

A MORAL DILEMMA ON CONTEMPORARY FILIPINO SEX PRAXIS

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Tracing back to our ancestry in the early times, Filipinos were known to be very traditionalists. Early Filipinas used to be courted in a more subdued and indirect manner. During the courtship process, a traditional Filipina is expected to play "hard to get", to act as if not interested, to be not flirty, and show utmost restraint, modesty, shyness, good upbringing, be well-mannered, demure, and reserved despite having great feelings for her admirer; a behavior culturally considered appropriate while being courted. This behavior serves as a tool for measuring the admirer's sincerity and seriousness. Females upholding such values were often called Maria Clara and were highly respected by society. But as these principles were passed from generation to generation, this upright morale was slowly depreciated. Little by little, society, especially women, was slowly detaching from tradition. Instead, they became less conservative and often shows the first motive to the opposite sex. With these changes that are continuously occurring, our young adults are also starting or should I say, already drowning in this pool of socially accepted claims and becoming unaware of the possible consequences of such actions.

A study conducted by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) shows that 10,279 of the total number of 38,114 HIV/AIDS cases from 1984 to October 2016 were in the age bracket of 15-24. Moreover, in a recent study held by the DOH between January 11 to June 2016, 8000 HIV/AIDS cases were recorded and this is just for 25 years old and below. 1 out of 10 teens, specifically 15-19, are either pregnant or already mothers.

Alarmed by the statistical numbers, the DOH's HIV/AIDS Awareness Campaign has been brought down to school levels. Thus, a solution was proposed. Condom

distribution in schools will be implemented. But before giving away condoms, students will be counseled by a teacher that will first be trained on how to counsel teens. According to DOH Secretary Paulyn Ubial, its main advocacy is abstinence and delaying sexual debut, if they cannot do that, they should be faithful to just one partner. And parents will be urged to be open about the topic of safe sex.

While we all know that given the situation of teens these days when it comes to 'sexual awakening,' it still isn't enough reason to expose our young people to such. Putting a box of condoms in the hands of even fairly mature young people won't help stop the deadly disease because HIV/AIDS can also be transmitted by other means such as dirty needles and infected blood. Of course, the disease can also be passed on through "unprotected" sex but what if the contraceptive sheath breaks? Out goes the HIV virus swimming into the 'clean' one. Though giving away condoms in schools may not fully stop the spread of HIV, it will surely lessen the number of teenage pregnancies. Moreover, the thinking that condoms might prevent early pregnancy, might also be the reason why more and more teens will indulge in sex. According to Sec. Ubial, "Distribution of condoms is not a bad habit. We are not encouraging the youth to use them. The condoms are for safekeeping and should be used only during emergencies and for the youth's protection." So, if the condoms to be given away were not meant to be used, then why should they even give them to young people? Is sex even considered an emergency? No wonder sectors like the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) are going against this proposed solution of the DOH to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

There are contrasting ideas in the arousing practice of distributing condoms to young people; maybe the government would likely take direct action in preventing the spreading of the deadly virus; however, this practice in the Philippines, a country where morals are highly appreciated, is a direct insult to our beliefs. Concepts puzzled Filipino people; liberty overvalues.

At the end of the day, we are still entitled to our own belief system.

References:

UNAIDS, 2016. Philippines Addresses Rising Trend in New HIV Infections. Department of Health. Retrieved from: <https://doh.gov.ph/node/10649>