EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT TRACKING FOR TEEN MOTHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO VHEMBE DISTRICT

By

MUDAU THIZWILONDI JOSEPHINE

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PROMOTER: DR H.N. MUTSHAENI

CO-PROMOTER: DR T. RUNHARE

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DECLARATION

I, **Mudau Thizwilondi Josephine**, (Student Number 9509355) hereby declare that the thesis submitted by me for Doctoral Degree in Education at the University of Venda has not been previously submitted for a degree purpose at this or any other university and that this is my own work in design and execution and that all the referenced material contained there in have been duly acknowledged.

Mudau TJ

10-09-2014
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. This study also aimed to find out the prevalence of teenage pregnancy, attendance at school, and academic perfomance by teen mothers in the Vhembe District schools. The study sought to establish whether teenage motherhood has an effect on academic performance as perceived by educators. Sixty teenage mothers, eighteen teachers and six principals were purposively sampled for the study. Data was collected using in-depth interviews and focus group interviews to give the researcher a platform to ask open-response questions and to explore the educators' perspective about academic performance, attendance at school and the educational achievements of teenage mothers.The data was analysed thematically. This was done by carefully identifying and expanding significant themes that emerged from the informants' perceptions about the academic performance, attendance, and educational achievement of teenage mothers.The study revealed that the prevalence of teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood have a negative effect on school attendance and the academic perfomanceof the teenagers compared to their peers who are not pregnant.The study recommends that sex education should be taken seriously in secondary schools; educators should be trained and given skills to deal with both pregnant learners and teen mothers. Government should introduce a new method of disbursing the child support grant. There should be a provision of moblie clinics in schools so that both pregnant learners and teen mothers can be supported and not humiliated or stigmatized by peers and educators.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents Mr William and Mrs Mulambilu Seabe who were my inspiration and have instilled in me the self-confidence and the belief that education is the cornerstone in life.

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CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy is a world problem that affects the social, health and economic status of teenage mothers, whether in the developed or developing countries (National Campaign to prevent Teenage Pregnancy 2006). Teenage mothers and fathers are often unprepared for parenthood. They drop out of school and take up low paying jobs and, in some cases, never complete their education. The social and economic consequences of early childbirth are profound (Chigona & Chetty,2007:3).

Globally, 15 million women under the age of 20 give birth, representing up to one-fifth of all births, and 529,000 women die due to pregnancy and childbirth- related complications every year (Dev Raj, Rabi, Amudha, Van Teijlingen &Chapman, and 2010:10). Teenage pregnancy is a major concern to world communities, with the United States of America (U.S.A) being at the top with almost 1,000,000 teenage pregnancies each year (Williams, 2010:1).The United States has the highest number of pregnancies and births among adolescents (Coley & Lansdale, cited in Chang'ach 2012:3). According to the Inter-press Service (2011), the global rate for teenage pregnancy for the year 2011 was 52, 9 pregnancies per 1,000 female adolescents. In 2000, the total number of teenage pregnancies in the United States was 821, 81 (84 pregnancies per 1000 people), as compared to Canada whose total rate of teenage pregnancies in 2000 was 38,600 (38 pregnancies per 1000 people) (Chang'ach, 2014:4). The United States has the highest teenage birth rate of all developed countries (Crosson-Tower, 2007:280).

In England, there are nearly 90,000 teenage conceptions per year; around 7,700 to girls under the age 16 and 2,200 to girls aged 14 or under who fall pregnant (Holgate, Evans & Yuen, 2006:9). The Department of Health (United Kingdom) in (Macleod, 2011:137) reports that in England and Wales, more women in their early twenties find themselves

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with unwanted pregnancies that end in abortion. The United States has the highest teenage birth rate of all developed countries (Crosson-Tower, 2007:280).

The United States has the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates among comparable industrialised nations. Its rates are twice as high as Great Britain and ten times higher than those of the Netherlands. In the United States, 800,000 to 900,000 adolescent girls who are 19 years of age or younger become pregnant each year (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000:10). The United Kingdom (UK) has the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe. Between 1998 and 2006, the under 18-conception rate in England and Wales remained higher than that of other Western European countries, and three times higher than that of Germany (Lemos, 2009:14).

Vinovskis (1988 and 1992), opines that teenage pregnancy emerged as a social problem within the media and social policy debates in the United States in the 1970s. This is when special interest was taken in the issue. According to Zellman (1981) United States public schools have become increasingly involved in the problems of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood. Therefore, the United States Education Amendment Title IX provides teenagers who are pregnant or who have a child, regardless of their marital status, the same rights as other students. They cannot be expelled from school or barred from any programme. With the passage of Title IX, student pregnancy and parenthood became legally, a school matter (Zellman: 2009).

In Africa, the sexual behaviour of urban adolescents in Nigeria and Liberia is now very similar to that of people in the same age category in the USA and Europe (UNICEF, 2006:45). In the same continent (Africa), girls are often married at a young age and are under pressure to give birth to children. In sub-Saharan African countries, girls and women are losing the battle for equal access to secondary education. In many developing countries, such as Kenya, teenage pregnancy has been one of the major hindrances to the educational success of girls (Grant & Hallman, 2006:3).

In the sub-Saharan African countries there are also concerns about high rates of pregnancy related to school dropouts, (James *et al.* 2000:37). According to Meekers and Ahmed (1999:211), official school policies in Botswana regarding schoolgirl

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pregnancies contribute to the young mothers' difficulties in returning to school to complete their education. Again, educational policies in Botswana stipulate that a teenage pregnant mother who wishes to return to school must apply to a different school from that one she left. This indicates that for the individual woman, childbearing at an early age can shape and alter her entire future.

Singh (2009:46) indicates that the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have the highest level of adolescent childbearing in the developing world, with rates ranging between about 120 to about 160 per 1000 in most countries of this region. Young mothers are traumatised by the stigma of early pregnancy and begin a lifelong trajectory of poverty for themselves and their children through truncated educational opportunities and poor job prospects (Chigona & Chetty, 2008:7). Studies in South Africa have shown that, second to financial concerns, teen pregnancy is one of the main reasons for high school dropout rates.

There are several factors that contribute to an increased risk of early pregnancy. These risks include lack of knowledge about sex and how to use contraceptives, barriers to accessing contraceptives, including negative attitudes of health staff, peer pressure, low self-esteem, poverty and low educational expectations. Teenage pregnancy has recently emerged as an important area of focus for many scholars, but, according to earlier research conducted by different authors, the scourge was not always given the attention it deserves (Tlakula, 2000:18).

South Africa is not an exception. According to Haas & Haas (1995:8), teen pregnancy continues to be a national problem in South Africa even though contraceptives are easily accessible to most teenagers. When such pregnancy occurs, both the boy and the girl are unprepared and tend to blame each other or react with hostility towards each other (Haas & Haas 1995:12).

Most researchers such as Grant & Hallman (2006:79) and Loyd & Mensch (1999:2) see teenage pregnancy as having negative consequences, and they identify occurrences such as the disruption of schooling, poor child outcomes, and health risks associated with early pregnancy, demographic concerns, early marriage, and other relationship

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difficulties, as major obstacles in the psycho-social development of the teenage mothers. While some of the research on teenage pregnancy in South Africa specifically addresses the consequences of early pregnancy, much of the literature starts with the basic assumption that teenage pregnancy has negative consequences and is, therefore, a social problem (De Villiers, 1991:76).

Makiwane, Desmond, Richter and Udjo (2006:324) acknowledge teenage pregnancy as a social problem. This perception is supported by many negative consequences of teen pregnancy. For example, teenage pregnancy is associated with physiological harm to the teenage mother and the child. In addition, early pregnancy may exclude the teen mother from educational and social resources, the end result of which initiates the young mother into a trajectory of lifelong poverty for her and her child (Ojwang, & Maggwa, 1991:7).

Arbor (2004:55) comments that the public perception that teenage childbearing is a social problem is relatively new. Even though teenage pregnancy is a social problem, in contrast to circumstances in many other developing country settings, schoolgirls in South Africa who become pregnant are not expelled and are allowed to return to school once they have borne the child. Kaufman, (2001:5) mentioned that half the levels of early child- bearing have been constant over several decades; 30 to 40 percent of women in each five year age cohort have given birth as teenagers for about the last 40 years.

Chigona & Chetty (2008:7) write that, in South Africa, during apartheid rule, pregnant girls were not allowed at school. In the post-apartheid era, with the adoption of the Bill of Rights in 1996, girls who become pregnant whilst schooling are no longer expelled from their institutions. Nationwide, girls are allowed to remain in school if they can manage logistically and financially. To fulfil the provision of the Bill of Rights, the Western Cape Education Department introduced the Managing Learner Pregnancy Policy in public schools. This was in response to the high rate of teenage pregnancies in South Africa. The policy gives teen mothers the right to remain at, and continue their education in school. The policy dictates that schools should ensure that the rights and development of female learners are not curtailed and that special measures are taken in

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respect of pregnant learners (Department of Education, 2009:4). The most important reason for doing research on the educational achievement of teenage mothers is that teen motherhood is one of the problems facing society, the world over, making it difficult for teen mothers to attain and complete their secondary school education.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teen motherhood is one of the problems facing societies in the world in general, and South Africa in particular. This social problem is widely documented by various authors such as Campion (1995:90) and Richardson (1993:342). MacLead and Tracey (2009:9) conducted a study that showed the consequences of early reproduction. The consequence of early reproduction was also supported by the Minister of Basic Education, Motshekga, in a UNICEF document (2009:4) in which she said that the high proportion of unintended pregnancies in South Africa remains a serious problem. Due to teenage motherhood and other contributing variables, which include prior poor school performance, domestic responsibilities and being a primary care giver for the child, school dropout is permanant for teenage mothers (Meeker & Ahmed 1999:321).

According to Sowetan, News 24 (2011), the KwaZulu Natal Health MEC, Sibongile Dhlomo, expressed concern about the high rate of teenage pregnancies which stood at about 17 000 pregnancies at KZN schools in 2010. UNICEF (2009:6) and the Minister of Basic Education, Motshekga, also observed that despite the decline in teenage fertility rates, the high proportion of unintended pregnancies for teenagers in South Africa remains a serious problem. Due to the problem of teenage pregnancies, the government of South Africa developed interventions such as South African Schools Act (1996) and measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancies (2007:5). These measurers are in line with the law in South Africa through the Constitution. The Schools Act of 1996 states that young girls who fall pregnant should not be denied access to education.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to explore the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers in South Africa.

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1.4 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Hofstee (2006:89), assumptions are things that you take to be true without checking whether or not they are true. This study was, therefore, conducted on the basis of the following research assumptions:

- Teenage pregnancy may negatively affect learning and school achievement;
- Schools do not have formal interventions aimed at assisting learners who are either pregnant or are teenage mothers;
- There is a high prevalence of teenage pregnancies in schools;
- Teenage pregnancy can result in girls dropping out of school; and

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework is a set of terms and relationships within which the problem is formulated and solved (Miles & Huberman, 1994:18). It conceptualises or states the theory within which the investigator will examine the problem. It guides research, determines what will be measured, and what statistical relationships will be looked for. The theoretical framework is also important in exploratory studies, where prior knowledge is limited and the researcher tries to learn (Terre Blanche, & Durrheim and 2006:98).

The theoretical framework of this study interrogates the ways in which the lives of women are shaped in society, and attempts to provide an understanding on how such beliefs and values can be understood in trying to address issues pertaining to the emanicipation of women, and how social justice can be achieved in society. Since the research seeks to find out the experiences of teenage mothers and issues that affect their learning in schools, the research is informed by feminist theories such as liberal, radical and socialist feminism. All these theories provide an insight into how the oppression of women and girls can be understood in a given context. Liberal feminism, in particular, places a lot of emphasis on the role of education in changing the social stereotypes that affect and oppress women and girls. Theoretically, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based on biology, and, therefore, that women

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and men are not all that different. Women and men should have the same rights as men, as well as the same educational and work opportunities (Alcolff, Linda an& Potte 1993:123).

Although there are a variety of feminist theories, their goal is to change the patriarchal power relations. For instance, radical feminism sees no need to comply with the existing patriarchal agenda. According to Weedon (1993:45), radical feminism acknowledges that women have been dominated by men because women have chosen to exist in the same social system with men. Men rule over women and make them subordinates. Wome are exploited and work for men for free. They carry out reproductive roles for men and are denied access to power. This theory argues that the family institution is the source of women's oppression and that the only way to change it is to liberate women through a complete revolution.

According to Phendla and Makofane (2002:4), the South African government has, since 1994, entered into a range of international commitments and conventions, and developed progressive policies and legislation that have set the context for gender transformation. Gender transformation serves as a basis for protecting and promoting the rights of the previously marginalised and disadvantaged members of civil society, especially women and children. Wolpe A, Quinlan O, and Martinez L, (1997:58) argued that the educational policies, the effect of campaigns alerting policy makers and the public in general to the rights of girls and women to all forms of education have played a role.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to find out the factors that influence school participation and performance of teenage mothers. The main purpose of this study was to explore the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers in South Africa. This study also assessed the impact of interventions to stop teenage pregnancies. The study sought to identify some of the problems that teen mothers andpregnant teenagers are facing even though the inclusive policy allows all students to attend school regardless of whether they are pregnant or not.

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The specific objectives are:

- To investigate the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in schools of Vhembe District;
- To investigate factors that influence the rate of school attendance by teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy;
- To explore the nature of curricula support offered to teenage mothers in basic education; and
- To find out the school performance of teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research explores the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers in South Africa. The research will, thus, be guided by the following key question:

What factors influence the school participation and performance of teenage mothers?

1.7.1 Sub-questions

- How prevalent is the problem of teenage pregnancies in the schools in Vhembe District?
- What factors influence the rate of school attendance by teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy?
- What is the nature of curricula support offered to teenage mothers in basic education?
- How do teenage mothers perform in school before, during and after pregnancy?

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Introduction

This section outlines the key methods used in this study. There are two major approaches employed in research, namely qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this study, qualitative research was adopted. Bless (2006:43) states that qualitative

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researchers attempt to share the understanding and perception of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. According to Sherman and Webb (1990:65), qualitative research is concerned with experience as it is lived or experienced by people of that particular setting. The qualitative method is, therefore, applicable to this study because it seeks to explore the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers, in order to understand their experiences from the respondents' perceptions and meanings.

The qualitative approach was used, in order to understand the social life and the meanings that people attach to teenage pregnancy in their everyday lives. It refers to research that elicits participants' account of meanings, their experiences and perceptions about issues in society (de Vos, 2002:28).

1.8.2 Research Design

Bless and Smith (1995:34) defines research design as a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observed facts. According to Earl and John (2001:55) research design is a plan or structured framework of how a person intends conducting the research process in order to solve the research problem.

1.8.3 Case study approach

A qualitative case study is a research approach that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context by using a variety of data sources. Stake, (1995:544). Denzin (1994:55) and Silverman (2005:232) define a case study as the basic idea of one case or perhaps a small number of cases that can be studied in detail, using whatever method is appropriate for the study. Acase study was adopted, in order to develop an understanding of that case as much as possible and to excel at bringing an understanding of a complex issue and extend the matter to what is already known through previous research. Denzin (1994:60) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. It was important to adopt the case study approach for this study because it dealt with teenage mothers who are still at school.

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1.9 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to Goddard and Melville (2001:132), a population is any group that is the subject of research interest. Rubin and Babbie (1993:54) define a population as that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected.

The population of this study comprised of teenagers who already had children and were attending secondary schools in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province.

1.10 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling involves decisions about which people, setting, events, behaviours or social process to observe (de Vos, 2002:54). Sampling is described by Maxwell (2005:35) as a procedure which involves the selection of elements from a targeted population. It is a technique by which a sample is drawn from the population. Claire, Higson & Ashraf (2006:6) define sampling as a technique by which a sample is drawn from the population. Good sampling involves a well-defined population and an appropriately chosen unit of analysis (Bless &Higson-Smith, 2000:65).

Purposive sampling was adopted to select participants. This sampling method is based on the researcher's judgment regarding the characteristics of the chosen sample and it relies heavily on the subjective consideration of the researcher (Bless and Higson-Smith 2000:68). I selected the respondents on the basis of my own judgment, and also to ensure that they all shared a common characteristic, namely teenage motherhood.

1.11 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is defined as a method of gathering information for research purposes through techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and participant observations (Silverman, 2005:88). The research was conducted using qualitative research methods. Interviews and focus group discussions were used.

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1.11.1 Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews are a form of interview that enables members of a group to share their experiences and to reach some kind of consensus about the problem (Bless, 2006:36). This method is very useful because it helps one obtain information from the respondents. It is very useful in allowing participants to share their thoughts with each other.

The advantage of using this technique is that it allows some space within which participants get together and create meaning of their experiences as a group. According to Millward (1998:66), the focus group is a discussion-based interview that produces a particular type of qualitative data, which is generated through the simultaneous use of multiple respondents. Bless (1995:67) mentions that the focus group is a form of interview that enables members of a group to share their experiences and to reach some kind of consensus about a problem. In this study, the focus group interviews were conducted as an open conversation in which each participant made comments, answered questions and responded to comments from others, including the interviewer.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

According to De Vos (1995:23), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants and then transcribed. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006:143), a key principle of interpretive analysis is to stay close to the data, in order to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding.

I, therefore, familiarised myself with the collected data through:

- Reading field notes;
- Reading transcribed material while listening to tapes;
- Making notes of her own impression of collected data; and
- Inducing themes as they emerged naturally from the data while ensuring that they have a bearing on the research questions.

