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# The Prevalence of Pre-marital Sexual Practice and Its Contributing Factors in Robit High School Students

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**Abstract:** Sexual activities among high school students have been reported to be increased worldwide. Schools are the ideal places where adequate and accurate information be provided along with their formal education. Some studies revealed that 2 out of 4 peoples in urban Ethiopia practiced their first sexual intercourse in respective high schools. The aim of this study is to assess the status of the premarital sexual practice and its associated factors among high school students at Robit town. A cross sectional study was conducted Among Robit high school students from May to June 2012. Of 242, students 14.9% (69.4% of males and 30.6% females) reported having practiced premarital sexual intercourse. All students had their first sexual intercourse after the age of 15 years. Among those who were sexually active 41.7% and 58.3% were grade 9th and 10th respectively. The main reasons for initiation of the first sexual intercourse were 44.4%, 27.8%, 11.1%, 8.3%, and 8.3% were full in love, had desire, peer pressure, to set money and was drunk respectively. The study findings revealed that there is a high Prevalence of premarital sexual practices among the students. In addition school students are practicing risky sexual behaviors such as multiple sexual partners and sex before marriage. As a result, an integrated effort needs to be initiated to address such school students' sexual and reproductive health problems.

**Keywords:** Premarital Sexual Practice, High School, Sexuality, Reproductive Health

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## 1. Introduction

Premarital sex- is sexual activity practiced by persons who are unmarried, although it has always been practiced in the West it has increased in prevalence since the mid 1950 [1]. The period between development of the onset of puberty and adulthood. It usually is beginning between 11 and 13 years of age with the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics and spans the teenage years, terminating at 18-20 years of age with the completion of the development of the adult form [2].

One of the most painful and yet over looked aspects of sex outside marriage is emotional scars. What might start as fun, exciting and romantic can end in a lifetime of painful memories. In another, it wills big health problems for teenagers who are practicing premarital sex during their early ages [3].

Schools are the ideal places where adequate and accurate information be provide along with their formal education. Moreover, peer groups in school play a great role in information dissemination and help students internalized the

facts that lead to behavioral change. This needs the integrated effort of adolescents, school teacher, the family and other relevant bodies [4].

Some studies revealed that, 2 out of 4 peoples in urban Ethiopia practiced their first sexual inter course in their respective high schools. The general population also adapted stigma and discrimination towards those who are in problems with the result premarital sex. According to, some information, most female's sex workers are pushed out by their parents due to premarital sex which is the cause for abortion and HIV/AIDS [5].

This research answers the question what the prevalence of premarital sexual practice and risk factors for it among Robit high school students.

## 2. Objective

### 2.1. General Objective

To assess the prevalence of the premarital sexual practice

and associated factors that attributes for premarital sexual practices among high school students. At Robit town.

**2.2. Specific Objective**

- To describe the prevalence of premarital sexual practice among Robit high school students.
- To determine factors contributing to pre marital sex among high school students.
- To identify those participants who practice unsafe sex.

**3. Methodology**

**3.1. Study Area**

This study was conducted at Robit town, which is found North Wollo of Amhara region, in a north Ethiopia. Robit town is about 555km s from Addis Ababa. The total population of Robit town is 5786 and has one high school.

**3.2. Study Design and Period**

Institution based cross sectional study was conducted among Robit high school students from May to June 2012.

**3.3. Populations**

**3.3.1. Source Population**

All Robit high school students

**3.3.2. Study Population**

Grade 9 and 10 students.

**3.3.3. Sample Size Determinations**

Assumption is used for the determinations of the sample size. Level of confidence 95%  $2(1- 1/2) = 1.96$  of error 5 to(d=0.05) anticipated population prevalence(proportion) p of 50% was preferred as there was no available previous study in the area, thus proportion of the respondents, additional 10% allowance was consider.

$$n_1 = \frac{Z(\alpha/2)^2 pq}{d^2} \tag{1}$$

$$n_1 = \frac{(1.96/2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n_1 = 384$$

