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Parents to blame for kids' acts

THE upsurge in sex-related issues due to inappropriate sex and ignorance has resulted in the high incidence of abortion, dumping of babies and unwanted teenage pregnancies.

An average of 100 babies are abandoned a year, police figures show.

This does not take into account the number of babies who have been disposed of for good without a trace. It also does not take into account the number of unmarried and underage girls who have had abortions.

Unwanted babies have been dumped in appalling and sickening places, such as toilet bowls, rubbish dumps, rivers, garbage bins and abandoned buildings. Some have been found with red ants all over them and some have been ravaged by dogs and rats.

Therefore, the news report "Places for unwanted babies" (NST, Feb 16), gives a practical solution to reduce the infanticide. The women, family and community development minister has said that unwanted babies can be sent to the 104 district welfare offices or the 60 orphanages nationwide run by the Welfare Department.

This has to be complemented by parents, schools, governments and non-governmental organisations.

Babies are dumped by unwed mothers and underage girls who are young, naive and immature.

Parents have to play their role as guardians and monitor their children. Some children have been given too much freedom and parents have to be mindful of their clandestine activities. A strong foundation

in religious and moral values has to be instilled in children during their formative years. It is the duty of parents to inculcate these values.

Sex education should be introduced in schools and colleges. Sexual promiscuity among adolescents is on the rise due to a lack of sexual and reproductive health information.

Boys and girls should possess adequate knowledge about sexually-transmitted diseases (such as AIDS), unwanted teen pregnancies and the sanctity of marriage (sex within the confines of marriage). Sex and sexuality are taboo subjects in our society, but depriving children of sex education will lead to more cases of teenage pregnancies and sex-related problems.

When unwed girls find themselves pregnant, there is

virtually no help from the family. These girls should be able to seek help and guidance from the authorities, who should counsel the family to accept the truth.

They should be referred to non-governmental organisations such as Kewaja, which look after the welfare of unwed mothers.

Baby-dumping has brought shame and dishonour to families and the nation. We are responsible for our children and we have to bear the consequences of their indecent acts. In a way, we have to take the blame for their ignorance.

Therefore, a concerted effort is needed by parents, schools, religious leaders, the government and NGOs to deal with this social scourge.

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