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1.13 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Delimitation of the study refers to the boundaries that are set by the researcher, in order to control the range of a study. The study focused on teenage mothers from six schools in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.

1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the context of education, ethics are particularly important (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:197), in that they deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. The sensitive nature of the study raised silent ethical issues that were carefully considered during the research process. Consideration was taken to adhere closely to ethical measures for analysis. In this study the researcher considered the following ethical measures:

1.14.1 Informed consent

Social research often, though not always, entails an intrusion into people's lives, thus disrupting their regular activities (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:45). Informed consent entails informing the respondents about the overall purpose of the research, the main features of its design, as well as any possible risks and benefits from their participation in the research (Kvale 1996:154). It involves making respondents aware that their participation is voluntary and that their right to withdraw from the study is guaranteed. Each respondent will read and sign an informed consent form, which will also serve as a letter of introduction for the researcher. (Appendix)

1.14.2 Confidentiality

According to Cele (2008), confidentiality entails the protection of the respondents' interests, as well as their identity. Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying participants will not be reported.

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1.15 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to Creswell (1994:75), significance of a study should describe the importance of the study for a selected audience. Articles on teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood do occasionally include recommendations that pregnant teenage girls and young mothers should also be helped. However, specific measures in South Africa such as the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy, the South African Schools Act and the South African Constitution are in place to help teenage pregnant learners and teenage mothers. These measures include the inclusive policy and the promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (No. 4 of 2000), which indicates that school children who are pregnant should not be unfairly discriminated against.

According to Zellman (1981:76), teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood are seen as serious problems in different places, especially in public schools. It is envisaged that this study will also build advocacy for the plight of teenage mothers, as well as provide guidelines or a framework for future programmes. This study will also help the Department of Education with the data on the educational achievements of pregnant teenage girls and teenage mothers. It will also help to explain the policy, in order to make people have a clear understanding of what the policy is all about.

Therefore, this study will benefit all teenage girls who are not yet pregnant, teenage pregnant girls and teenage mothers by making them aware of the fact that being pregnant at an early age will hinder their educational development and affect their health. It will also highlight that being a mother means responsibility, having a child comes with responsibility and it may lead to one dropping out of school.

This study has added to the body of knowledge regarding learner pregnancy in schools, particularly in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. It will also help the Ministry of Education and the Department of Health and Social Welfare by providing data on learner pregnancy and how that can help in the reduction of teenage involvement in sexual activities, especially in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.

This study will also benefit the teachers and the principals of schools by informing them of the educational gaps and problems facing pregnant teenage girls and teenage

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mothers, in order for them to support these learners. This study will make the Ministry of Education aware that even though the policy which upholds inclussiveness is in place, its implementation varies by school, and that should bear in mind that, the future of the student comes first. They should also monitor and check whether the policy is achieving its desired goals. The study will help advice the Ministry of Education on how to train teachers and school staff on how to take care of and support pregnant learners and teenage mothers. This study will also help advice the Ministry of Education to include sex education in its curriculum. It will inform policy makers of the need to emphasize the practice of safer sex to avoid dangerous diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

The studies will conscientise teenage girls that they should not engage in sexual activities at an early age. It will discourage transactional sex fuelled by older men who display their money in an attempt to lure teenage girls into a relationship. Peer pressure is one of the contributing factors for teenage pregnancy. Therefore, this study will endeavour to alert teenagers to the challenges and factors leading to this phenomenon.

1.16 DIVISION OF THE RESEARCH CHAPTERS

Chapter one presents background of information to the problem and it clearly spells out what the problem is. The statement of the problem is described in this chapter, thus making it clear what problem is or how I became aware of the problem. This chapter also presents the purpose of the study, which highlights why this study was conducted. It also describes the importance of the study, and this is supported by the information found in chapter 2 which reviews related literature. Research questions were written, in order to guide the researcher towards the information needed for this study. Chapter three of this research discusses the theoretical framework. Chapter four presents the research design and methodology, chapter five, the research findings and chapter six gives a summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusion.

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CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One I presented the introduction to the study, the background to the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, assumption of the study, preliminary literature review, study objectives, research questions, research design and methodology, population of the study, sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis, delimitations of the study, and the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, research design and methodology, data gathering approach, data analysis, delimitation of the study, ethical consideration, significance of the study, and division of the research chapters. This chapter presents the literature review.

2.2 THE PREVALENCE OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The increase in the rate of teenage pregnancies and teenage motherhood is one of the problems facing society, the world over, making it difficult for teen mothers to attain and complete their secondary education. This social problem is widely documented (UNICEF, 2001:12; National Research Center for Women and Families, 2001:23; Treffers, 2003:36; Mayor, 2004:7; Population Council, 2006:33).This is also a problem in the Vhembe district schools, the rate of teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood is very high. According to Motshekga, the Minister of Basic Education, (2009:4) learner pregnancies are more concerntrated in the Limpopo province, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. She adds that the high proportion of unintended pregnancies for teenagers in South Africa remains a serious problem.

One reason for the growing interest in the right to education for pregnant teenagers is the realisation that teenage pregnancies and teenage motherhood continue to be the major causes for the differences in educational access, transition, attrition and completion rates between females and males in many countries (Grant & Hallman,2006:6; Richter & Mlambo, 2005:34).

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In many industrialised countries such as Britain and the United States, teenage pregnancies and parenthood have, in recent years, been identified as social and public health problems that need to be confronted without delay (UNICEF, 2001:60). The rate of teenage pregnancies was pointed out as a worldwide problem that ranges from 143 per 1000 in sub-Saharan African countries to 2.9 per 1000 in South Korea and Japan (Treffers, (2003:77). The results indicate that the United States has the highest teenage pregnancy rate of 22%, followed by the UK with 15%, Canada with 11% and Sweden with the lowest rate of 4% (Singh & Frost, (2001:264).

Teenage parenthood has come to be regarded as a significant disadvantage in a world with increasing demands for an extended education, and in which delayed childbearing, smaller families and careers for women are increasingly becoming the norm (UNICEF, 2001:65).

According to Lings (2004:43), teenage pregnancies are a focus of concern in the United Kingdom. This is because the rate of teenage motherhood is higher than in other Western European countries, and has not fallen as fast as rates in other countries. Lings (2004:44) pointed out that the rates of teenage pregnancy vary widely and are highest in more deprived areas where women are poorer.

According to Dangal (2005:88), in the US, more than 40 % of the women become pregnant before they reach 20 years of age. US teenagers have one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the Western world, twice as high as the rates found in England, France and Canada, three times as high as that in Sweden, and seven times as high as the Dutch rate, despite similar or higher rates of sexual activity in the other countries. In countries with straight forward attitudes towards sex, teens get more consistent messages, clearer information and greater access to information and there is a higher acceptance of contraception and abortion.

During the1990s, both Britain and the US identified teenage pregnancy as a national public health issue, alongside cardiovascular disease, cancer and mental health, which require targeted interventions. A reason for this concern was that rates of teenage

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pregnancy were perceived to be higher than those in other developed countries (Lawlor & Shaw; 2004:65)

Reviews in the United States have suggested that many of the negative outcomes, such as poverty and deprivation, previously ascribed to the mother's age, are as much causes and correlates of teenage pregnancy as effects. The general view has been that teenage child-bearing will have long- term negative effects on the mother's well-being. The argument being that these individuals will have more difficulty completing high school because of time off required for pregnancy, recuperation and childcare.

Kearney and Levine (2007:46) argue that American research during the 1970s and 1980s which consistently documented the negative effects of teenage childbearing across a range of outcomes, found that teenage mothers were more likely to be socially and economically disadvantaged throughout their lives than women who delayed childbearing. Furthermore, teenage mothers were also less likely to complete their education, be employed and earn high wages.

In sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries, teens are losing the battle for equal access to secondary education. In many developing countries teenage pregnancy has been one of the hindrances to the educational success of girls (James *et al* 2000:45).

As in many developing countries, teenage pregnancy is one of the major impediments to the educational success of girls in sub-Saharan Africa (Swaison, Bendera, Gordon & Kadzamira, 1998:26). Recent research in South Africa has shown that by the age of 18, more than 30% of the teens have given birth at least once (NCR-IOM 2005). Mokgalabane (1999:47) maintains that pregnancy is among the most serious causes of school disruption, particularly at secondary school level. In many cases, the birth of a baby marks the end of schooling for the teen mothers (Grant & Hallman, 2006:7).

Research shows that there are factors that influence whether or not a teen mother is able to continue schooling after the birth of the baby. Most of the factors depend on the girls' ability to manage logistics and finances associated with mothering and schooling simultaneously (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001:132).

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Even though teen mothers continues with their education, those who go back to school after the birth of their babies face a number of challenges as learners, and that makes it hard for them to succeed with their schooling. Arlington Public School (2004) reports that adolescent mothers face difficulties and the girls experience undue pressure from parents, peers and teachers. In addition, they receive very little support from school and their homes, and are usually misunderstood (Arlington Public School, 2004). In most cases, the situation of the teen mothers is worsened by the fact that the fathers of their children play no role in the children's upbringing.

In South Africa, there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy, which needs to be addressed thoroughly. Teenage pregnancy is a social phenomenon that occurs when an unmarried girl gives birth in her teenage years. It seems teenagers do not have enough knowledge about contraception use. As a result, they end up falling pregnant at an early age or while still at the secondary level of schooling. Teenage pregnancies delay and disturb the process of furthering their studies as many fail to go back to school after birth. In their research, Bana *et al* (2010:76), report that in South Africa, the percentage of females aged 15-19 who were mothers or who had ever been pregnant had risen from 11.9% in 2003 to 39% in 2006.

Jewkes, Morrel & Christofides (2009:675) pointed out that in the past few decades, South Africa has seen a decline in teenage fertility, and yet rates still remain high with around 30% of 15-19 year olds falling pregnant. While a large number of pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers are not in school, a significant proportion of girls had dropped out from school before falling pregnant. Teenage pregnancy and being a teenage mother is not simply about a teenager having unprotected sex; It is wrapped up in gendered norms, sexual taboos and gender inequalities within our societies. As Jewkes, Morrel & Christofides (2009:676) noted, teenage pregnancy is not just an issue of reproductive health and young women's bodies, but rather is one of the causes and consequences that is rooted in women's gendered social environment.

In South Africa, the Department of National Health and Population Development reported that the rate of teenage parenthood in 1990 was 330 per 1000 women under the age of 19 years. This means that many teenage girls were becoming mothers at an

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early age. The transition from childhood to adulthood is quite difficult for teenagers, and it complicates the normal course of adolescent development (Morgan, 1987). According to Chigona and Chetty (2007:4), statistics in South Africa show that overall four out of ten girls become pregnant at least once before age 20.

More than 30% of 19 year old girls are reported to have given birth (De Wet, 2000:34). Figures from statistics South Africa show that in one year more than 17000 babies are born to mothers who are 16 years and younger. Of that number, 4000 babies are born to mothers who are under 14 years (Medical Research Council, 2000:45). Among many topical issues in the print media are young people who are giving birth at an early age. Freeman(1993:89) suggests that the cause of early child bearing in South Africa are many, including, for example, youth unemployment, poverty, poor education, single parenthood, as well as substance abuse.

According to Chigona and Chetty (2007:8), teenage pregnancy has militated against the educational success of girls in South Africa. Teenage pregnancy has become one of the central issues in our societies today. It is the most challenging issue that teenagers, families, and communities face today. It affects us all in some way. Many researchers have turned towards understanding why teenagers are falling pregnant at an early age.

Chigona and Chetty (2007:264) indicated that in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries, girls and women are losing the battle for equal access to secondary education. In many developing countries, teenage pregnancy has been one of the major hindrances to the educational success of girls. It was indicated that in some sub-Saharan countries, early pregnancy is often seen as a blessing because it is proof of the young woman's fertility. The lack of education on safe sex, whether it is from parents, schools or otherwise, is a cause of teenage pregnancy. Chigona and Rajendry (2007:265) indicated that many teenagers are not taught about methods of birth control and how to deal with peers who pressure them into having sex before they are ready.

The *Sunday Times* (2007) reported the case of one school that had 144 pregnant pupils in 2006. Resent research in South Africa has shown that by the age of 18, more than 30 percent of the teens have given birth at least once. It is evident that teenage

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pregnancy is becoming more and more a barrier to girls' education (Chigona and Chetty, 2007:275).

According to research conducted in South Africa by Mkhize (1995:78), communities suggest that fertility is an integral part of the cultural construction of the female self regardless of age. The cultural importance of female fertility has also been cited as a primary reason for non-use of contraceptives and unprotected sex, as well as the cause and for the persistent high pregnancy rate. According to a recent MRC study, social pressures often prevented young women from using contraceptives.

A South African study in KwaZulu Natal by Manzini (2001) showed that teenage pregnancy differed according to race and location. It emerged from the study that blacks had a higher rate of teenage pregnancies than Asian and white communities. In South Africa, studies by IRIN Africa (2011) revealed alarming figures released by a South African provincial education department indicating that schoolgirl pregnancy has doubled in the past year, despite a decade of spending on sex education. It was also indicated that the number of pregnant schoolgirls escalated from 1,169 in 2005 to 2,336 in 2009 in Gauteng Province in South Africa.

Teenage pregnancy continues to be a community health problem warranting attention, especially in rural areas of Southern Africa. This is a true reflection of a real situation that communities face in different parts of the world. Teenage pregnancy is a health issue because some teenagers lose their lives during delivery, while some are confronted with the challenge that South Africa is facing the scourge of HIV and Aids. Most of the data on teenage pregnancy in Africa is drawn from either school dropout rates or studies on sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Meekers & Ahmed (1999:211) observed that in some African regions, up to ten percent of the schoolgirl's dropout of school because of pregnancy.

According to McGrew (1991:245) teenage mothers or fathers are often unprepared for parenthood. They drop out of school; take low paying jobs and never completes their education. This situation makes pregnant teenage girls emotionally and economically stressed at a time when they are looking forward to becoming self-sufficient. Social and

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educational institutions share a large portion of the problems of adolescent childbearing. Shore (1990) mentioned that there are approximately 10 million girls in the United States between the ages of 15 to 19 years who become pregnant each year.

Many girls in South Africa were sexually active, several had already experienced pregnancy, and some were at risk of faalling pregnant unintentionally because knowledge regarding pregnancy prevention was modest (Chigona & Chetty, 2008:3). Culturally parents believe that talking about sex related issues is a taboo, and this is why there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy globally. It is important to note that even talking about contraceptives is not an easy task due to the family and community's cultural beliefs. Most parents believe that contraceptives contribute to prostitution and irresponsible behavior in society by teenagers. It was argued that availability of contraceptives in the country and knowledge of such contraceptives was not enough to stop pregnancies because there were several constraints to the use of contraceptives. For example, most males were strongly against the use of contraceptives by their partners because they believed that contraceptives were detrimental to health, reduce sexual libido and so on. These beliefs also influenced teenage boys not to use condoms, sometimes because of lack of knowledge on how to use those condoms (Chigona & Chetty, 2008:8).

Erlbaum (2002:55) indicated there seems to be great imbalances between girls and boys as far as the meaning of the word love is concerned. To the men or boys, loving and caring is used as a means of convincing girls to have sex, and, most likely for the girls, love and caring means receiving of money and gifts in exchange for sex. This reveals exactly what teenage girls are doing because they fall in love with sugar daddies, in order to get money. Erlbaum (2002:65) maintained that sex experimentation by teenagers is a natural behaviour which cannot be stopped.

Pilow *et al* (2004:31) found that although literature exists on the effects of race and class on youth in South Africa, research into gender and education, and in particular the challenges young teen mothers go through when they go back to school, and how to address the challenges so that girls are able to finish their schooling, remain limited. According to Mokgalabone (1999:87), the situation relating to pregnancy and schooling

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disturbances in South Africa are inevitably associated with societal problems. Research by Kaufman *et al* (2001:64) shows that both pregnancy and parenting are the leading reasons given by girls for dropping out of school. Other factors that affect teen mothers in coping with are mothering, peer pressure and school environment (Kaufman 2001:68).

Girls who become pregnant during adolescence are more likely to have been born to teenage mothers, live in poverty, and bear children fathered by males two to three years older than themselves, have more than one child during pregnancy and have children who may be unsuccessful in school and at risk of negative social behaviours and deliquency (Musick, 1993, Palmore; & Shannon, 1988; Renker, 1999). This is reflects the practical incidents that are happening in many societies.

According to Whyte (1991:324), parents who are intolerant to their adolescent children's emerging sexuality or who cannot accept it, may unwittingly push their children towards irresponsible sexual activity. In this situation, parents should provide an environment in which learners are informed about reproductive matters and have the information that assists them in making decisions. Again, there is need to inform affected learners about their rights to education.

It is important to provide teenagers with a clear message that they should abstain from engaging in sexual intercourse. There are many reasons for this, especially considering the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV and AIDS, as well as the negative impact of pregnancy on the future life chances for girls.

Teenage pregnancy is a very big issue globally but its magnitude in South Africa poses a grave concern. Kyei (2011:135) reveals that in 2001, Limpopo province had the highest number of teen pregnancies in the country, with an average of 5 children per woman. This shows that teenage pregnancy is very high in the Vhembe District. Kyei (2011:135) further indicated the high percentages to show alarming problem in the Vhembe District. For example, those aged 13 years is made up 30 %, 15 years is 55 %, aged 16 years is 35 %, 18 years is 78 % and 19 years, 72 %. It is the evident that the fertility levels of teenage girls who were pregnant in Vhembe District is very high (57 %).

