is medically referred to as a therapeutic abortion when it is performed to save the life of the pregnant woman; prevent harm to the woman's physical or mental health; terminate a pregnancy where indications are that the child will have a significantly increased

chance of premature morbidity or mortality or be otherwise disabled; or to selectively reduce the number of fetuses to lessen health risks associated with multiple pregnancy. An abortion is referred to as an elective or voluntary abortion when it is performed at the request of the woman for non-medical reasons (Adepoju, 1999).

The issue of abortion has attracted substantial attention in recent times in Nigeria and everywhere in the world; abortion has therefore become a global issue (Alimson, 2001). The major concern in most of the discussions on abortion and related situation draws heavily from the fact that abortion constitutes severe danger to a woman's health, but at the same time when performed by medical specialist (i.e. abortion specialists) abortions are safe for the woman, and relatively simple.

However, other factors (economic social, educational, and family size) have equally become prominent in respect to induced abortion or pregnancy termination. Both male and female students are supposed to be sexually responsible since a lot of student's in today's society are already sexually active, but females always carry the bulk of the responsibility as they are the ones who would be greatly affected by any mistake (Alimson, 2001). For instance, a female student who forget to take necessary pregnancy precautions and therefore gets pregnant may resort to an abortion for the following reasons.

- i. To complete her education,
- ii. To avoid becoming a mother prematurely, as well as the responsibility attached to it,
- iii. To avoid being negatively labeled by the society has been "loose"
- iv. Fear of having a child out of wedlock. (Almison, 2001)

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In a study that was carried out on the category of people that indulge in abortion, the result will definitely prove that it is adolescents and youths. The minority will be older people (especially those who have passed the age of child bearing). Several causes have been identified as inducing abortion other than medical. The phenomenon in most countries is frowned at. In Nigeria for example the abortion Act of 1967 as amended in 1982 states the following;

-If the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy was terminated, the pregnancy should be terminated.

-If the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent impurity to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, it should be terminated.

-If the pregnancy has not exceeded its 24th week and the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk greater than if the pregnancy were terminated of injury to the physical or mental health of the existing children of the family of the pregnant woman, it should be terminated.

-If there is substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormality as to be serious or handicapped, the pregnancy should be terminated (George, 2004).

The above Act therefore permits under certain conditions, the abortion of a pregnancy. Most women with the following conditions are to involve in abortion carried out legally by medical experts.

Mindful of the social stigma of having unwanted pregnancies, many young girls who become pregnant seek abortion as the only way to end unwanted pregnancies. This however, has serious health risks, which sometime leads to death of young girls. For instance, unsafe abortion results in various complications such as haemorrhage, perforation of the uterus, secondary infertility and even death. It is also obvious that unsafe abortion has a devastating health impact as measured by deaths, illnesses, injuries and the cases of emergency care (Expanding Access to safe Abortion, 1993). Beside the risks of unsafe abortion, there are serious health risks involved child bearing as an adolescent or teenager. For instance, teenagers face greater risk of pelvic bone immaturity, prolonged labour and other wise difficult birth.

The fear of been sent out of School or dropping out of school because of unwanted pregnancy makes undergraduate students involve in abortion and in order to abort the baby, they go to quack doctors because it is cheap or they take concoctions and this either kills them or destroys their womb. Money in this case is also a problem.

George (2004) has clearly observed that about 72.5% of those involved in abortion are female students, 17.5% are unmarried women, while about 4.3% are housewives. It is this rate that has become a problem. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the determinant of induced abortion among undergraduate students in Nigeria, by looking at the reason why students

involve in abortion.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

- i. To examine the determinant of induced abortion among undergraduate students in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the negative consequences or disadvantages of induced abortion by undergraduate students.
- iii. To identify the best possible ways to prevent or reduce the negative effect caused by induced abortion among undergraduate students.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the determinants of induced abortion among undergraduate students in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the negative consequences or disadvantages of induced abortion by undergraduate students?
- iii. What are the best possible ways to prevent or reduce the negative effect caused by induced abortion among undergraduate students?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant negative effect of induced abortion

H₁: There is a significant negative effect of induced abortion

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following are the significance of this study:

- i. The outcome of this study will be beneficial to all categories of women, female students and the society at large. This is because the understanding of the causes of abortion will enable society, university authorities and policy makers look for means to address and reduce the menace.
- ii. The results from this study will help individuals identify the negative effect or disadvantage associated with the involvement of abortion and how it affects the society at large.
- iii. This research will be a contribution to the body of literature in the area of the effect of personality trait on student's academic performance, thereby constituting the empirical literature for future research in the subject area.

1.7 SCOPE/LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will cover the causes and the consequences of induced abortion among student

undergraduates in Nigeria.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

Financial constraint- Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

Time constraint- The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.

THE DETERMINANCE OF INDUCED ABORTION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES STUDENTS IN NIGERIA (Case study of University of Benin)

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