

## ***Induced abortion in Cameroon: between the clandestineness and the legality.***

Abortion is one of the oldest methods of preventing unwanted births and until recently one of the most hazardous. In spite of its illegality, it is well known that induce abortion is commonly practised in Cameroon and still claiming lives.

The rate of fertility fell in Cameroon since 1976 averaging up to 6.4 children by woman in 1978 and 5.8 in 1991 then from 5,4 children by woman in 1996 to 5.0 in 2004.

The use of the modern and traditional contraception is still average in Cameroon. 54 per cent of women interrogated in 2004 declared to have used a contraceptive method. One can wonder if the recourse to the induced abortion in this population group is not a means of birth control facing, a material poverty, a lack of information and the difficulties of access to contraceptive methods.

Although abortion is a taboo, it is not some less rife in Cameroon. It is an ancient practice that is valued by all women but that develops especially among young girls. It poses a huge health problem in the sense where it is less known for the legal or financial grounds. In all case, abortion is very certainly one of the factors important in the decrease of the fertility in Cameroon.

Although abortion is highly restricted in Cameroon, it is not uncommon among urban adolescent. The practice of illegal abortion frequently increases complications which can drive to barrenness or death. The severities of laws incite illegal abortion practice that hides unwanted pregnancies.

Abortion is above all the social failure consequence and it is caused by the socio-economic environment of the country. Any woman confronted with problems of survival is tempted to do away with her unwanted pregnancy.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The purpose of this study is to:

- Explain why the Cameroonian ethics still condemns abortion
- Explain that provoked abortion is one of the major factors of the decrease of fertility in Cameroon
- Explain why the use of contraception (modern and traditional) is still average in Cameroon
- Emphasize the principal causes of abortion.

### **DATA, METHOD AND USED VARIABLES**

- Cultural and ethnological data on the maternity among the Cameroonian people
- Data coming from the demographic investigations and health in Cameroon (1991, 1996, 2004)
- Multi-varied analysis methods
- Davis , Blake and Bongaarts' methods
- Indicators/variables : Total fertility Rate (TFR), Index of marriage, Index of contraception, Index of abortion, Index of postpartum insusceptibility, indicator of intrauterine mortality, Indicator of sterility
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### **AWAITED RESULTS**

Illegality surrounding abortion frequently provokes complications that can drive to women barrenness or death. The severity of laws incites illegal abortion practice that hides unwanted pregnancies.

Abortion is especially the social failure consequence and is caused by the socio-economic environment of the country. Women confronted with problems of survival are tempted to do away with her pregnancy.

It seems to me more necessary to think on the sanitary conditions of these abortions than their effects about the rate of fertility

It makes no doubt that the contraception is the best alternative to abortion but we must also admit that there is no method that is necessary in the control of fertility and that no Family planning services are perfected.

Would it not be more logical that one considers a planning or a control of the births without legalising abortion? Instead of condemning this act that cause people to risk their life in a clandestine manner, would it not be worth to control it legally in hospitals?

The study recommends:

- A more comprehensive community-based study of abortion
- A review of the abortion laws of Cameroon to permit un less first trimester of early abortions
- Availability of contraception and contraceptives
- Establishment of abortion counselling centres

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