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Kyei (2011:136) pointed out that the percentage level cited for the Gauteng Province is between 30-40 % and that cited for the kwazulu-Natal province, is 32 % (Hallman, 2008:133), so teenage birth in Vhembe is far higher than two provinces in the country. The Department of Social Development in the Limpopo Province also came out with similar results, which showed that teenage pregnancies in the province are higher in the Vhembe and Mopani Districts. The following section will deal with Teenage pregnancy and school attendance.

2.3 TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The effects of teenage pregnancy which include among others, grade repetition and periods of temporary withdrawal from school, results in many young women in sub-Saharan Africa remaining in primary or junior secondary schools well past their puberty and into their late teens, thus increasing their risk of pregnancy-related school disruptions (Grant& Hallman,2006:28).n the same vein, Chigona and Chetty (2007:2) maintain that there are some schools that do not allow pregnant girls and young mothers to attend classes (in sub-Saharan countries of Africa). According to the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) executive director, in Zambia alone, 2,230 girls had been forced to drop out of school in 2010 because they fell pregnant. Most studies see (Natalie-Rico, 2011:10) found that dropping out of school is a negative effect of teenage pregnancy. In addition, sudden, frequent absenteeism may be a signal of pregnancy. Studies conducted in Canada and the United States have shown that young mothers are at greater risk of living school or attaining a lower level of education, thus reaching professional dead-ends or missing job opportunities(Tipper cited in Gouvernement du Quebec 2011:1).

Lloyd and Mensch (1999:21) contend that "rather than teenage pregnancy causing girls to drop out, lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women and the domestic demands placed on them coupled with the gender inequalities of the education system, may result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic performance, and acquiescence in or endorsement of early motherhood". Using the KZN transitions data, Grant and Hallman (2006:45) showed that poor school

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performance is a strong marker of the increased likelihood of experiencing a pregnancy while enrolled in school and of dropping out of school at the time of pregnancy. Poor school performance also limits the likelihood that girls who experience a pregnancy would ever return to school.

Studies conducted by Hosie (2002:342) revealed that the minority of teenage women who conceive under the age of 16 and whose pregnancy leads to a disruption of education such as formal exclusion by school authorities, had a limited range of opportunities available to them with regards to their continued education. The present study intended to find out from teachers if many pregnant teenagers in the Vhembe District are not attending school as revealed by previous studies. Chigona and Chetty (2008:4) are against the practice of some sub-Saharan countries of Africa and some South African schools of not allowing pregnant teenagers to attend school. However, the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108/1996, section 29 affirms that everybody has a right to basic education.

2.4 ADOLESCENT STAGE

Adolescence is a development stage occurring between the ages eleven and twenty years. It marks a child's transition to young adulthood (Ramabulana, 2003:32). It is generally a time of self-discovery in which young people aim to define their place in the world. Unlike the onset, thereof, the end of adolescence is not easy to mark as it is defined by social, legal, and psychological measures such as being self-supporting, choosing a career, being eligible to vote and marry. Adolescent development is expected to include predictable physical and psychological milestones (Ramabulana, 2003:33).

Adolescents go through an accelerated physical growth that is experienced by both males and females. These dramatic physical changes mark their transition from childhood to adulthood. The gradual development of childhood is followed by changes that come like a sudden storm. The entire body form changes, making adolescents look like adults even if their emotional and intellectual abilities are not yet mature. This process, which begins with pubescence, is also marked by maturity of primary sex

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characteristics such as the organs directly tied to reproduction. The outset of puberty may occur as early as ten years or late as fifteen years (Ramabulana, 2003).

Growing up has become far more complicated than it was a generation ago. Today's adolescents are attaining puberty earlier. It is this early physical maturation that predisposes teenagers to premarital unprotected intercourse, thus putting them at risk for unplanned pregnancy. This explains the global shocking statistics of adolescent's giving birth, with more than 13 million adolescents younger than twenty years each year, contributing approximately 10% of the total annual number of births (Falaye, 2001). Unwanted teenage pregnancies come with psychological problems, such as feelings of guilt and shame. According to Falaye, (2008:33) the social and moral effects for a pregnant teenagers are enormous.

Analysis of adolescence as a development stage should also take into consideration six important needs of youth (Rice, 1996:269). These are as follows:

- The need to establish caring, meaningful, and satisfying relationships with individuals;
- The need to expand childhood friendships through getting acquainted with new people of different backgrounds, experiences and ideas;
- The need to find acceptance, belonging, recognition and status in social groups;
- The need to pass from homosocial interest and playmates of middle childhood to heterosocial concern and friendship;
- The need to learn about, adopt, and practises dating patterns and skills that contribute to personal and social development, informed mate selection and, subsequently, a successful marriage; and
- The need to find an acceptable masculine or feminine sex and to learn gender appropriate behaviours.

In view of the above tasks, it is quite obvious that adolescence is a time during which parenthood is not expected and is not necessarily a norm. The news of an out of wedlock teenage pregnancy is mostly reacted to with anger and disappointment. According to Parekh & de La Rey (1999:77), an unplanned teenage pregnancy is often

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accompanied by a strong sense of failed aspirations for the whole family. The shame is experienced by parents and their teenage children (Ramabulana, 2000:44). It is this reaction which tends to hinder normal development for expectant teenagers. Adolescent childbearing is also inconsistent with mainstream societal demands for attaining adulthood through education, work experience and financial stability (Rice, 1996:278).

During the adolescent stage the sudden and rapid changes experienced make this period one of self-consciousness, sensitivity and concern over one's own appearance. The challenge is that these physical changes do not occur in a smooth regular schedule. Adolescents may go through phases of awkwardness, both in terms of appearance and physical mobility and co-ordination. Teenagers tend to be more concerned about their appearance than about any other aspect of themselves (Papalia& Olds, 1988:245).

Due to their increased strength and agility, which develops ahead of the optimal decision-making skills, adolescents also participate in a variety of risk-taking behaviours. During adolescence, it is appropriate for youngsters to begin to separate from their parents and establish an individual identity. As they pull away from parents in search of their identities, the peer group takes on a special significance. In mid-adolescence (14-16 years), the peer group expands to include romantic friendships. Through romantic relationships and dating, adolescents learn to express feelings in a manner that is consistent with their internalised values.

Pregnancy during adolescence has been the impetus for a myriad of studies. Over the past few decades, more than 2,000 articles have been published on teenage pregnancy. Most studies focused on demographic variables and correlates related to risks associated with teen pregnancy and statistical analyses of incidence and prevalence rates (Atticco & Hartner, 1993; Blake and Bentov, 2001; Kirby, 1999; Stenberg and Blinn, 1993).Studies in family planning conducted by Singh (1998:21)show that childbearing at an early age can shape and alter a girl's entire life. From the perspective of communities and governments, adolescent pregnancy and childbearing have a strong and unwelcome association with low levels of educational

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achievement for young women, which in turn may have a negative impact on their position in and potential contribution to society (United Nations, 1995).

Singh (1998) argued that, although the United States continues to have the highest teenage pregnancy rate among Western industrialised countries, national trends have indicated that teenage birth and pregnancy rates are declining. Between 1991 and 1998, there was a 28.6% decline in ages 10 to 14, a 17.7% decline in ages 15 to 19, and 21.4% decline in ages 15 to 17 (Ventira, Curtin, & Mathews, 2000:234).

2.5 TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Bezuidenhout, (2004:40) pointed out that falling pregnant while still at school or at an educational institution generates a set of problems for which the teenagers have to find a solution. He further said that poor academic performance leads to poor employment and financial prospects, which, in turn, may have detrimental effects on all the other aspects of the life of the mother and her baby. A study conducted in Carlifornia among the Hispanic teens brings to the surface parents' views about teenage pregnancy which is according to them is, "a symbol of achieving womanhood or manhood". Even though the affected teenagers appear to be experiencing limited opportunities for academic and career advancement, African-American families largely condone teen motherhood (Russels & Lee, 2004:5). The present study however did not focus on parents' views, but on the views of educators.

Thompson cited in Alla, 2009:20) argues that teenage pregnancy is associated with poor high school performance and decreased earnings in life. Mpaza (2006:25) maintains that once the baby is born, the teenage mother needs more time to look after the baby. Much of the responsibility is carried out during the night, and this creates problems for a teenager, and prevents her from doing her homework and studying. The effects are that the teenage mother will fail to concentrate in the classroom because she would be tired. Consequently, she will perform badly and fail.

Teenagers who give birth tend to complete fewer years of schooling than those who delay parenthood. Every additional year which passes without a live birth positively corresponds with an increase in educational achievement (Chigona & Chetty, 2007:7).

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The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (March, 2010:6) also reports that children of teen mothers do worse in school than those born to older parents. They do not perform and have lower performance on standardised tests. According to Mpanza (2006:16), educators believe that when pregnant school girls absent themselves from school to attend ante-natal clinics, they under achieve. This lowers the school pass rate. This indicates that there is poor performance amongst teen mothers due to the overload of work, including taking care of the, baby.

2.6 EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM

Teenage mothers are often unprepared for parenthood, and they drop out of school even before they give birth. According to the (HSRC, (2005) although many girls who fall pregnant hope to return to school and the policy permits this, they find it difficult to do so due to taking care of the child. It is also difficult for them to concentrate on their studies. Educational problems need to be tackled through policy.

2.6.1 Policy on learner pregnancy in South Africa

Since the first democratic election in 1994, South Africa has developed an extensive body of law and policy that incorporates the Constitution's Bill of Rights. It has also developed a human rights culture. In 1996, the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) ushered in an important moment in translating inclusive education commitment into the schooling environment.

South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996(SASA) states that, in order to comply with the Constitution of South Africa in terms of the right of everyone to basic education, it is compulsory for every learner under the age of fifteen to attend school. The Act also stipulates that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfair discrimination in any way (Panday *et al,* 2009). Before the Act, it was quite legal (and common) for pregnant learners to be expelled.

In South Africa, formal commitment to the rights of women, specifically, and to gender equality more broadly, has influenced law-making and policy. The Act makes provision for the compulsory attendance of all children 'until the last school day.

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In terms of this Act, not admitting a pregnant learner or expelling a pregnant learner is considered unfairly discrimination and unconstitutional. The rationale for this policy is that access to education is a basic right and that denial of access because of pregnancy constitutes an infringement of this right. The rights are very good if they are used properly, but they are also open to abuse by learners themselves. Learners may end up abusing those educational rights.

In this Act, there is also the equality clause which states that, the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on the bases of race, gender and pregnancy. This means that the right to education does not exclude pregnant learners.

The right to education is one of the core human rights specified in almost every international declaration and convention such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, Education for All (EFA), of 1990) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000 (Tailor, Smith & Nairin, 2000; Danadet & Singh, 2001; Detrick, 1999; Ochalita & Espinasa, 2001). The importance of education has long been cited as a critical factor in the development of nations and in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This places the achievement of universal primary education second only to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

The problem of teenage pregnancy among schoolgirls is a major concern in many countries and a constraint in the elimination of gender disparities in education. Furthermore, on a continent where the adage, "When you educate a woman, you educate a nation," holds so true, the repercussions of girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy cannot be underestimated (LAC, 2008). The elimination of all forms of discrimination in human society is, therefore, one major objective of international conventions and declarations. The main aim of the conventions is to redress gender inequality in education and other spheres of life, most of which incorporated the concerns raised by feminist and gender equity civic groups.

According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey, conducted in 2006-2007, approximately 13% of women aged 15 to 19, at the time of the survey, were already

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mothers, and another 3%, in this age group, and were pregnant with their first child. Although these figures are a small improvement over those in previous surveys, the median age at first pregnancy has not changed over the last 14 years and remains 21. The Ministry of Health and Social Services (1993) in Namibia observed that a high proportion of Namibian mothers are very young, and that one consequence of teenage pregnancy is that young women are less likely to complete the basic schooling. However, Namibia is no different South Africa since there is also a high percentage of South African teenagers who have begun bearing children.

Table 2.1 shows percentage of South African teenagers who have begun bearing children. The figures include both mothers and those pregnant at the time of the survey.

Table 2.1:
Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who have begun child-bearing, 1992-2007

Age at time of survey	1992 survey	2000 survey	2006-2007survey
15	1.3	2.2	2.7
16	6.3	5.8	5.5
17	18.7	16.0	13.9
18	36.0	27.6	21.6
19	45.4	39.3	34.7
Total	21.5	17.6	15.4

Source: MHSS (1993, 2003, 2008)

The Ministry of Education (2008) shows that the higher repetition rates could indicate a higher commitment among females to complete their education, whereas re-entrance could possibly indicate females returning to school after pregnancy. Despite limited research, it is clear that teenage pregnancy and family demands impact how female learners.

In 2007, the Department of Education released measures for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy. These measures advocate for the right of pregnant

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girls to remain in school. However they suggest up to a two year waiting period in the interest of the right of the child before girls can return to school. This is a good strategy because, culturally, a pregnant girl should be at home waiting to give birth and being taken care of by elderly people (Panday . *et al*, 2009).

In a rights-based society, young girls who experience early pregnancy should not be denied access to education. This is entrenched in law through the Constitution and Schools Act of 1996. In this regard, schools require guidelines on how to uniformly and optimally prevent and respond to early pregnancy so that the right of the adolescent to education is protected and equally balanced against their need to access health care and to maintain the focus on learning within a school environment. The policy also shows that the involved teenage boy learner and girl learner should be offered counseling services and educational support. This is a difficult task because the presence of pregnant girls at school poses new challenges for teachers, who, sometimes, have to act as midwives. Even though learners have to be accepted in schools while being pregnant, it creates problems because teachers have not been trained to be midwives.

Affirmative Action is a policy or a programme of taking active steps to increase the representation of certain groups who were previously discriminated against and disadvantaged in education. In South Africa, the discourse around affirmative action has looked at racial and gender discrimination perpetuated during the period of apartheid. There are many ways in which affirmative action has been incorporated into the government's effort to fight poverty, one of them being the giving of social grants, in order to help people who are poor, unemployed and previously disadvantaged Chigona &Chetty,(2008:7).

South Africa introduced the child support grant which has stirred up similar issues and similar debates regarding welfare. A school of thought has developed in South Africa which claims that the Child Support grant has some perverse incentives, one of which is to encourage women especially teenagers to have more children. Evidence that would support an adverse effect of the Child Support Grant on fertility includes concurrence between the introduction of the Child Support Grant and the increase to overall fertility,

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in particular (Makiwane & Udjo, 2006:5). Guthrie, (2002:78) indicated that an average of 51% of households in the Limpopo Province was wholly dependent on the Child Support Grant. These were households living in the rural areas.

The problem of learner pregnancy is not only affecting South Africans, but countries such as Namibia are also affected. According to Gender Research and Advocacy Project for School Policy on learner pregnancy in Namibia (2008), the problem of learner pregnancy among schoolgirls is a major concern in many countries. Teenage pregnancy has been cited as a constraint in the elimination of gender disparities in education and in the achievement of gender equality.

This policy indicates that the concern about improving the educational rights of girls who become pregnant is based, in part, on the knowledge that this will affect the fate of their children and future generations. The policy also indicated that the school is only one among the players who share in the role of shaping the behaviour of the youth. Parents in the home should have the first and foremost responsibility of providing the child with values and examples which will guide him or her through childhood and the youthful years (Gender Research and Advocacy Project for School Policy on Learner Pregnancy in Namibia, 2008). Namibian policy showed that if educational agencies and the society at large can give support to schools, hope to play a successful role in preventing unwanted pregnancies through provision of population and family life education. Namibian policy they included the following stipulations: sexual activity should be delayed until after a learner has completed formal schooling; and attention should be paid off to benefits the educational programme and allow sexuality to be practiced within a safe and emotionally mature relationship.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists in Namibia (2001) commissioned a study to review the implementation of the policy on teenage pregnancy. The study also recommended the adoption of a policy which focused on support rather than punishment. The study also recommended the establishment of "bridging centres" where young mothers could continue with their education, while breastfeeding, It also recommended the utilization of counseling services for the girl and her parents, and the

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introduction of flexible models of attendance for pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers to carry on with their classes.

Furthermore, as a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Namibian government has committed itself to taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of education, more especially through the reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organisation of programmes for girls and women who leave school prematurely (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1998).

According to UNICEF (2009), government policy has the power to influence the trajectory of teenage pregnancy through both direct and indirect ways. Policy decision can determine the availability of resources to provide critical services and to implement programmes. However, the impact of national policy and programmes is often hard to measure with the available evidence, and is particularly thin in developing countries. Nevertheless, the declining teen pregnancy rates in South Africa have occurred in parallel with the institution of an enabling policy environment for young people.

Other more indirect policy benefits have accrued through increased access to educational and economic opportunities for young people and the availability of social grants, such as the Child Support Grant, that have enabled parents to keep their children in schools. The progressive approach adopted by the Department of Basic Education to allow pregnant girls to remain in school and to return to school post-pregnancy has, to some extent, mitigated the educational and economic consequences of teenage pregnancy (UNICEF, 2009:212).

According to Bray (1996:66) and Prinsloo (2005:78), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa includes a Bill of Rights which protects every person from unfair discrimination and unequal treatment. In fact, the first chapter of the South African constitution indicates that non-racialism, non-sexism and equality are the principles upon which the constitution is founded (Constitution of Republic of South Africa, 1996). That the constitution points to non-sexism and equality is important in that pregnant and former pregnant teenager rights are guaranteed just like those of every other person.