Hence the source of population less than 10,000 sample closeness will require and

$$n_2 = 1 + \frac{n_1}{N} \tag{2}$$

where  $n_1 = 384$

$N =$  source population

$n_2 =$  sample to be determine

$n_2 = 1 + \frac{384}{690} N = 690$  (current Robit high school student in grade 9 and grade 10)

$$n_2 = 247$$

Lastly, by adding the 10% allowed for in case refusal and/or absenteeism of respondent sample become

$$n_f = 10\% \text{ of } n_2 + n_2 \text{ where}$$

$$n_f = \text{Final Sample}$$

$$n_f = \frac{10}{100} \times 247 + 247$$

$$= 24.7 + 247$$

$$n_f = 272$$

**3.4. Sample Techniques**

By systematic random sampling technique one high school (Robit) was selected from Raya Kobo high schools.

Pretest –the questionnaire was carried out on selected students of the same grade in Gobyehigh school to evaluate accuracy and completeness of the materials.

**3.5. Data Collection and Analysis**

Self administer questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire was adapted from the Ethiopian BSS questionnaire.

The questionnaire was prepared in easy understandable way and translated to the local languages and translates to English.

Data was analysis by chi- square and odd ratio

**3.6. Data Quality Control**

To improve the quality of data it was collected by oriented date collectors about the research and checked by research data collection supervisors, additionally and an ongoing supervision was conducted.

**3.7. Study Variables**

Independent Variables.

- Socio- demography(Age, sex, ethnicity, maritalstatus, Religion, Educational level).
- Parent job status.
- Substance abuse(alcohol, chat, drugs.).

Dependent variables.

- Sexual practice.

**3.8. Limitation of the Study**

Inherent to cross sectional data that is impossible to make causal inferences.

**3.9. Operational Definition**

Premarital sex: - sexual practice before marriage.

Safe sex: - proper sexual practice for dual protection(for HIV/STI and un wanted pregnancy).

Adolescence: - the period between the age s 10-19.

Youth:- the period between the age 15-24.

Pre puberty: - before age 10.

Substance abuse:-use of substance in the absence of medical order

Puberty:- a period in life when a person moves from childhood

Reproductive health: - not complete absence of disease, dysfunction in all condition related to the reproductive system and to its function and process.

Social stigma:- perception of a person when someone knows a hidden idea

### 3.10. Ethical Clearance

Permission was obtained from the ethical clearance of Raya kobo Woreda Health office ethical committee and Robit High School and Informed verbal consent was obtained from Participant students.

## 4. Result

### 4.1. Socio – Demographic Characteristics of Robit High School Students

A total of 272 school students were participated in the survey, and the reasonable rate was 100% however 30(11%) of the response were not include from the analysis because of their incomplete and non- responses while 242 respondents completed the questionnaires. From the total of 272 respondent 157(64.9%) and 85(35.1%) were males and females respectively. Were 236(97.5%) of the respondent were unmarried 6(2.5%) were currently married.

The majority of the respondent, 239(98.8%) were Amhara and 3(1.2%), Tigrians. By religion, 221(91.3%), 21(8.7%) Orthodox and Muslim, respectively; Moreover their educational levels, 137(57 %) and 150(43%) Of the respondent were attending in grade 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respectively.

Among all the respondent 201(83.1%), 35(14.5%), 3(1.2%), and 3(1.2%) were living with their parents, Single parent, relatives and alone respectively(see on table-1). 64(26.4%) of the respondent reported that they have permanent pocket money while 178(73.6%) have no pocket money

**Table 1.** Socio demographic characteristics of Students in Robit High School.

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Age	10-14	220	90.9
	>20	22	9.1
	Total	242	100
Sex	Male	157	64.87
	Female	85	35.13
Grade Level	Total	242	
	9 <sup>th</sup>	137	57
	10 <sup>th</sup>	105	43
	Total	242	
	Married	06	2.5
Marital Status	Un married	236	97.5%
	Divorced	0	0
	Widower	0	0
	Total	242	100
	Orthodox	221	91.32
Religion	Muslim	21	8.68
	Protestant	0	0
	Catholic	0	0

