

PERSPECTIVES OF PREMARITAL SEXUALITY  
AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH LESS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
ADVANCEMENT IN HANOI

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at exploring what adolescents think of their premarital sexuality. Sexuality has been seen through all of four elements: sexual partnership, sexual acts, sexual meanings, sexual drive and enjoyment. These perspectives were examined in relation with the adolescent living conditions, the personal changes at adolescence and the social conception of their sexuality. The research targeted the group of less socially and economically advanced adolescents in Hanoi. They are rural adolescents who come to work temporarily in Hanoi. Adolescents in the research were defined as unmarried boys and girls aged 15 to 24.

The research employed qualitative methodology with in-depth interview, focus group discussion and projective technique as data collection tools. It was conducted in four urban districts of Hanoi.

The findings revealed that adolescents with less social and economic advancement in Hanoi had liberal perspectives of sexuality in some aspects. They accepted having more than one partner; some of them supported premarital sexual intercourse. They considered sex as love, boys have sex to gain experience and girls have sex to please their partner and keep the partner for them. Most of them were fond of dating. Their daily life was very difficult, they considered themselves low status so they preferred a partner of the same strata. Social norms expected girls to be proper in their behavior so they did not stay out too late and should control sexual arousal between the partners. Finally the respondents seemed to have limited knowledge of safe sex.

Recommendations were made in an attempt to help this group of adolescents improve their sexual health. Sexual education should be provided through youth union activities or the family members. In the city there should be counseling centers to provide them with knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and organizations that can provide necessary life skills for them to integrate with other adolescents and to deal with their life in the city.

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