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Section 9 of Chapter 2 (Bill of rights) has relevant clauses that protect pregnant and former pregnant teenage learners from any form of discrimination in education (Constitution of South Africa, 1996; Mothata, 2000, Prinsloo, 2005).

One of the most cost effective interventions that countries can introduce is flexible school policies. In fact, increasing access to second chance programmes such as high school equivalence programmes in the US have allowed teenage mothers to continue their education, thereby limiting the impact of pregnancy on a range of outcomes (World Bank, 2006). More progressive policies adopted in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America after 2000, mean that many more young women can stay in school and complete their education (World Bank,2006:211)

While some countries allow young women to remain in school during pregnancy, others require them to take a leave of absence for a specified period, after which they may re-enter school. However, the extent to which policies are actually implemented are unknown and the effects of such policies are yet to be evaluated.

South Africa is one of several countries in sub-Saharan Africa that has taken steps to protect young mothers' rights to education (Kaufman, 2001). Even before the transition to democracy, in the absence of a formal policy, schools allowed pregnant girls to remain in and to return to school post delivery. The introduction of the Constitution in 1996, together with the Education Act and Schools Act in the same year, formalised this practice. In July 2000, the Council of Education Ministers pronounced specifically on teenage pregnancy, indicating that pregnant learners should not be expelled from school. (Mercury, May 8 2008).

In 2007, the Department of Education, motivated by a concern for learner pregnancies in public schools, introduced guidelines for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy (DOE, 2007a). The guidelines recognise the responsibility and influence that the education system shares with the larger community to prevent and manage teenage pregnancies. It emphasises a prevention focus to reduce teenage pregnancy, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. The Department of Education indicated that this goal could be achieved through sex education provided by the Life Orientation

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learning area, HIV and AIDS programmes, and peer education among learners. The guidelines recognise that unplanned pregnancies do occur, and that the education system requires policies and procedures to manage these events appropriately. The guidelines attempt to balance the right of the pregnant teenager to education and equality, against the rights of the newborn child to care and support.

The Department of Education noted that the primary focus must be on prevention of pregnancies. However, second chances should be made available to prevent the loss of human potential. The department also promoted community- based interventions promotes open communication between parents and children with a distinct focus on pregnancy. The department further indicated that a comprehensive strategy should be developed for the prevention of learner pregnancy and the strategy will explore the policy options relating to teen pregnancy in education.

The Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2009) stipulated that the education committee was concerned about what the policy was towards learners who were pregnant and still in school. The committee also wanted clarity on the policy that spoke to learners returning to school in less than two years after having a child. Concerns were expressed over the fact that there was an increased risk of teen pregnancy when girls were involved in a relationship with older males. Members wanted to know why the department said there was the perception that there was an upsurge in teen pregnancies when communities were complaining that there were too many teen pregnancies, specifically among school learners.

More effective policies are needed to address adolescent sexual health. I know that family and peer groups influence youth behaviour, that cultural messages and the quality of programme interventions are important, and that effective policies at the state and local levels can be a powerful tools for preventing teen pregnancy. Policy matters in a number of ways. Policy decisions can have a tremendous impact by simply increasing or reducing the resources available to support programmes and services. Programmes such as the abstinence programmes, the content of sex education curricula in schools, the presence or absence of school-based clinics, and issues of parental notification, are

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just a few examples of the influence public policy can have on programming and, ultimately, on teen pregnancy rates.

2.7 PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS HINDERS THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION

Pregnancies among learners threaten their health and social welfare and the health welfare of the children born to them. Pregnancies often cause learners to terminate their education, leaving them with very few options of establishing a good life for themselves and their children. Many health educators have argued that comprehensive sex education would effectively reduce the number of teenage pregnancies although people believe that such education encourages more and earlier sexual activity. According to Pearton (2000:12), states that teenagers are mostly too young and emotionally immature when they first fall pregnant. This, if these girls are to succeed academically, it is important for their parents to intervene and provide adequate support for them. In most cases teen mothers cannot afford child care facilities and their families do not offer much help in taking care of the babies. Consequently, as parents, teen mothers do not have enough time to do their school work. This is worse when teen mothers have to miss their classes due tothe illness of their babies.

Chigona & Chetty (2007:266) point out that in many developing countries, teenage pregnancy has been one of the major hindrances to the educational success of girls. This is evident in the fact that teenage pregnancy is becoming more and more a barrier to girls' education. In South Africa, Grant &Hallman (2006) have shown that, in most cases, the birth of a baby marks the end of schooling for the teen mothers. This is a true reflection because thre are many girls who are school dropouts because of the problem of teenage pregnancy. There are factors that influence whether or not a teen mother is able to continue schooling after the birth of the baby.

In the 2000 Commission on the Gender Equity Report to the South African Ministry of Education, it was stated that a number of complaints had been received from pregnant learners concerning the way in which their schools had been treating them. Some forms of discrimination, which included suspension from class, were reported (Ministry of

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Education, 2000). South Africa has one of the highest literacy levels exceeding many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In a knowledge- based economy, education is essential to secure future employment.

Learner pregnancy can have an impact on young mothers and their children by placing limits on their educational achievements (UNFPA, 2007) Teenagers become mothers without the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources and networks to cope with the demand of parenthood. The impact of teenage pregnancy on educational achievement later in life remains negative and significant even after controlling for other social factors such as coming from a disadvantaged background. In this situation, teenage mothers tend to have fewer years of education compared to those who have their first child after 20 years of age. Ferguson & Woodward (2000:44) postulate that the impact of teenage pregnancy on a young woman's educational achievement is driven by the timing of the pregnancy and the manner in which the woman and her family respond to the pregnancy. Early child-rearing requires strong familial support for girls to return to school. Studies in the US have shown that child-rearing, lack of parental support and lack of support from peers, all contribute to high dropout rates. When girls were solely responsible for childcare, they are less likely to return to school.

According to Mercer (1995:245), literature stresses the problem of poor education attained among young mothers as compared to their later time when they delay child bearing. In this situation, some teenage mothers manage to attain education very well but some do not. Many teenage mothers who are not married and reside in large families whose income is low, are faced by multiple interrelated and increasing disadvantages which have a detrimental effect on the level of their educational attainment and social adjustment in schools (Steinberg, 1998:112). Steinberg further argued that the underachievement of those students whose grades are far lower than one would expect are based on their intellectual ability. Before giving birth, some mothers have good intellectual abilities. However and after giving birth, their academic performance starts to deteriorate because of the multiple roles they have to play. This leads to underachievement, signaling a discrepancy between the teenager's prior school performance and some manifestation in their true ability (Steinberg, 1998:233).

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Culture was also seen as major cause of teenage pregnancy because in different cultures, including the Venda culture, there is no room for protective methods like condoms, irrespective of whether one is married or not. Therefore, culture is seen as a social problem.

2.8 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

According to De Villiers (1990:69), teenage pregnancy emerged in the literature somewhat later in South Africa. Research on the subject was extremely scant in the late 1970s, but increased in the 1980s. Currently, there is a lot of interest in this area, and a substantial amount of work is being undertaken.

There is a lack of understanding of mutual responsibilities for both sexes in a relationship. The girl's right to information and knowledge about sex and ways to ensure safe sex require recognition of her right to gain information and knowledge both intellectually and experimentally. The girl should be recognised as a sexual being and must be treated with dignity regardless of whether she is sexually active or not (Seabela, 1990:88).

A great number of teenage mothers are single parents because their boyfriends abandoned them during pregnancy. They then found themselves faced with many challenges that eventually changed their lives. Lack of support from teenage mothers' families' friends, partners, communities, churches, and teachers exacerbates the problems encountered for by the teenage mothers who repeatedly indicated that the lack of support made them feel frustrated, alone and humiliated. The reaction of the family and friends may cause problems, especially when the teenager and the baby are not accepted back into the family. The relationship with their peers changes because, as young mothers, they now have different needs from those of their peers. The teenager changes from being a carefree adolescent to being a responsible young woman. They now have to mix with older members of the community who also make them feel that motherhood has made them old before their time.

The teenager is often forced to break-off schooling, leading to a lack of education, that in turn, increases the likelihood of poverty. The pregnant teenager may get married only

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to discover that early marriage predisposes one to early divorce. According to Seller (1993:66),the adverse reaction of society as a whole and the moral stigma which is attached to teenage pregnancy in some societies can and will have far-reaching consequences. In this situation a teenage mother is unable to support herself and her baby, and this may lead to her to taking up a life of prostitution rather than becoming destitute.

Culturally, women are allowed to have babies when they are physically and psychologically matured, that is from the age of 20 and above and after they have finished their studies. In the Vhavenda culture, pregnancy out of wedlock is regarded as a taboo and a disgrace to the family, and the child as a misfit in the community. Culturally, single parenthood is not accepted at all, because even in instances where the woman is a widow, arrangements and provisions are made for her.

The reason behind these arranged marriages was to avoid an unplanned pregnancy and children born out of wedlock. Reproductive health information and the provision of counseling services for youth are relatively new practices, especially in developing countries. Although public health institutions have long been dispensing free contraceptives and condoms, their services have not been seen as relevant to the youth. Louw (1996:256) argued that adolescents are often informed about sexual matters too late or given faulty information. In this situation where parents fail to give their teenagers information about sexuality, they receive wrong information from their peers and other elderly people.

Culturally, sex education within the home is rare. Most young people were informed about sex by their peers and a discussion of sexual matters between mothers and daughters was considered taboo. Older people consistently argued that introducing their children to family planning would encourage them to be promiscuous.

At the International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984, the international community voiced concern over problems related to youth fertility, and, in particular, to teenage fertility. It was proposed that governments should make provision for adequate education for adolescent girls and boys, including sexuality education and family life

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education. In such roles, rights and responsibilities of parents, as well as changing individual and cultural values should be considered.

Goddard (1978:6) mentioned that in Africa, traditional cultural systems of preparation for adult life are being threatened, resulting in the loss of parental and community guidance in the area of sexuality. At the same time, aspects of urbanisation, such as housing shortages and co-educational education, create increased opportunities for interaction among adolescents and allow for peer pressure to exert an influence on sexual behaviour.

Teenage pregnancy also has social consequences. What used to be practiced like sending a pregnant girl to relatives is no longer practiced. Instead of doing that, pregnant girls now remain in their homes, choosing to raise their children and continuing to attend school. This indicates that adolescents who become pregnant are, therefore, highly visible in the community, in schools and in their families. Increased visibility also means increased stigma.

Teenage pregnancy also affects the marriage prospects of young women. The National Campaign to prevent teenage pregnancy (2006:15) reported that premarital fertility is high in South Africa, particularly among African and Coloured communities. However, it does not necessarily lead to marriage. It also affects these young mothers financially because women report that young fathers often deny paternity to protect their own educational and financial aspirations.

According to Rickel (1990:48), social factors contribute to teen pregnancy and decreased contraceptive use. A survey of sexually active black females in Chicago found that coming from a low socio-economic background, living in the ghetto, growing up in female- headed families with a large number of children, and having more sisters who were teen mothers are risk factors for early sexual behaviour without adequate contraception. This indicates that the problem of learner pregnancy is not a South African problem only; but that it is a worldwide issue. For women coming from a lower socio-economic class, becoming a mother may be a means to becoming socialized into, achieving adult status and reaching maturity.

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2.9 INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCES/LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER ABOUT SEXUAL

One of the primary interpersonal variables associated with adolescent pregnancy is the degree of communication and alienation in the mother-daughter relationship. A close mother-daughter relationship encourages adolescent and pre-adolescent girls to turn to their mothers instead of others for nurturance. Communication between mother and daughter about sex, sexual issues and sexual feelings and behaviours can significantly help daughters to learn and practice responsible sexual behaviour. Such communication desensitises the topic of sex, helps teens overcome negative feelings about the changes in their bodies and provides information about birth control (McWhirter, 1993:136).

In their study, De Villiers & Kekesi (2003:77)said that adolescents reported infrequent communication about sex between themselves and their parents. When communication occurs, it concerns societal expectations and sexual safety. Mothers tend to communicate more often than fathers, and more often with girls. Teenagers rate communication with parents about sexual matters as unimportant, more especially if they experience little communication. Seekoe (2005:23) believes that mothers lack skills and are uncomfortable talking about sex with their daughters. Lack of appropriate information may also lead to a young girl's vulnerability to risky sexual behaviours.

When communication is absent, a girl is placed at greater risk of premature sexual activity and potential conception, mainly because she looks to other-male peers for nurturance and intimacy. Families with poor interpersonal relationships, ineffective communication and limited problem-solving skills may inadvertently encourage teens to turn elsewhere for nurturing relationships (McWhirter *et al*, 1993:141).

According to McKee, O'Sullivan and Weber (2006:520), open communication about sex is associated with better sexual health outcomes for adolescents, and mothers are clearly the primary communicators about sex in most families. Both mothers and daughters emphasize the importance of discussing sexuality and reproductive health,

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yet both report that it is challenging and most often inadequate. Little is known about the role of the family in facilitating gynecologic care for adolescents.

Parents avoid any mention of sex in their day-to-day relationships with their children. Another reason is that parents themselves lack scientific knowledge about it. Sometimes parents and adolescents may not even know each other's thoughts and attitudes about sex (Mahajan & Sharma as cited in Wang, (2009:33). According to Dorroch, Landry and Singh (2000:55), teaching young people about their physical and sexual development delays the first sexual relationship and increases the use of contraceptives by those who are sexually active.

Burgess, Dziegielewski & Green (2005:380) mentioned several barriers to effective familial sex communication. These barriers are as follows:

- Parents are often uncomfortable talking about sex;
- Parents misperceive their adolescents' sexual behaviours;
- Parents may lack accurate information in the area of sex education to share with their children; and
- Many parents assume that their adolescents are not sexually active; therefore, they focus only on discussing abstinence.

Knox and Schacht (2006:273) stated that, parents although they reluctant to discuss safer sex are a powerful influence on the sexual behaviour of their children. Dilorio, Kelley & Hocckenberry-Eaton (1999:87)found that if an adolescent talks more with the mother about sexual issues than with friends, he/she is less likely to have initiated sexual intercourse and more likely to have conservative values. Parental control can be lost at the very time when the community is becoming more influential. In this circumstance, the characteristics of the community become a central influence on adolescent development, and if the nature of the community is conducive to maladaptive behavior, the results can be predictable (Zabin & Hayward, 1993:48).

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2.10 CAUSES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

The lack of communication between parents and their children about sexual matters is one of the major problems that lead to teenage pregnancy. It is crucial to consider that today, children learn more about things that their parents did not know until they reached the age of 20 or so. As such, if parents do not provide children with relevant sexual knowledge, the problem of teenage pregnancy cannot be alleviated.

The most problematic area is the lack of sexual knowledge on the part of the teenagers. Most teenagers do not know the changes their bodies go through during the developmental stages to adulthood. There are several changes which the body goes through when a person is a teenager. The lack of correct and relevant information results in teenagers, especially female ones, indulging in sexual activities, and in turn, leads to them falling pregnant. This is due to the fact that there is lack of communication within the family that is between parents and their children. Parents have to play a very important role in their teenagers 'lives, and explain the consequences of indulging in sexual activities.

As children grow towards adulthood, there are various stages that their bodies undergo. One of the most important stages is the puberty stage. During this stage, of menstruation for girls, begins. The development of sperm in the testes of males and the maturation of organs involved in reproduction also takes place during this stage. At this stage, children embark on sexual activities that result in pregnancy because they do not have knowledge of what sexual intercourse entail; all they know is that this practice takes place between male and female persons (Magwentshu, 1990:7).

It is important that parents should explain to their children that once a child reaches the puberty stage, this means that he/she has reached sexual maturity and is capable of procreating a baby.

Adolescent pregnancy continues to be one of the most difficult issues that teenagers, their families, and communities face today. It affects us all in some way. Teenage mothers or fathers are often unprepared for parenthood. They drop out of school, take low-paying jobs and never complete their education. Most studies conducted on the

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problem of teenage pregnancy in South Africa attributed early sexual intercourse and teenage pregnancy to several causes. Some of the major causes are inappropriate parenting, reproductive ignorance, peer group pressure, lack of knowledge, the effects of myths and beliefs, and socio-cultural issues. These factors interact and contribute to the problem of teenage pregnancy in a very complex manner. It may not be possible to single out one cause of teenage pregnancy in South Africa. The problem is complex because it cuts across almost all segments and aspects of society.

Magwentshu (1990:34) indicated that because of this lack of sexual knowledge, adolescents, especially females, engage in sexual intercourse at an increasingly early age, and the age range for the first intercourse for females is twelve to nineteen years, with a median age of fifteen years. Teenage pregnancy is a growing problem to an extent that it has become a national concern because teenagers have absolutely no sexual knowledge.

2.11 IGNORANCE CONCERNING SEXUALITY

Studies done in the US by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2006), on the causes of teenage pregnancy, showed that there is low and inconsistent contraceptive use among sexually active teens. Only two-thirds of the teens use some form of contraception (usually a condom) the first time they have sex and then discontinue using it afterwards. Further, teenagers lack proper information on contraception use. This is similar to the situation in the UK. According to Wikipedia (2006:8), 80% of teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 years, in Britain, are sexually active and one-third of these did not use a form of contraception during their first encounter.