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Ethnicity	Other	0	0
	Total	242	
	Amhara	239	18.76
	Tigrian	03	1.24
	Oromo	0	0
	Afar	0	0
	Other	0	0
	Total	242	
	Both Parents	201	83.06
	Single Parent	35	14.46
Currently Living with	Relatives	03	1.24
	Alone	03	1.24
Pocket Money	Friends	0	0
	Spouse	0	0
	Yes	64	26.45
	No	178	73.55
	Total	242	

When the respondent classified based on their parents educational status as perceived by the respondents 150(61.98%), 199(82.2%) from uneducated family father mother respectively. While the rest(father and mother)65(26.9%), 29(12%), 10(4.1%), 4(1.7%).5(2%), 3(1.2%), 41.7%, and 9(3.7%), 3(1.2%) of the respondent were from the families who are grade 1-4,5-8,9-10,11-12 and 12+2 and above respectively.

As far as students parents (father and mother) were concerned 8(3.3%), 18(7.4%), 206(85.1%), 208(85.9%), 12(4.9%), 6(2.8%), and 16(6.6%), 10(4.1%), were daily laborer, farmers, civil servant and has private business respectively.

**Table 2.** Description of parents of the study population Family education, Occupation and economic status, Robit town, 2012.

	Variable	Frequently	Percentage(%)
Fathers education level	Un education	150	61.98
	Primary(1-4)	65	26.86
	Junior(5-6)	10	4.1
	Secondary(9-10)	05	2.10
	Preparatory(11-12)	03	1.24
	>12 and above	09	3.72
Mother educational Level	Total		
	Un education	199	22.2
	Primary(1-4)	29	12
	Junior(5-6)	04	1.65
	Secondary(9-10)	03	1.2
	Preparatory(11-12)	04	1.65
Father Occupation	>12 and above	03	1.24
	Total		
	Daily laborer	08	3.3
	Farmer	206	85.1
	Civil servant	12	4.96
	Employed in private sector	0	0
Mothers Occupation	Have privet business	16	66
	Total	242	
	Daily laborer	18	7.44
	Farmer	208	85.9
	Civil servant	06	2.8
	Employed in private sector	0	0
Mothers Occupation	Has privet business	10	4.1
	Total	242	

Table 3. Reproductive history of high school students, Robit town, 2012.

Variables	frequency	Percentage(%)
Premarital Sex		
Yes Male= 25 Female = 11	36	14.9
No Male = 151 Female = 35	206	85.1
Reason to start sex(N=36)		
Full in love	16	44.4
Had desire	10	27.8
Raped	0	
To- get money/ gift	03	8.3
Peer pressure	04	11.1
Was drunk	03	8.3
Relation of the first sexual partner		
• An acquaintance	13	36.1
• A friend	19	52.8
• Fiancé	4	11.1
• Relative		0
Relation to startsex with current partner(N=26)		
• Full in love	14	53.8
• Had desire	04	11.1
• Got married	02	5.5
• Raped	0	0
• To get money gift	02	5.5
• Peer pressure	04	11.1
Contraceptive method used		
Yes	20	55.6
No	16	44.4
Type of contraceptive method		
• Condom	10	50
• Pills	7	35
• IUD/Loop	0	
• Norplant	0	
• Inject able/DMPA	3	15
Sex with commercial sex worker		
Yes	1	4
No	24	96
Unwanted pregnancy		
Yes	1	9
No	10	91
Rate of unwanted pregnancy		
One time	1	100
Two and above times	0	0
Abortion		
Yes	1	100
No	0	0
Place of abortion		
Health institution	1	100
Traditional by non- professional	0	0

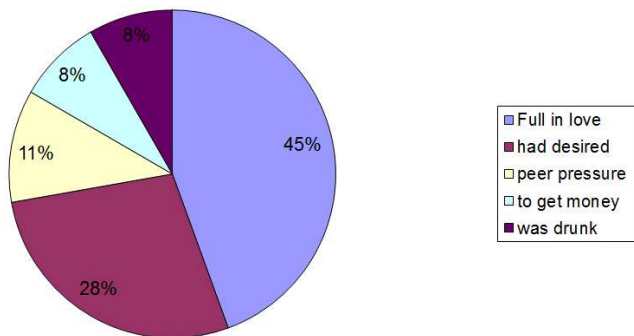


Figure 1. Reasons to start premarital sex in Robit high school students in 2012.