Ignorance concerning sexuality, contraception, conception and reproductive biology is seen by many researchers as a major contributing factor in teenage pregnancy. Seabela (1990:45) reports that two-thirds of their samples of 100 and 145 pregnant teenagers were ignorant concerning the relationship between menstruation, coitus, fertility and conception.. Mkhize investigated the source of teenagers' sexual information. Peer groups play a significant role in the transfer of sexual knowledge. This

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is a significant reflection of what is happening in the life of the young generation because parents have neglected to talk to their teenagers concerning sexual issues. Instead, these issues are taught in schools. Teenagers have succumbed to pressure from the mass media, which contains sexualised material that influences teenagers to engage in sexual relations before they are ready. Some teenagers engage in sex in order to emulate their favourite media characters. A BBC report (http://news.bbc.co.uk/) on why teenage pregnancy was rising indicated that some parents do not talk to their children about sex and contraception even when they are fully aware that they are having sex. Thus many young people are brought into sexualised society without the necessary knowledge needed to look after their sexuality. (BBC, 2005).

It appears that parents in South Africa (Bailie, 1991) and the United States (Caldas, 1993:45) play a very small role in transferring information to their teenage children. Various possible reasons have been put forward for parents' reluctance to discuss sex with their children. These include shyness, religious reasons, and a strong incest taboo. In addition, customary and cultural practices prohibit open discussion about sex -related subjects.

The developmental urge to experiment, ignorance amongst teenagers, and the feeling of rebellion associated with adolescence have an impact on the teenage pregnancy rate. Ignorance also leads to myths such as the belief that the use of contraceptives, may cause infertility or will make them gain too much weight and lead to big tummies. Parents shy away from the task of instructing children who are approaching puberty on sexual matters. Many believe that to inform children about contraception is tantamount to encouraging sexual involvement.

This issue concerning teenage pregnancy is rooted in the fact that a very high percentage of our community is illiterate. Very few people actually know how pregnancy comes about and, therefore, cannot figure out how to prevent it. Some parents believe that the use of contraceptives by female adolescents will result in or leads to indefinite infertility. Moreover, parents also believe that introducing contraceptives to their children will make them think that they have been given permission to get involved in sexual relationships.

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2.11.1 Peer pressure

Peer pressure is defined by Coleman (1990:16) as pressure to think or behave along certain prescribed guidelines. It is a primary mechanism for transmitting group norms and maintaining loyalties among group members. Erickson (2005:79) maintained that peer group affiliations are essential to a healthy identity development in adolescence as it allows teenagers to explore interest in ideologies and test their abilities to intimate peer relationships. Social interaction with peers also provides the opportunity to express emotion and feelings. Many adolescents become involved in sexual relationships not simply as a natural consequence of being in love, but often is to gain peer approval.

When the need for acceptance and support from others is high, females, particularly, turn to a friend for emotional support and standard of behaviour. The tendency to go with a crowd is likely to result in early sexual experimentation and pregnancy (Kerry, 1991). Once a teenager becomes integrated into the peer group in which behaviour patterns and interrelations are not normative, it is to be expected that her own behavior pattern and social relations will be affected.

Peer pressure is another big problem that brings about teenage pregnancy. Peer group influence plays a major role in most teenagers' lives, and how a particular teenager deals with it, depends on his/her home background.

Some teenagers become pregnant because of the pressure they receive from their friends. For instance, a teenager can be involved with a group of friends who have been teenage parents and who want her to fall into the same pit by pretending they are enjoying to be parents. Peers influence teenage pregnancy because teenagers can obtain information about sex from their friends. This may serve to guide decision-making about sex. This information is of course not always accurate, as reflected in the long-standing teenage myths about fertility, such as that one cannot fall pregnant the first time she has sex with a man.

The peer group is a microsystem in that it comprises relationships, roles and activities. Peers are equals and individuals are usually of the same gender, age, social status and they share the same interests. Today, more mothers are being employed outside the

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home and more and more children are being cared for in a group setting. Consequently, children are experiencing social interaction with peers today earlier and for longer periods of time than they were a generation ago. School-age children and adolescents who are not supervised by adults after school are more likely to turn to their peers for support (Berns, 2007:66).

In most cases, many teenagers fall pregnant because they have been pressurised by their peers. An individual who associates herself with peers who are already teenage mothers is more likely to become a teenage mother herself because of a desire to belong to the group. Sometimes, she might feel alienated if she does not fall pregnant. Peers can sometimes have a positive influence on other. They might influence each other to live a positive life and have a better future. According to Moore and Rosenthal (1993:66), teenagers can obtain information about sex from their friends, which may serve to guide decision-making about sex.

Kaplan and Peck (2000:135) indicated that individuals with problematic backgrounds, coming from high risk environments and non-supportive families may have fewer educational aspirations and an increase in negative peer involvement. Consequently, students with negative peer association are more likely to imitate their peers' lifestyles, most often leading to increased feelings of marginalisation.

A study conducted by Erlbaum (2002:210) indicates that over one fourth (28.85%) of the students had one friend with a baby, 21.15% had two teenage friends with a baby, and 17.13% (all girls) had three or more teenage friends with a baby. Five of the girls (13.89%) felt that having teenage friends or family members who have babies makes them want to have a baby. This indicates that there is a high rate of teenage pregancy in the world.

2.11.2 Lack of knowledge about sex, contraceptive and conception

Teenagers often become pregnant because of lack of knowledge of sexuality and contraceptives, as well as a low-self image and little sense of control over their lives and their future (UNICEF, 1993:22). Many young people engage themselves in sexual activity at an early age, although they do not have knowledge about sex. The lack of

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information and discussion of sexual matters is a problem as parents find it difficult to discuss sexual matters with their children. This results in many teenagers lacking knowledge about sex and conception (Hudson, 1991:85). Learning about sexual functioning involves reliable teaching and guidance which is not always available.

Contraceptives are methods which are used to prevent pregnancy. These methods include the pill, injection, diaphragm, condoms and sterilisation (Adams, 1994:54). Contraceptives help to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Many young people lack knowledge about contraceptives (UNICEF, 1992:5). According to Hudson (1991:90), contraception is not popular among many teenagers, particularly those from economically and educationally poor backgrounds. Some girls are afraid to use contraceptives because girls who seek contraceptive advice are not praised or condoned by the society, their family or their peer group. Some of them, even when they have sufficient knowledge, appear to be unwilling to put their knowledge into practice or are unable to make connection between knowledge and use. Sex education and guidance about contraceptives should be taught in schools.

Children must have facts and information regarding their sexual functioning and the consequence of sexual activity at an early and appropriate age. The programmes should also provide information about the human reproduction system, the menstruation cycle and conception. Many teenagers do know about the use of contraceptives, but some believe that they cannot get pregnant during their first time of sexual intercourse. According to Kruger & Steyn (2006:77), discussions and counseling sessions should be informative but non-judgmental and non-threatening, as the main outcome is to prevent teenage pregnancy and its devastating repercussions on the adolescent, her family, the child born to such a young mother and the public health care sector.

According to De Villiers & Kekesi (2004), as an increasing percentage of adolescents reach their sexual debut at younger ages, effective contraceptive methods become even more critical. The potential for a reduction in unintended pregnancies in adolescents and a reduced need for abortions is a welcome prospect.

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In a study conducted by De Villiers& Kekesi in 2004, of the 36 (51, 4%) who had never used contraception, 18 mentioned that they never thought that they would fall pregnant. De Villiers and Kekesi (2004) also reported the fact that many young people who become pregnant have access to suitable facilities but do not utilise them due to experimentation, rebellion and a certain degree of risk-taking behaviour as well as unresolved emotional issues regarding sexuality.

Inconsistent or incorrect use of contraception is the major cause of contraception failure. Teenagers should follow the advice given by their health care workers about the correct use of contraceptives, in order to avoid contraception failure. The use of contraceptives is viewed negatively by society because of a belief that availability of information regarding contraception might encourage sexual activities among teenagers. Parents not allowing their teenagers to use contraceptives contribute to unplanned pregnancies among their teenagers. According to Ehlers (2003:19-20), adolescent mothers in South Africa claimed that they did not use contraceptives because of ignorance about contraceptives, fear of going to the clinic, fear of picking up weight, and opposition from their boyfriend regarding the use of contraceptives.

According to Zabin & Hayward (1993:43), reasons for not using contraception are not confined to lack of awareness of birth control options or of the risk of pregnancy. They include a large measure of fear and misinformation about its use, as well as ambivalence about childbearing itself. Inaccurate beliefs about the dangers and the ineffectiveness of contraception are sufficiently strong to discourage them from addressing the many problems associated with its acquisition and use.

Zabin & Hayward also stated that teenagers have exaggerated fears about the side effects of the pill. Eaton *et al.* cited in Phillips & Malcom, (2006:59) stated that there is uncertainty about the proper use of condoms among South African youth and this could explain the low rate of condom use. This means that there is a serious gap in knowledge about the proper use of condoms among young South Africans and this leaves them in an unbearable situation of unplanned pregnancy.

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In their study, Eaton *et al. (*2003:76), discovered that there is the lack of communication or interaction with adults especially at health care centres about using condoms as well as the lack of access to condoms in the communities. Many adults, especially in rural areas, do not communicate with their teenagers about contraception use because they think that teenagers would disrespect them if they communicate with them about sexual matters and contraception use. Open communication between parents and their teenagers helps teenagers to postpone early pregnancy by abstaining from sexual activities or by using contraceptives correctly.

2.11.3 Sexual and reproductive health service

Family planning services are provided to young people with the purpose of making available reproductive health services, providing contraception such as condoms and improving their knowledge and skill to use them (Kirby, 2007:35). While there is evidence from the US that shows considerable numbers of young people make use of family planning services (up to 40 percent of 15-19 year olds in the US), the evidence on the impact of such services on sexual behaviour and pregnancy is limited (Kirby,2007:40).

Young people in South Africa have benefited from a number of health policies directed at the population at large. Several interventions have been instituted within the rubric of family planing services. In particular, contraceptives have been made available at primary health care clinics and other mobile services at no cost since 1994(Shisana *et al.*, 2005:27).But over half of the sexually-active young people do not use contraception when they have sex. While a range of socio-cultural factors determine contraceptive use, one reason why contraceptive use is low is because sex is often not planned (Kirby, 2007:30) and happens on the spur of the moment (Jewkes *et al.,* 2001:40).

2.11.4 Alcohol and drug abuse

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) estimates that 4,6 million teenagers aged 14 to 17 experience serious alcohol related problems (Bachman, 1991:12).According to Plant (1992:24), the use of alcohol and other psychoactive drugs such as marijuana, tobacco and cocaine is deeply intertwined with adolescent sexual

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activity, which leads to teenage pregnancy and childbearing. The use of alcohol and drugs appears to be higher among teens participating in premarital sex. The study conducted by Mott & Haurin (1998:47) indicated that alcohol use is more closely linked with adolescent sexual activity. Young people are more likely to engage in high riskbehaviour when under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

Alcohol consumption might directly cause an increased risk of STI s due to its effects on behaviour and sexual arousal. In one study, Bana *et al* (2010:10)discovered that substance abuse was significantly associated with having multiple partners. Some of the youth in the study who used recreational drugs admitted to increased sexual activity and violent behaviour following their use. The use of drugs among adolescents leaves them in an unacceptable situation, which makes them regret their own risky behaviours. Almost all studies have found that substance use, alcohol and drugs are positively associated with several adolescent sexual behaviours such as early initiation of sexual intercourse, multiple sexual partners and engaging in intercourse without contraception. The relationship between adolescent substance use and sexual behaviour is an important public health issue. Sexual activity is a proximate cause of sexually transmitted disease and unwanted pregnancy, two harmful outcomes prevalent among teens (Rashad & Kaestner; 2004:88).

Dowdell cited in Africa & Van Deventer, (2010:265) stated that, the development of a healthy lifestyle during adolescence is a complex and evolving process. As a child matures into an adolescent, there is a rapid change in behaviour patterns. According to Espejo (2003:89), teens who use or abuse drugs and alcohol, who have had a history of violence and delinquency or are failing/dropped out of school, have higher rates of sexual activity. Those teens are more likely to put themselves in sexually risky situations and are less likely to use contraception.

Many young people in most communities tend to abuse alcohol and many teenage girls become less inhibited as a result of alcohol consumption. As a result, they end up involved in risky sexual behaviours, resulting in unplanned teenage pregnancies. The majority of the teenage girls when under the influence of alcohol have unprotected sexual intercourse do not even remember who impregnated them. Risky sexual

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behaviour that occurs when under the influence of alcohol does not lead only to teenage pregnancy among teenagers. According Setlalentoa, Pisa, Thekisho, Ryke &Loots (2010:15), alcohol use is prevalent in South Africa and it may be associated with higher risk of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmission.

2.11.5 Pregnancy as a result of unwanted sex

One factor which must not be underestimated is the effect of gender violence on schoolgirls. Many pregnancies may be a result of forced sex rather than free choice or risky sexual behaviour. A 2006 UNICEF study found that out of 19% of the girls aged 15-24 in the study who had been pregnant, a shocking 40% of these pregnancies resulted from forced sex. This study further indicated that another form of pressure can come from teachers. It has been shown that between 1995 and 2002, the Ministry of Basic Education in South Africa expelled 114 male teachers for impregnating schoolgirls.

2.12 CONSEQUENCES OF EARLY CHILDBEARING

Teenage pregnancy is an issue that is rampant in society today. It is increasing the population growth rate in society. Many babies who cannot be catered for by the available resources are born through it. Many pregnant teenage girls end up dropping out of school to avoid shame, thus undermining government's efforts towards ensuring Education for All and of meeting the Millennium Development Goal of Education.

One consequence of teenage pregnancy is that it is only the girls who take the blame and consequences of pregnancy; boys do not, yet both are responsible for the conception. A study done on the consequences of teenage pregnancy by Health and Fitness indicate that, in some cases girls were seen as having made a mistake by getting pregnant since they were not economically prepared for the responsibility.

One of the negative consequences of teenage pregnancy is poverty. Poverty has now been recognised as both the cause and consequence of early childbearing (Kirby, 2007:77).Earlier research may have overestimated the consequences of early

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childbearing because of the assumption that poverty and socio-economic disruption were a consequence of teenage pregnancy.

Poverty is a level of income that is not high enough to provide for daily basic human needs (Nemanashi, 2008). A large majority of young people live below the poverty datum line and struggle to keep body and soul together. Because of poverty, many teenage girls engage in sexual activities in exchange for money. Such practices often lead to teenage pregnancy. Unlike older mothers, most teenage mothers are more likely to be from poor backgrounds.

Given the fact that a young mother depends on her family for financial support, the family is overstretched and may not be able to cater for all the needs of the infant. This could have serious implications on the young mother's future, forcing her to seek employment to help supplement the family income (Champion, 1995:44). By dropping out of school in search of employment, the teen mother is assured of employment in the form of manual labour. This means being uneducated and getting very low paid jobs for the rest of her life.

According to Rickel, (1993:145), the low socio-economic status of a teen's family is linked with the early age of intercourse among females, particularly among blacks. Poverty deprives the young mothers of chances of success and of exploring the world which would bring changes in their lives. It also deprives teenage mothers of the opportunity to returning to school. Poverty can be seen as both the cause and result of teenage motherhood.

Research done by HSRC (2005:6) indicated that some girls got pregnant in order to receive the grant because they were poor and thought that the money would help them and their families to afford food and other basic needs. According to Cassel,(2002:74), the general consensus is that teenage pregnancy is mostly unplanned and often coincides with other transitions such as schooling. It can result in negative consequences for the teenage mother and more especially for the child. Teenage pregnancy can have a profound impact on young mothers and their children by placing limits on their educational achievement. In this situation, teenage mothers tend to have

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fewer years of education compared to those who have their first child after 20 years of age.

Young women who begin childbearing early complete less schooling than women who delay childbearing until their 20s. In developing countries schoolgirls who become pregnant rarely return to school, whether they are married or not. In this situation many young women risk unsafe abortion to avoid leaving school. Even though some countries are modifying policies of expelling pregnant schoolgirls, most young women cannot return to school after giving birth because they must care for the child (NRC & IOM, 2005:15). Early childbearing has the following outcomes: dropping out of school, school absenteeism, and poor academic performance, and lower educational attainment, poor cognitive development of children, and poor educational outcomes for children.

The disadvantages of teenage motherhood are many and well documented. They range from concerns about health outcomes, interpersonal and relationship difficulties and interruptions to the normative life trajectory to economic consequences (Moore & Rosenthal; 1993:156). According to Espejo (2003:88), future prospects for teenagers decline significantly if they have a baby. Teen mothers are more likely than other young women to drop out of school, remain unmarried and become single parents, and to live in poverty and rely on public assistance (Terry-Humen, Manlove & Moore, 2005:55).

According to (HSRC, 2005) the issue of poverty is significant in any discussion of teenage parenthood; it affects both parents and children so closely. Most teen mothers live under the poverty line and require public assistance for the basics of life, i.e. food, clothing and shelter.

2.13 HEALTH PROBLEMS

Pregnant adolescents commonly experience poor nutrition, poor health and limited access to and use of medical and health services. Pre-natal and postnatal problems are more common among them than among older mothers and more of the babies die.

Concerning health risk, some studies suggest that pregnancy before the age of 20 carries more health risk than pregnancies at older ages. Estimates provided by

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UNFPA,(2007:5) indicate that the risk of death after pregnancy for women aged 15-19 is twice that of those aged 20-24. It was shown that the health consequences of early pregnancy are 600 times higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in developed countries (Blum, 2007). Studies conducted in South Africa in the 1980s and 1990s reported similar health consequences for early childbearing. According to Kaufman *et al.* 2001:48), teen pregnancy is common among Coloured and African adolescents in South Africa, and it is still highly stigmatized. Young women refer to the trauma that they experience when they realise that they are pregnant and the difficulty they face in deciding who tell and what to do, as well as the negative response they receive from family and friends.

International studies indicate that children of teen mothers are likely to experience health problems compared to children of older mothers (NRC & IOM, 2005:76)This study further indicate that the low birth weight is associated with negative outcomes later in life such as cognitive and physical disabilities and lower educational attainment.

According to Maja & Phil (2005:47), unplanned and unwanted pregnancies pose major reproductive health problems for women throughout the world, including the Republic of South Africa. Pregnancies create health risks for both the mother and the infant, resulting in higher maternal and infant mortality.

According to De Villiers and Kekesi (2004:69), children of teenage mothers are at an increased risk of cognitive and psychological deficits. The combination of cognitive, emotional, academic and social problems amounts to the "massive school failure" of these "children of children". Espejo (2003:90), stated that children born to teen mothers suffer from higher rates of low birth weight and related health problems. The proportion of babies with low birth weight born to teens is 28% higher than the proportion for mothers aged 20-24. The low birth weight raises the probability of infant death, blindness, deafness, chronic problems, mental illness and cerebral difficulties.

2.14 PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES FOR ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

According to Zellman (1982:55) US public schools have become increasingly involved in the problems of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood. Concerning this problem, two

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factors have been identified since the problem became more visible. It was found that, today, most adolescents who carry their pregnancies to term keep their infants and, marry, in order to legitimise a non-marital pregnancy than did their counterparts in the past. Zellman (1982:56) further argues that these factors helped in explaining why teenage pregnancy is less stigmatized as shameful or immoral because teenagers now expect to continue attending school.

Zellman (1982:57) stressed the importance of the school involvement in student pregnancy and parenthood as stipulated in Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments. The Title provides that teenagers who are pregnant or who have a child, regardless of their marital status, are entitled to the same rights as other students. It again states that students who are pregnant or teenage mothers cannot be expelled from school or barred from any programme. The United States came up with a strategy that allows the provision of separate educational programmes for pregnant teenagers and indicated that the program must be both voluntary and comparable in quality to regular classes. With the passage of the Title IX, student pregnancy and parenthood became, legal (Zellman, 1982:59).

The National Institute of Education stated that eleven local education agencies around the country were visited during the research and interviewed a total of 367 state officials, school staff members, pregnant teenagers and adolescents' parents (Zellman, 1982:60). The research wanted to establish the strategies or programme that can be used, in order to help pregnant students and adolescent parents. The study came up with seven inclusive curriculum programs. These programmes offers enrollees a general educational curriculum and a range of course work relevant to childbearing, such as classes in parenthood or child development. These programmes sometimes also offer services ranging from counseling, health monitoring, and childcare. However, the common feature of all inclusive programs is that students who are enrolled in them do not attend regular classes (Zellman, 1982).Programmes for pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers may involve social costs. Zellman (1982:66) stated that the existence of a programme indicates the existence of a problem.

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In their previous research, Chigona & Chetty, (2008:10) discussed the responses of public schools and families to the needs of teen mothers. They further indicated that lack of support from the schools and families contributed to teen mothers not succeeding in school. Chigona and Rajendry (2008) mentioned that in South Africa during apartheid, pregnant girls were not allowed at school. This has contributed to a high rate of illiterate women and girls in South Africa. Due to democracy and adoption of the 1996 Bill of Rights, girls who become pregnant whilst schooling are no longer expelled from their institutions (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler 2001:17).

Kaufman, de Wet and Stadler, (2001:19) pointed out that in 2003; the Western Cape Education Department introduced the Managing Learner Pregnancy Policy in public schools. This policy gives teen mothers a right to remain at, and continue their education in school. The policy dictates that schools should ensure that the rights and development of female learners are not curtailed and that special measures are taken in respect of pregnant learners (WCED 2003). In South Africa, De clerg(1997:98) extends the description of policy to include decisions, courses of action and resource allocation designed to achieve a particular goal or resolve a particular problem.

According to the policy, the educational consequences of learner pregnancy and parenting do not just stop with the girls; rather, they are bound to have a negative impact on the girl's offspring as well. In other words, without proper education, the teen mothers will not have skills needed to become self-supporting and economically productive citizens. This often results in their children entering the education system with economic and developmental disadvantages. Therefore, schools should act cautiously in matters of learner pregnancy. It is important that the schools handle the situation from an educational and value- driven perspective so that the teen mother's future, as well as that of her offspring, is not jeopardised.

2.15 SEX EDUCATION

High enrolment rates of adolescents in the school setting provide an important access point for intervention on sexual and reproductive health. As such, the high coverage of adolescents in the school setting provides an important leverage point to delay the

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onset of sex and to ensure that those who are sexually active are able to adequately protect themselves (Kirby, Obasi & Laris,2006:60).

A review of 56 curriculum–based programmes in the US, half of which were implemented in the school setting, reported that there is strong evidence that sex education can both delay sex and promote safe sex (Kirby, 2007:73). Two thirds of the programmes reviewed had a significant impact on at least one aspect of sexual behaviour, or lowered rates of pregnancy, child bearing, or STIs.

There was strong evidence of the effect of school-based sex education and HIV education on adolescent sexual behaviour. While the interventions did not increase sexual activity, they did report positive effects in delaying sexual activity, and decrease the number of sexual contraceptive use. There was also ample evidence of changing values, attitudes and peer norms (Visser, 2005:90).

The study recommended that sex education should be integrated into undergraduate teacher training courses to improve teacher's knowledge, and skills in teaching about HIV (Ahmed *et al.,* 2006:66). Visser (2005:78) also reported on the lack of commitment towards the programme by teachers and principals, organisational problems in schools (lack of allocated time and human resources) and competing priorities in the school system that contributed towards the limited implementation of programmes.

Although evidence of the effectiveness of sex education in South Africa is not as convincing, the available international experience suggests that the question is not whether sex education should be provided but how its effects can be optimised (Mukoma and Fisher, 2006:54). Incorporating many of the characteristics that constitute good programmes may assist in improving the outcomes of sex education in South Africa. In addition well-designed evaluation studies are required in South Africa to demonstrate and improve the effectiveness of school-based sex education programmes. To ensure a distinct focus on pregnancy, life skills evaluation studies should also include responsibilities of parenthood, knowledge and skills required for successful parenthood, as well as the importance of planning for and timing of parenthood (NRC and IOM, 2005:87).

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2.16 CONCLUSION

Teenage pregnancy is not a problem for African countries only but it is a worldwide phenomenon. One of its measure causes is poverty and also the issue of sugar daddies. All over the world, countries are generally coming to accept that expelling pregnant girls and teen mothers from school is counter productive in that it will perpetuate the poverty which mostly likely drove the girl to early sexual activity in the hope of alleviating poverty. The following chapter will cover the theoretical framework in this study.

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CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The theoretical framework of this study interrogates the ways in which the lives of women are shaped in society and attempts to provide an understanding on how such beliefs and values can be understood in trying to address issues for the emancipation of women, as well as how social justice can be achieved in society. Since the research seeks to find out the educational achievement of teenage mothers and the issues that affect their learning in schools, the research is informed by feminist theories such as liberal, radical and socialist feminism. These theories provide an insight into how the oppression of women and girls can be understood in a given context.

It is important for me to use liberal feminism because liberal feminists like Agger (1993:40) believe that men and women are equal and should be valued equally and also have equal rights. Liberal feminism believes in achieving equality of access and equality of treatment for girls (Arnot, 1993:210). Liberal feminists believe that through the provision of equal educational experiences for both sexes a genuinely equal society can be developed (Cruddas, 2003:211).Therefore, in this study liberal feminism was used as it puts emphasis on the role of education in changing the social stereotypes that affect and oppress women and girls(Dillabough, 2001:225).

Education is a fundamental human right for all children, including girls (Chigona & Chetty 2008:5). Yet, in many areas of their lives, girls' prospects for education may be diminished because of pregnancy, motherhood and gender discrimination. In terms of the South African Bill of Rights, Section 29 of the Constitution, everyone has a right to basic education Chigona & Chetty (2007:16). This Bill was made to eliminate any discrimination against sexes and also to promote gender equality.

South Africa is a democratic country and, because of that, all people should be free from all forms of discrimination. South Africa has a School Act which encapsulates issues of inclusive education. This means that all learners, regardless of whether they

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are pregnant or teen mothers, have a right to education. In support of the above argument, White Paper 6 on inclusive education, (2001:65), describes government's intent to implement inclusive education at all levels, by facilitating the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reducing barriers to learning.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 makes education accessible even to pregnant learners and teen mothers. In this way, it prohibits all forms of discrimination against learners. The Department of Education (2007:7) also designed policy guidelines that direct schools to allow pregnant learners and teen mothers to continue with their education.

One of the greatest achievements since democracy in South Africa has been the massive expansion of access to basic education, especially in the enrolment of girls (DOE, 2008:2). The gender equality issue in education has been a major concern in many countries, including South Africa. The importance of gender equality in education within the process of international goal-setting has been emphasised in Education for All (EFA). Education should serve as the vehicle for transforming attitudes, beliefs, and entrenched social norms that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. Malhotra, Pande & Grown (2003:40) stated that education is associated with the empowerment of women (UNESCO, 2000; Millenium Development Goals (MDG), 2006).

Girls' access to schooling in many developing countries is so low that the term "empowerment" has been used to mean mere participation in the formal system. Empowerment should enable girls to acquire knowledge and skills to counter sexual stereotypes and conceptions of masculinity and femininity that limit the social potential of women (Parpart *et al.*, 2002:210). Parpart *et al.*,(2002:210) further maintained that empowering girls should mean offering them courses with content that not only attacks current sexual stereotypes but also provides them with alternative visions of a gender free society.

The UN Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966), and the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Belief or

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Religion (1981), have been key in acknowledging that women's rights have been marginalized, both institutionally and conceptually, in national and international human rights movements. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW,3 September 1981) also emphasises the need to recognise and respect the rights of women. These documents helped to increase the momentum of women emancipation campaign. Consequently, feminist scholars took the initiative of writing about the need for access and equal opportunities for women in all spheres of life. These interventions are helping to advance the struggle for women emancipation and empowerment by eliminating all forms of inequality faced by women. They also affirm non-discrimination and equality as an overaching human right for women (Ali, 1994:12).

According to Ballara (1991:1), the position of women is still far from satisfactory. Their lower status with regard to access to power in both industrialised and developing countries is rooted in economic inequalities and discrimination. The UN (1995:45) points out that the World Bank has stressed the high social rates of return to female education as an important development strategy in developing countries, and this strategy is broadly accepted across a range of agencies and governments.

Girls' education helps to achieve the goal of empowerment and autonomy for women and it improves their political, social and economic status (World Bank, 1995:33).

3.2 CONTEXTUALISING GENDER EQUITY THEORIES INTO THE STUDY

There are many feminist theories that have been used to examine the discrimination and inequality experienced by women in society. Some of the most important feminist theories include, among others, socialist, radical and liberal feminist theories. However, this study focuses on the liberal feminist theory.

Proponents of all three theories generally agree that gender refers to the differences between male and female within the same household and between cultures that are socially and culturally constructed and change over time (Bobo, 2001:141). These differences are reflected in roles, responsibilities, and access to resources, constraints,

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opportunities, needs, perceptions, views, decision- making and others held by both males and females. The attributes, opportunities and relationships are learned through socialisation processes. Ostergaard (1992:56) argues that gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or man in a given context.

Gender theories are critical to this study as teen mothers are failing to cope with their studies when it comes to the issue of attending and performing well due to gender roles that are attached to them. Instead of focusing on their studies, they have to deal with domestic chores that are attached to the private sphere, where they have to focus on taking care of the baby, cooking for the family and also doing their school work. This is very difficult because, after doing such roles, women will be tired. The result is that they will stop going to school and the performance will also be affected. Instead of the father of the child helping with some chores, continues to do his studies. Sometimes the girl ends up dropping out of school due to the burden of doing her duties as a woman and, at the same time doing her school work. The father will continue with his schooling unhindered by the same problems.

Women oppresion is one of the key issues that affect pregnant girls and teen mothers because they are expected to do all domestic work. All this is caused by the division of labour within families. In this study, participants are based in the rural areas where they are expected to fetch water from nearby taps, while boys are busy studying or playing. Girls are expected to make sure that people eat and, only can they then focus on their studies. Woman are marginalised and regarded as inferior.

3.2.1 SOCIALIST FEMINIST THEORY ON WOMEN SUBORDINATION

Socialist feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses on both the public and private spheres of women's life. This theory argues that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both economic and cultural sources of the oppression of women (Collins, 1990:45).

It also asserts that women are unable to be free due to their financial dependence on males in society. This situation arose as a result of being dependent on men for

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survival. Socialist feminists reject radical feminism's main claim that patriarchy is the only or primary source of oppression of women.

The majority of teenagers in this study were dependent on men because of lack of equal access to resources (money). Socialist feminists see the economic dependence of women on men as a driving force of women's subjugation. They see women's liberation as a necessary part of larger quest for social, economic and political justice in society.

Socialist feminism argues that the rulling class oppresses women and relegates them to the position of second class citizenship in society and within the family. Women are seen as instruments of production Karl. Max indicated that the rise of women's oppression is the rise of class a society within the family and nuclear family

3.2.2 RADICAL FEMINISM ON PATRIARCHY AS ROOT CAUSE OF WOMEN'S DOMESTICATION

Radical feminism is informed by the patriarchal ideology. As a result, radical feminists maintain that women are oppressed simply because of their sex. It identifies men as oppressors and does not consider social discrimination as affecting women and men in similar ways. It locates women's oppression in the social institution of gender, whereas socialist feminism focuses on uniting people and fighting all forms of oppression rather than struggling separately to advance the interest of women. It is influential because it talks about men as oppressors, who like to see women in the private sphere where they will be focusing on domestic chores and rearing children. To them, patriarchy is the system which oppresses women through its social, economic and political institutions. James,(2000:43) defines patriarchy as a system of male dominance created to control women. James adds that patriarchy is a system of male dominance, rooted in the ethos of war, which legitimates violence sanctified by religious symbols, in which men dominate women through the control of female sexuality. According to Martin (1984:87), a patriarchal society is organised and run by men. These men make the rules and dominate in all forums outside and at the home. Johnson (2005:5) views the patriarchal society as a society which promotes male privilege by creating power differences

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between men and women. Society sees men as heads of families and as having power over women because even the number of children and when to have a child is not discussed between men and women. Men take decisions over a woman, and this shows the power differences between sexes. Women are being marginalised and subordinated due to their status.

For radical feminists, patriarchy is a sexual system of power in which the male possesses superior power and economic privileges. According to radical feminists, patriarchy is rooted in biology rather than in economics or history. Women are regarded as sex objects, whom men treat as they wish. Teenage pregnancy and giving birth are biological features because men do not fall pregnant but impregnant a woman. In this study, for example the issue on teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood are biological determined. Radical feminists state that patriarchy manifested itself through male force and control. The roots of patriarchy are located in women's reproductive selves (Eisenstein, 1979:98). This idea is also supported by Firestone (1970:231) who, in her book *Dialectic of Sex,* argues that the specific oppression that women experience is directly related to their unique biology.

According to Lynne (2010:43), patriarchy is a system of power that organises society into complex relationships based on the emphasis of male supremacy over women. Radical theorists aim at challenging and overthrowing patriarchy by opposing gender roles and the oppression of women. They also call for the radical re-structuring of society. Radical feminists contend that women can free themselves only when they have done away with what they consider an inherently oppressive and dominating patriarchal system (Collins, 1991:89).

These feminists are opposed to male-based authority and power structure, which is responsible for oppression and inequality between men and women. They also argue that the oppression of women is rooted in patriarchal gender relations as opposed to legal systems. This is a power over others, where men are superior to women and women are seen as inferior.

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A woman's body, therefore, becomes the defining criterion of her existence and it is also the central focus in so far as the freedom from her sexuality is concerned. Therefore, radical feminists call for a fight against the oppression and marginalisation of women, in order to free them from all forms of discrimination. Some radical feminists also call for a revolution as a way of ending patriarchy and the oppression of women (Unger, 1992:44).

In view of the various views expressed by scholars, radical feminism calls for women to become empowered so that they can challenge patriarchal inequalities. This is needed because empowerment would be the best tool to be used to challenge existing power relations that oppress women. Women empowerment must also include transformative political action, meaning that education for girls should be a priority. The power that is needed is the one that is rooted in self-understanding that can inspire women to recognise and challenge gender inequality in the home and the community.

Rowlands cited in Parpart (2002:55), argued that empowerment is not just a gender issue but also a development issue affecting women and men. Girls and women need to be empowered to take actions on their bodies, focus on education and forget about making babies, which results in many young girls dropping out of school and becoming illiterate. These girls need to be empowered because empowerment goes hand in hand with the increase in self-confidence and self-esteem, and being respected by others. For example, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995:6) states emphatically that women's empowerment is fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (Connel (1990:211). Again, the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Policy on Gender Equality (1999) includes women's empowerment as one of the eight guiding principles for policy goals (World Bank, 1995:329).

Education is a means of empowering women. It has often been seen as one of the keys to empowerment. To achieve empowerment through education, empowerment should enable girls to acquire knowledge and skills that improve the social potential of women (Sinqussawin & Ratansing, 1999:88).