### 4.2. Reproductive Health History Among Robit High School Students

Among all students aged 10-22 years, 206(85.1%) reported not having sexual intercourse 36(14.9%) of the respondent reported to have premarital sexual intercourse at the time of the survey. Of which 25(69.4%) were males and 11(30.6%) were females. From all sexually active students have their first sexual inter course of the age of 15. Among those who were sexually active 21(58.3%) and 15(41.7%) were grade 10<sup>th</sup> and grade 9<sup>th</sup> respectively at the time of the survey. Regarding their first sexual partners were friends 19(52.8%) followed by acquaintance 13(36.1%), fiancé 4(11.1%) and no relative relation ship. The main reason for the intention of their first sexual intercourse 16(44.4%), 10(27.8%), 4(11.4%) and no relative relationships. The main reason for the initiation of their first sexual intercourse 16(44.4%), 10(28.8%), 41(11.1%), 3(8.3%), were full in love had desire, peer pressure, to get money and was drunk respectively.

Among those who were sexually active males 1(4%) had sexual intercourse with commercial sex workers while 24(96%) had not sexual intercourse with commercial sex worker? From sexually active females 1(9%) had unwanted pregnancy with a rate of one time and she had an abortion in health institution.

### 4.3. Risk Behaviors for Premarital Sex

Among all respondents 222(91.7%) were never used(drunk) alcohol at all, 20(8.3%) used alcohol once a week and there were no one who drink daily, 242(100%) were never smoke cigarettes, 239(98.8%) not chew at all, and 3(1.2%) chew once or twice a week and regarding to the hashish all respondent says never used at all.

Table 4. Risk behavior for premarital sex.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
• Alcohol drink		
Never	222	91.7
Once or twice a week	20	8.3
Daily	0	0
• Smoke cigarettes		
Never	242	100
Once or twice a week	0	0
Daily	0	0
• Chew chat		
Never	239	98.8
Once or twice a week	3	1.2
Daily	0	0
• Drugs like hashishuse		
Never	242	100
Once or twice a week	0	0
Daily	0	0

4.4. Relation of Independent and Dependent Variables

Table 5. Observed frequency of premarital sex with age.

		Age		Total
		10-20	>20	
Premarital sex	Yes	28	8	36
	No	192	14	206
Total		220	22	242

Table 6. Expected frequency of Premarital sex with Age.

		Age		Total
		10-20	>20	
Premarital sex	Yes	33	3	36
	No	187	19	206
Total		220	22	242

No association between age and premarital sex( $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ ) at 95% CI).  
No need of calculated OR hence there was no association.

Table 7. Observed frequency of Premarital sex with Religion.

		Religion		Total
		Muslim	Orthodox	
Premarital sex	Yes	4	32	36
	No	17	189	206
Total		21	221	242

Table 8. Expected frequency of Premarital sex with Religion.

		Religion		Total
		Muslim	Orthodox	
Premarital sex	Yes	3	33	36
	No	18	188	206
Total		21	221	242

There was association between religion and premarital sex( $X^2_{cal} < X^2_{tab}$  at 95% CI).

$$OR = \frac{ad}{bc} = \frac{4 \times 189}{17 \times 32} = 1.3$$

Interpretation- Orthodox students had less likely to experience premarital sex by 1.3 times than Muslim students.

Table 9. Observed frequency of premarital sex with grade level.

Grade level				Total
		9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	
Premarital sex	Yes	15	a 21	B 36
	No	122	c 84	D 206
Total		137	105	242

There was an association between grade level and premarital sex( $X^2_{cal} < X^2_{tab}$  at 95% CI).

OR =0.5

Interpretation – grade 10<sup>th</sup> students had less likely to experience premarital sex by 0.5 times than grade 9<sup>th</sup>.

Table 10. Observed frequency of premarital sex with sex.

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Premarital sex	Yes	25a	11b	36
	No	132c	74d	206
Total		157	85	242

Table 11. Expected frequency of premarital sex with sex.