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It is thus, important for girls to protect themselves against men and also make sure that if they are abused, they report the incident. It is important for girls to share their problems on different issues. They should also express their feelings on what they do not want, (for instance forced sex) because that is where they have this high rate of pregnancy. The DOE (2007:1) focuses on the prevention of pregnancy. It notes that pregnancy has a far greater impact on girls than on the boy father (DOE, 2007:1), and almost grudgingly admits that unplanned pregnancies may occur. Therefore it is important to educate learners to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities with regards to healthy lifestyles. Connell (1990: 213) stated that patriarchy is very hard to eradicate because it is the root or the belief that women are different and inferior.

3.2.3 LIBERAL FEMINISM ON WOMEN EMANCIPATION

As stated earlier on, this study is more informed by the liberal feminist theory than the other two presented feminist theories. The liberal feminist theory is preferred over the socialist and radical feminist theories because it stresses the liberation of women more than on focusing on the mere causes of women oppression as is done by the other two theories.

The choice of the liberal feminist theory, in this study, is that it aims at eradicating gender inequalities and advances the interest of women through available democratic channels and through the use of non-coercive methods such as gender equity policies and programmes. For the purpose of this research, the views of the liberals are seen as appropriate to understanding how the lives of both men and women should be transformed, in order to improve lives, especially of the oppressed. The challenges that teenage mothers face are to a certain extent, influenced by the social stereotypes which do not value education for girls and women. Liberal feminism maintains ideas and methods similar to those of the civil rights movement, such as the use of non-violent but democratic means as a choice weapon in their battle for equal and fair treatment (Wallaby, 1996:45). The theory of liberal feminism also assisted me in my research as it underpinned the position of gender equality in which all people are created equal,

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meaning women are essentially the same as men. The theory is also based upon the principle of equal opportunity and freedom in which gender equity is not determined by sex.

Liberal feminist perspectives are generally concerned with ways in which norms, roles, institutions and internalised expectations limit women's behaviour. They also seek to demonstrate how women's personal control operates even with the constraints of relative lack of power (Steward, 1994:45). These theories also aspire to a world in which women have equal access to current social benefits and so develop an educational agenda premised on notions of "access and success" that are equal to men. Liberal feminists like Agger (1993:231) & Craig (1992:67), believe that men and women are equal and should be valued equally and also have equal rights. Gender is viewed as a socially and culturally constructed concept that has important consequences in the lives of all people.

The liberal feminist theory is a female-centred theory, which revolves around the empowerment of the female in a patriarchal society. It also focuses on equality across the board for men and women (Freeman, 2001:99). In attempt to find the fundamental attitudes that cause gender inequality, the liberals find that sexism, prejudice and the discrimination of women. According to Bobo (2001:134) sexist attitudes disadvantage women through socialising them into submissive gender roles. Bobo (2001:123) also argues that the roles that women are forced to play, those of emotional, sexual and household servants, render them mindless, dependant and subconsciously depressed. It would be good for women to be treated equally the same as men. This would involve removing the gender stereotypes that encourage gender imbalances between sexes. With regard to universal educational access and opportunity, most UN member states, South Africa included have ratified important international conventions and treaties such as Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of 2000 and Education for All (EFA) of 1990, that all uphold equal and equitable educational right to, within and through education for all children (Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; Leach, 2000). It is in this vein that the

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South African Department of Education crafted a policy to compel and guide schools to allow girls who could fall pregnant while at school to continue with their education (DoE, 2007; Gant & Hallman, 2006; Manzini, 2001; Runhare, 2010; Runhare & Vandeyar, 2011, 2012). Giving such educational opportunities to formerly pregnant teenagers could be in line with liberal feminist view that society should give more opportunities for upward mobility to women and the girl child, including teen mothers.

The liberation of women is equated with equality of opportunity through the provision of equal civil rights and educational opportunities (Eisenstein, 1981:231). Liberals believe that by providing women with the opportunity to engage in these activities, women can have the same chances for success as men. Gender socialisation that eliminates discrimination is valued in society as a whole. Thus, liberal feminism asserts that inequalities do exist between men and women. The main cause of inequality is the lack of access by women to resources that empower them. This perpetuation of inequalities oppresses women whose only solution is to make education accessible to women and change the social stereotypes that affect women negatively (Parpart, 1995:8).

The liberal feminist theory calls for women's struggle for equity that arises from and provides a link between women's oppression and male power. According to James (2000), liberal feminism is rooted in the viewpoint that women are disadvantaged and oppressed in contrast to men, and that their oppression is unjustified or illegitimate. Struggling to access education and equal rights has a long history in liberal feminism. In the United States, feminist politics followed the initial path in the 1960s which dealt with the campaign for women's rights and equality in education.

James (2000:160) notes that many feminist theories embody different conceptions about the manifestation of women oppression. These conceptions are bound by one common thread, which is male power as the source of women's oppression. The basis of this male power, as postulated by feminists is that it stems from the male-based control of knowledge, religion and culture in which women are ostracised from positions of authority and power, and in the manner in which cultural homogeneity unfairly limits women. Under the umbrella of this general characterisation, various expositions of

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women and their oppressions erroneously perceive feminism as a single philosophical doctrine (James, 2000:155).

The emergence of liberal feminism as an approach is greatly embedded in and borne out of the ideas of the civil rights movement, which include the use of non-violent but democratic means as a choice of weapon in their battle for equal and fair treatment. Liberal feminists agitate for women and girls' education to enable them to move beyond the emotional and private sphere of the home into the rational, public sphere of citizenship (Collins, 1990:230).

Liberal feminists argue that the state, in its governance role, must effectively protect women and pass enabling legislation which would eradicate gender inequalities in all spheres of society. According to Beasely (1989:88), liberal feminists support the notion that education is a vehicle for change and that the oppression of women is not a structural feature of the capitalist economic system. It looks up to the state to effect women emancipation through legislative measures such as affirmative action, employment equity and subsidised day care for professional and middle-class women. Beasely (1999:12) further argues that the emancipation of women lies in them attaining education and changing the view held by society which is that women are less capable and irrational than men and irrational.

The main focus on liberal feminism is to change the status and opportunities in the political and economic institutions by granting women equal access to what men have, through reforming present systems, changing and or implementing legislation, and through democratic channels. Liberal feminists focus on achieving equal access and treatment for both men and women. They maintain that this equality can only be achieved through the provision of equal educational experiences for both sexes (Arnot, 2001:35).

Runhare, (2010:62) points out that in the United States of America (USA), the right of pregnant learners to continue education is based on two acts of parliament which all American states and districts are compelled to adopt and implement in their schools. He adds that, the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, referred to as Title IX and the

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Women's Educational and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEFA) of 1975, any form of discrimination against pregnant teens in schools is prohibited.

One of the interventions for redressing this problem is the inclusion of pregnant and former pregnant teenagers into formal education (Bayona & Kandji-Murangi 1996; Manzini, 2001; Chilisa, 2002; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2007: 2008, cited in Runhare & Vandeyar, 2012). Accordingly, most United Nations (UN) members states are signatories to international conventions like the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Education for All (EFA) and Millenium Development Goals (MDG), which among other objectives, seek to safeguard the right of every person to education (Stromquist, 1998, Sadie, 2001, cited in Runhare & Vandeyar 2012:51).Apart from these conventions, South Africa designed policy guidelines that direct schools to allow pregnant and parenting learners to continue with their education (Department of Education (DOE), 2007:10). It is in this vein that this study investigated the extent to which teen mothers in South African school settings experienced and benefited from schooling before, during and after pregnancy.

Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1992) shows that formal education in Uganda emphasised the negligence of girls' education, so that by 1990 the imbalance in males and females participating in education remained unaddressed. Kenway (1990:331) attributes these conspicuous disparities to historical and cultural belief that regarded males as being more important than females, a discourse which related to the class-specific role of women as cultured wives and mothers.

The above statement shows that some of the feminist theories hold the view that society is male-dominated. This shows that women were historically disadvantaged in society and that men have had more power than women. Liberal feminist theory underpins the position of gender equality in which all people are created. Liberal feminism further emphasises that all people regardless of gender, should be given equal of opportunities. It does not promote inequality because inequality stems from the denial of equal rights to women. Inequality promotes sexism, which is a tool used by men to oppress women. Therefore, teen mothers and pregnant girls need to be encouraged to continue with

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their studies. Lberal feminists maintain that equality between men and women is an integral part of the universal human rights.

According to AusAID (1997), promoting equal access to education is an essential tool for achieving equality and development. Education, above all, enables people to take the change process into their own hands and to shape their own destiny. Therefore, it is important for teen mothers and pregnant girls to access educational opportunities, in order to achieve their goals in life.

According to Tong (1989:8) the liberals concern with justice is based on a conception of society. It argues that individuals must be allowed to exercise their autonomy and fulfill their needs as they define themselves. This theory helped me to understand that, both pregnant learners and teen mothers have a right to equal access to education like any other learner.

The important thing about the liberal feminist theory is that, liberty means freedom and this freedom does not need any interference because everyone has a right to it. This means that people have equal opportunities. Jagger (1983:77) pointed out that society violates the value of equal rights in its treatment of women, primarily by restricting women as a group rather than treating women as individuals. This theory was used because of its' emphasizes of the need to eradicate of all forms of discrimination and gender inequalities through education. This means that learners, both girls and boys, should have the same right in schools.

Liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based on biology, and, therefore, women and men are not different. This means that, since women and men are not different, they should not be treated differently under the law (Collins, 1990:55). Thus women, including teen mothers and pregnant learners, should have the same right as men and the same educational opportunities.

Alcoff *et al.* (1993:123) argued that if women and men were raised in a more androgynous atmosphere and if women were provided access to educational opportunities similar to those afforded to men, the distinction between men and women

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would be eliminated. Following this line of thinking could ensure that equal education becomes the most effective means of social change. Because of the need to liberate women, liberal feminists fought for women's rights to control their own bodies (Nicholson, 1990:25).

The Liberal feminist theory calls for equal rights in education, in order to promote gender equity principles as contained in Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It states that education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Therefore, women and girls need to be empowered, in order to overcome the obstacles in their lives.

Liberal feminism emphasises the promotion of gender equality in all areas of education as a means not only to meet the basic needs of girls and boys, but also to ensure opportunities to achieve their full potential and realise their human rights. Therefore, ensuring gender equality in education means girls and boys have equal opportunities to enter school.

Liberal feminism stresses the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. It also focuses on women's ability to show and maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. According to liberal feminists, all women are capable of asserting their ability to achieve equality. Liberal feminism uses personal interactions between men and women to transform society (Chigona & Chetty, 2008:5).

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1995:145), argues that liberal feminism holds that women, as well as men, have the right to freedom. Liberal feminists create and support acts of legislation that remove the barriers for women. They believe that removing these barriers directly challenges the ideology of patriarchy and, would liberate women (Friedan, 1963:45). This is in support with international conventions like EFA, MDG, CRC, CEDAW, and the South Africa Bill of Rights which all define education as a basic right for all people irrespective of their circumstances (Daniel, 2003; Tsanga *et al.* 2004; Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; cited in Runhare, 2012:59). In the context of this study however, basic access to schooling may not be the

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lasting solution to the disadvantaged plight of teen motherhood. It is the outcomes in terms of their completion, pass rate and progression into higher education that could be considered as substantive educational benefits that could make a positive difference in their life chances.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight the liberal feminists' emphasis on gender equality for both sexes. Liberal feminists maintain that allowing girls to have access to education, would improve women's lives and also reduce gender bias. There are different instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, that state that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms. The International Covenant on Civil and Political rights also provides that both men and women have equal rights and that they have to enjoy all civil and political rights. These instruments ensure the elimination of discrimination against women, as well as the protection of the right of women. Liberal feminism holds that freedom is a fundamental value. It also insists on freedom for women.

Socialist feminism advocates for women to enter into traditional male dominated spheres and occupations that are in the public sphere and to move out of the private sphere which is the home. Therefore, pregnancy should no more be a hindrance to women entering the public sphere and or attending school. Socialist feminists focused on uniting people and fighting all forms of oppression rather than women struggling separately to advance their interests. Socialist feminism believed that the liberation of women from the domestic sphere to the public sphere would contribute to women's liberation.

Therefore, it is important for pregnant girls and teen mothers to be treated fairly and not to be discriminated against in any manner, especially with regard to educational access, participation and performance or achievement. Basing on the propositions of feminist theories that seek to revolutionarise the male dominated or patriarchal society, this study was conducted on the widely held assumption that more educational access to and participation by parenting teenagers is an important, though not the only agent for their emancipation. For this reason, the study was more informed by the liberal feminist

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perspective which calls for democratisation of all structural, legal, traditional, and cultural practices that can act as barriers to pregnant and parenting teenagers' educational aspirations. For without redressing the gender inequalities that affect this category of women, the EFA and MDG targets of eliminating gender in equalities in basic education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015 could remain an unforeseen dream (Runhare, 2010; Stromquist, 2005; Stromquist, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2005; Leach, 2000).

Liberal feminism has some of the weaknesses; it focuses mostly on the distribution of benefits and burdens in society and neglects power relation between men and women. It does not address the issue of patriarchy that oppresses women, but it talks of liberating them in different spheres of life. Women are still battling with the multiple roles that are attached to them while men are free and do not do anything but concerntrating on education. Society is still dominated by patriarchal power were men still practice power over women, even liberal feminism talk about equlity for all. It does not also question the status que, because those who are in leadership and being liberals and are white women and they are holding high positions in government.

3.3 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined, discussed and related how feminist theories, namely the radicals, socialists and liberals link up and informs how this study was contextualised. The next chapter focuses on the study methodology and the data gathering procedure.

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CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the theoretical framework. This chapter describes and explains the research design and methodology adopted in this study. This chapter first looks at the research paradigm, methodology and the design used in collecting data. It also describes the cluster selected for the study, as well as the process followed, in order to gain entry into the research site. It describes the sample, data collection methods, pilot study, as well as data analysis procedures used. The chapter finally ends with the delimitations and limitations of the study, ethical considerations and conclusion.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In research, there are two approaches that are frequently used by many researchers, the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. Both quantitative and qualitative research studies are conducted in education. Qualitative research presents facts in the form of words, while quantitative research presents statistical results represented with numbers (White, 2003:10; McMillan &Schumacher, 2010:315).

According to Patton (1990:94), a researcher who uses qualitative methods aims at finding out what people do, think and feel by observing, interviewing and analysing documents. This approach enables the researcher to conduct an in-depth study of selected issues. In other words, the qualitative research approach helps the researcher to study the phenomenon of interest in detail and to establish a relationship between variables. This research approach has been used in this study to solicit views of the research participants on the prevalence of teenage pregnancy, attendance and the educational performance of teenage mothers.

Similarly, Patton (2001:39) states that qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as "real world settings [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest." Bless & Achola (1988) and Babbie & Mouton (2001) defined research design

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as a plan that guides the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts, from whom, when and under what condition the data was obtained. McMillan & Schumacher (2010:342) view research design as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites, and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). The research design provides valid and accurate answers to the research questions. A research design also describes how the study was conducted and summarises the procedure for conducting the study, that is, it indicates the general plan, how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:342).

Mouton (1996:107) describes the research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the problem. For the purpose of this study, an explorative design was used to describe the learning experiences of teenage mothers, their attendance as well as the school performance of teen mothers in the Vhembe District schools, Limpopo Province. The use of the exploratory design in this study enabled the researcher to explore the views, ideas and feelings of the research participants on the educational performance of the teenage mothers.

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Various researchers have described qualitative research differently. Burns and Grove (2001:61), as well as van Rensburg & Smit (2004:3), indicate that qualitative research is a way to gain insights through discovering meanings. Within a holistic framework, qualitative research is a means of exploring in-depth information, richness and complexity inherent in the phenomenon.

In this study, I sought to explore the educational participation, attendance, achievement, and also the experience, views and perceptions of teen mothers in school. Parenting teen mothers, teachers, and principals were the participants in this study. I chose to employ qualitative research methods to collect data that answered my research questions. The qualitative approach enabled me to adapt to changes that were not anticipated at the beginning. It allowed for flexibility which is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2005:146) who mention that unstructured interviews are more flexible and

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more likely to yield information that the researcher had not planned to ask for. It gives the researcher an opportunity to be an active participant in the real context in the research field. When the researcher becomes part of the researched group, it is easy to build trust between her/him and the respondents. Once friendship and trust are built, it becomes easy for the participants to share their secrets with the researcher and for the researcher to observe the phenomenon in-depth from within. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to discover a new body of knowledge and to pave way for further research.

Open-ended questions in the interview schedule are designed to give respondents the opportunity to express perceptions and opinions for the purpose of fine-tuning and interpreting the data from the respondents. Interview questions also enabled the participants to reveal their experiences towards teen motherhood, performance, attendance and achievement in their school work. As described by Babbie & Mouton (2001), qualitative research was appropriate, in this study, because it was more suited to the exploration, description and understanding of the experiences and attitudes of teen mothers towards learning. It also involved both the researcher and the participants in the natural setting that was being investigated and focused on thick descriptions of the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Smit (1997:220) suggests that qualitative research derives knowledge from subjective data about values, intuition and social forces and traditions. Patton (1990:94) describes the qualitative method as a way of finding out what people do, think and feel by observing, interviewing and analysing documents. In addition, qualitative methods permit the researcher to study selected issues, in-depth and in detail, since there are no pre-determined responses that can cause constraints (Patton, 1994:94). One can, therefore, argue that the main purpose of qualitative research is to study the phenomenon of interest in detail and to establish relationships between variables.