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Premarital sex	Yes	23	13	36
	No	134	72	206
Total		157	85	242

There was an association between sex and premarital sex( $X^2_{cal} < X^2_{tab}$  at 95% CI).

OR = 1.3

Interpretation - Male students who were currently learning had 1.3 times practicing premarital sex when compared to female students.

Table 12. Observed frequency of premarital sex with pocket money.

		Pocket money		Total
		Yes	No	
Premarital sex	Yes	25	11	36
	No	39	164	206
Total		64	178	242

Table 13. Expected frequency of premarital sex with pocket money.

		Pocket money		Total
		Yes	No	
Premarital sex	Yes	10	26	36
	No	54	152	206
Total		64	178	242

There was no association between pocket money and premarital sex. (hence  $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$  at 95% CI).

No need of calculating OR hence there was no association.

Table 14. Observed frequency of premarital sex with Alcohol.

		Alcohol		Total
		Used	Not used	
Premarital sex	Yes	5a	31b	36
	No	15c	191d	206
Total		222	178	242

Table 15. Expected frequency of premarital sex with Alcohol.

		Alcohol		Total
		Used	Not used	
Premarital sex	Yes	3	33	36
	No	17	189	206
Total		20	222	242

There was an association between alcohol and premarital sex( $X^2_{cal} < X^2_{tab}$  at 95% CI with df =1).

OR = 2

Interpretation – Alcohol users were two times at risk to practice premarital sex when compared with non users.

Finally from the association of independent and dependent variables as we had seen religion, grade level, sex and alcohol had strong relation with premarital sex where as age, pocket money and ethnicity had no relation with premarital sex of Robit high school students of Raya Kobo district in 2004E.C.

## 5. Discussion

This survey was done on representative sample of Robit high schools students of both sexes aged 10-22 years to assess the premarital sexual practice and factors contributed to premarital sexual practice among high school students at Robit town, Amhara regional state.

The prevalence of premarital sex among the study population was 36(14.9%) of thus 25(69.4%) and 11(30.6%) were males and females, respectively. This finding is relatively higher specially for females when compare to similar study finding, in united states 61% of male and 125 female had engaged premarital sex. Other study on Jimma students also showed that out of 228 students 195(41.7%) male and 33(31.7%) females have and premarital sexual practice.

This study shows that premarital sexual practice among high school student especially for female in the study was higher than other study findings.

Therefore, the main age of the high school student at first sexual intercourse the current finding was found to be relatively higher than others. In the current study all of them had their first sexual intercourse after the age of 15 years. Other study students start sexual practice before the age of 14 years in (Nekemt). This indicates students' exposed them to different health related problem like STI, HIV/AIDS and abortion in their early age. Therefore, delay in the first sex is one condition decrease HIV infection.

Male students who had pocket money were likely to engage in premarital sex than females and also from those who have had pocket money 64(26.4%) 56(87.5%) were males and 8(12.5%) were females. At the same time, they were more likely to buy condom when they sex with commercial sex worker similar study in North East Ethiopia indicates that out of 157 sexually active 50%of their used condom regularly when they made sexual inter course with commercial sex workers. Other study in Jimma indicate that out of 123 students who had not regularly sexual partner only 80(65%) of them use condom. Also other study in Nekemt revealed that among those sexually active student only 34.5% use condom.

This study indicates that alcohol 20(8.3%) once or twice a week and chat 3(1.2%) were found more likely to contribute to premarital sex relates to students who were sexually active. Study conducted in North East Ethiopic indicates that those who drink alcohol and chewing chat were two times more at risk to initiate sexual intercourse earlier than those who did not drink alcohol and chat chewers.

## 6. Conclusion

From this study, it is possible to conclude that high school student engaged in premarital sexual practice (10.3 of males and 4.5% of females) which is found to be higher than most of studies. The students were found to start premarital practice after the age of 15. The most mentioned reasons for students to start sexual activity were fall in love, had desire, peer pressure, alcohol drinks and for money.

## Recommendation

Establish opportunity for student to dialogue with their parents about risk of premarital sex.

Schools are better to add life skill behavioral and reproductive health education in their curriculum.

Schools must inform for the students parent about the time the students spent their time after school.

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