Qualitative research is exploratory. In most cases a qualitative researcher strives for discovery rather than verification, and the researcher is likely to give new leads and avenues of research, with the outcomes used as a basis for further research (de Vos *et.al.*1998:243). I opted for a qualitative approach as opposed to the quantitative

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approach due to the exploratory nature of this research. Myers (1997:265) indicated that qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they do it.

Qualitative research is an enquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. It involves describing and analysing people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions (Mcmillan &Schumacher, 2006:315).

According to Mouton and Marais (1996:134), exploratory research aims to explore the dimensions of phenomena, the manner in which the phenomena manifest themselves and any other related factors. Similarly, Woods & Catanzaro (1988:150) explain that to explore refers to scrutinising the unknown with the purpose of discovering and gaining insight into the phenomena.

In a nutshell, Denzin and Lincoln, (2000:12) argue that open ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participant and are unanticipated by the researcher.

It is relevant to my study's qualitative methodology, which explains the use of open-ended questions that gives the participants the opportunity to respond in their own words. This methodology also gave me the chance to probe further and get more information from participants. Ambert, Adler, and Detzner. (1995: 881) indicate that qualitative methods are "commonly known to include open-ended questions, in-depth interviews, ethnographic studies and participant observation."

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4) contend that qualitative methods allow the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant responses that is, to ask why or how. This means that the researcher must listen carefully to what participants say. As a researcher, I must also engage with them according to their individual personalities and styles, and use probing to encourage them to elaborate on their answers.

Methods in qualitative research are open in the sense that they can be changed and adjusted in the process of the research and while data is being collected. In qualitative

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research, the design is as flexible as the methods, allowing for modification, in order to adjust it to the data. Qualitative is flexible because during data collection it allowed flexibility for the participants. It also helps the researcher to get valid information from the research participants. For the purpose of this study, the qualitative approach was used, in order to get the views and feelings of the research participants based on their words. Bless (2006:55) states that qualitative researchers attempt to share the understanding and perception of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Data gathered gave the researcher an understanding and perception/s of how teen mothers feel about their situation.

The qualitative approach was used, in order to understand the social life and the meanings that people attach to teenage pregnancy in their everyday life. To complement qualitative data, the study employed quantitative methods to collect demographic data from the respondents.

Qualitative enquiry was deemed appropriate for the purpose of this study because the research participants were interviewed in their own environment. Furthermore, this approach helped the researcher to obtain rich and deep data, which highlights the views and feelings on the educational achievement of teenage mothers (Worthen & Sanders 1987:50).

The research was conducted in six schools in the Vhembe District in the Limpopo Province. The six schools were selected because of pragmatic reasons such as the large number of learners and also that the schools were characterised by a high rate of teen mothers. The schools were not the only schools where the attendance, performance and achievement of teen mothers were very poor, but they were chosen because of their high enrolment and their population diversity. The population of my study was teen mothers who are still attending school, teachers and the principals. Purposive sampling was used to choose the six schools and the participants thereafter. De Vos*et. al.* (1998:253) mentioned that a purposive sampling method is used by qualitative researchers to identify access points and in selecting informative subjects for their study.

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4.4 CASE STUDY APPROACH

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explains a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information for example, observation, interviews, audiovisual material, documents and reports (Creswell, 2007:73). It is an approach to research that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context, using a variety of data sources. It was used, in order to assess the major issues that impede the progress of teenage mothers in schools. Therefore, the case study approach was used, in order to get in-depth information from participants in the schools under study. The case study approach is good for contemporary events when the relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated, or when one wants to cover contextual conditions because one believes they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the context (Yin, 2003:545). It is also useful when why or how questions are asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 1994 9).

There are several types of case studies that have been suggested by some authors and these include the instrumental case study that provides insight into an issue; an intrinsic case study, which is undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of the case; and the collective case study that involves studying a number of cases, in order to inquire about a particular phenomenon. Sarantakos (1999:78) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study research involves studying individual cases, often in their natural environment, and for a long period of time (Sarantakos, 1999:78). The general objective of using a case study is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible and to bring an understanding of a complex issue, as well as to extend what is already known through previous research.

Due to the sensitivity of the issues raised during the interviews, the case study approach was deemed appropriate. Some research participants needed to be attended

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to alone as their cases were very unique and too traumatic for them to be dealt with in a group. This situation called for one to be flexible, particularistic and exploratory as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1981:15).

4.4.1 Types of case studies

Hereunder follows a brief discussion of three types of study cases which are vital in research.

4.4.1.1 The intrinsic case study

The intrinsic case study occurs where the study is undertaken because the researcher wants a better understanding of this particular area. It is exploratory in nature. This means that the researcher is guided by his or her interest in the case itself rather than the desire to extend theory or generalise across cases. In this study, the intrinsic case study helped with the systematic collection of information about a particular issue, person or group, in order to effectively understand the views or opinions of the research participants concerning the educational performance of teenage mothers (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Berg, 2001).

4.4.1.2 The instrumental case study

This type of case study occurs where a particular case is examined to give insight into an issue, or to refine a theory. It is secondary to the exploration of a specific issue, building theory or redrawing generalisations. In an instrumental case study, the study becomes a tool to help understand something else better. This case study helps to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. In this way, it helps to facilitate the researcher's understanding of an issue. In other words, if the intention is to gain an insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon, the instrumental study case can be used. Instrumental case is used to understand what is more than obvious (Stake, 1995; Luck, Kackson & Usher, 2007).

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4.4.1.3 The collective case study

This case study occurs when the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases, to learn more about the phenomenon, population or general condition. It involves the exploration of multiple instrumental case studies. Yin (2003:547) has identified some specific types of case studies such as exploratory, explanatory and descriptive approaches as the main types of case studies which can be used for the purpose of data gathering. The exploratory approach are sometimes considered to be a prelude to social research, and it is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, or single set of outcomes (Yin, 2003:548; Pyecha 1988; Lotzkar & Bottorff, 2001).

Explanatory case studies may be used for doing causal investigation. This type of case study is used if one is seeking to answer a question that seeks to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. Descriptive case study requires a descriptive theory to be developed before starting a project. This type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003:548).Therefore, in my study, I concentrated on the explanatory and descriptive approaches because I wanted a detailed explanation of the performance and achievement of teen mothers, the treatment of teen mothers by teachers, and whether there is a policy protecting teen mothers in schools, and also whether the curriculum caters for teen mothers.

The case study, in this research, focused on selected learners who have been pregnant or teen mother's from six schools around the Vhembe District. I used the collective case study method, to investigate the educational achievement of teen mothers in the Vhembe District; special focus was on schools. In this process, purposive sampling was used to select participants who had been victims of teenage pregnancy. The schools were chosen because they had the largest number of teen mothers in those particular schools. This study was informed about schools with large numbers by the circuit managers. In this instance, approximately two teen mothers per school from the six schools were chosen for the case study.

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4.5 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Qualitative data collection approach plays an important role in imparting evaluation by providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results Corbin *et al* (1998:45). Qualitative data collection instruments are open-ended and have less structured protocols. Researchers often rely more heavily on interactive interviews. Respondents may be interviewed several times to follow up on a particular issue, in order to clarify concepts or check the reliability of data. Triangulation may be used to increase the credibility of their findings as researchers rely on multiple data collection methods to check the authenticity of their results.

4.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Population is a group of elements or cases whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which one intends to generalise the results of the research. The group is also referred to as the target population or universe (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:129). According to Goddard & Melville (2001:267), a population is any group that is the subject of research interest. Rubin & Babbie (1993:78) define population as that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. The population of this study consists of teen mothers at Vhembe District secondary schools in the Limpopo Province. However, it also includes teachers and principals. The study was intended to track teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy.

The population of this study was made up of sixty teen mothers from six schools in the Vhembe District (that is, ten teen mothers from each school). The population also consisted of eighteen teachers (three from each school), six principals from six schools in the District. These teen mothers were interviewed by the researcher in their respective schools.

4.7 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Sampling involves decisions about which people, setting, events, behaviours or social processes to observe (de Vos, 2002:89). Sampling is described by Maxwell (2005:78) as a procedure which involves the selection of elements from a targeted population. It is

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a technique by which a sample is drawn from the population. Claire, Higson and Ashraf (2006:55) define sampling as a technique by which a sample is drawn from the population. Good sampling implies a well-defined population and an appropriately chosen unit of analysis (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 98).

According to Patton (1990:624), the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for in depth-study. Glaser (1992:45) pointed out that in the initial stages of a study, researchers will go to the groups which they believe will maximise the possibility of obtaining data and leads for more data on the questions.

4.8 NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING

In this study, a purposive sampling method was used to select all the participants. This was in line with Creswell's (1994:148) argument that qualitative research lends itself to selecting participants purposefully without attempting to select them randomly. The six principals, eighteen teachers (18) and sixty teen (60) mothers were selected for the study. Six principals interviewed were each from the selected six (6) secondary schools. The three (3) teachers from each school comprised the number of teachers who taught Life Orientation and two teachers who were chosen because they were available at the time of the study. The average percentage of pregnant learners and teenage mothers was ten (10) per school.

This sampling method is based on the researcher's judgment regarding the characteristics of the chosen sample and it relies heavily on the subjective consideration of the researcher. The teenage mothers share the same characteristic of teenage motherhood, while teachers and principals all face the challenge of teen motherhood in their respective schools (Bless & Higson-Smith 2000:99). The researcher selected the participants on the basis of qualities which the informants possess. In this study all the research participants selected shared the same situation, namely the challenge of teenage motherhood. With the help of the purposive sampling method, the researcher was able to solicit information that was rich and informative on the issue of teenage motherhood. Information from the district manager and circuit managers guided the

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process in the selection of the six cluster schools. The district and circuit managers advised me to select my sample from schools with high enrolments.

4.9 SAMPLE SIZE

De Vos (1998: 360) refers to a sample as "... a special subset of a population observed for purposes of making inferences about the nature of the total population itself". The purposive sampling technique was used to select the cluster for the study. In purposive sampling, the researcher uses his/her judgment about which respondents to choose, and selects only those who best meet the purposes of the study (Bailey, 1992:89).

The sample size of this study was a cluster of six schools from the Vhembe District. The reason for selecting these schools is that, Vhembe District is very wide and has many schools which one cannot cover in one study. The schools were chosen using the detailed information provided by the circuit managers which indicated the schools with the highest enrolment. It was assumed that these schools would have many teenage mothers.

There were six principals for both six cluster schools, one principal from each school. Information about the pass rate in some learning areas for all learners in schools (including teen mothers) were given by the principals. Teachers were selected based on the learning areas in which teen mothers had made progress, and also on the bases of those that gave them problems. Educators teaching life orientation were also included as this is a compulsory subject for all learners. Three (3) teachers were selected from each school although there were many who wanted to give information about teenage motherhood.

Teachers were willing to give information about the challenges concerning teen mothers which they are facing. Teachers were interviewed using focus group interviews. For principals, individual or face to face interviews were conducted. In cases where the principal was not available, the deputy principal took charge on his or her behalf. The study focused mostly on teen mothers because I wanted to find out about their progress in school work and how as young mothers they were coping with school. The process of selection was also informed by Patton's (1990:87) advice that the logic and strength

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behind purposive selection of information is that the sample should be information-rich. Informed by the need to select an information rich sample, every teacher who had a teaching experience of six or more years was selected for the study. The sample for this study comprised of six school heads, eighteen teachers and sixty learners in the six selected schools in the district. All in all, a total of 84 respondents participated in the research. The school principal assigned to me was the Head of Department for Life Orientation, under which HIV and AIDS education and pregnancy -related issues fall.

Teachers were consulted because; at the heart of this study there was a need to investigate the attendance, performance and achievement of teen mothers in the schools. Again, teachers were important participants in the study because they are responsible for teaching and checking the attendance, performance and achievement of these learners everyday.

4.10 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection is defined as a method of gathering data for research purposes through techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and participant observation (Silverman, 2005:45). In this study it was very important to use instruments that would best collect information on the problems that affect the attendance, performance and achievement of teen mothers in their school work. Interviews and focus groups were the two research instruments used to collect data for this study. The data was collected during times specifically set aside for the exercise. An initial interview was sought with each school principal, teachers and teen mothers.

4.10.1 Face-to-face interview

An interview is one of the main data collection techniques in qualitative research, and it can also be adapted to suit a wide variety of research situations (Punch, 1998:99). An interview is a very useful and or good way of accessing people's perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality. This study used the interview method because it provided an opportunity for the researcher to learn about social life through the perspective, experience and language of those living in it.

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I used the interview method to collect data in this study. A schedule of interview questions enabled the participants to reveal their views about teaching teen mothers. Appointments that suited both the interviewer and the interviewees were arranged and the approval depended on the interviewees' availability. The time taken by the interviews and the number of visits that were made to the respondents' schools to conduct the interviews affected the planned timeframe negatively due to the distances between the areas where the selected schools were situated.

According to De vos *et al.* (2005:98), an interview is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Probing was also used to get more detailed information and for clarity. Hagan (2000:99) and Schrink cited in (De Vos, 2000:60) emphasise that probing in the case of interviewing, allows for more details and for accuracy. The structure of these interviews is flexible and the restrictions minimal, being presented in most cases in the form of guides rather than rules (Sarantakos 1999: 99). It was important for the researcher to use the semi-structured interview format because the goal of the researcher was to get the person to express his/her views or ideas about a particular issue. This can happen only when participants are comfortable and enable to open up, express and elaborate on ideas. According to Strauss (2002:109), semi-structured interviews are used to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. This method gave me and the participants more flexibility. To carry out the semi-structured interviews, the researcher had a set of predetermined questions written on an interview schedule, to guide the interview.

Semi-structured interviews generally last for a considerable amount of time and can become intense and involved, depending on the particular topic (Strauss 2002:109). In-depth interviews are one of the most common qualitative methods that are very effective in giving the human face to research problems. Kvale, (1996:29) defines in-depth interviews as a technique destined to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic.

In this study, I used in-depth interviews, in order to gather more information about the individual's perspectives on my research topic. The interviews helped me to get the

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research participants' views on the attendance and educational performance of teenage mothers as well as the support they needed to cope with their school work. In my study, I employed in-depth interviews because as a researcher, I wanted to engage participants by probing more on the research questions. This was done in a neutral manner. I listened attentively to participant responses and asked follow-up questions. This was done because in-depth interviews are conducted face-to-face. In this study, I made sure that I did not intimidate participants. Therefore, an in-depth interview is an effective qualitative method for research participants to talk about their personal feelings, opinions and experiences on the issue of teenage motherhood in their schools.

4.10.2 Focus Group Interviews

According to Millward (1998:98), the focus group is a discussion-based interview that produces a particular type of qualitative data which is generated through the simultaneous use of multiple respondents. In this study, focus group interviews enabled teen mothers to share their experiences and to reach some kind of consensus about the problem. This method was very useful because it helped the research find information from the participants and enabled the participants to share their thoughts. Focus group interview provides opinions and attitudes from the subjects' point of view (Du Plooy, 2002:55). Focus group discussions were done with selected people, that is, eighteen teachers (three teachers formed a group), and ten teen mothers from each school.

I used focus group discussions because they allowed me to access substantive content of verbally expressed views, opinions, experiences and attitudes of the participants. Due to the circumstances beyond my control (that is the sensitivity and confidentiality of some participant issues), I was forced to interview some of them face-to-face or individually because they did not feel comfortable giving their information in a group.

Questions which sought their experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme of the investigation were asked. These helped me to give the interviewees undivided attention during the process. Each one of them had an interesting experience to share with regard to their learning, attendance, performance and achievement. It is again important to note that unstructured interviews were conducted as they afforded

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me the opportunity and time to prompt and probe further, in order to gather more data from the respondents. Probing added a depth to the interviews and this resulted in some of the interviewees bringing unexpected dimensions to the conversation, as was the case with focus groups.

The field work of my study was in two phases, namely the introductory phase and the intensive field work. The intensive field work was done in two stages. In the first stage, the principals of schools and educators were interviewed. Teenage mothers were the last group to be interviewed.

4.11 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

4.11.1 Introductory phase

The introductory phase involved gaining access to the schools through the Department of Education, the Vhembe District Manager and Circuit Managers. Permission was sought from the District Manager, Circuit Managers and the principals of the schools. I wrote letters and delivered them to all the above mentioned categories of people. Permission was granted to me both verbally and telephonically and also through written letters. Successful fieldwork is usually determined by ones' ability to access the setting and the researcher's ability to build and maintain relationships with gatekeepers (de Vos *et.al.,* 1998:258).

4.11.2 Extensive fieldwork phase

This phase was divided into two stages of data collection. In the first stage, I interviewed the principals and teachers. For the other stage I interviewed teen mothers in the schools.

4.11.3 Stage 1 – Principals and teachers in the schools

Principals were engaged in small talk, in order to prepare them for the interview session. Before the interviews started, I sought permission to record the information using an audio tape, and permission was granted. I explained the aim and objectives of the study. I also read through the interview questions to familiarise my participants with

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the questions. Principals were interviewed in their offices, separately from the teachers. Face to face interviews were used. Teachers and learners were interviewed using focus group interviews. I used in-depth interview in order to gather more information about teen motherhood. The interviews took place in their schools. In-depth interviews helped me to pose questions in a neutral manner. I listened attentively to my participant's responses, and also asked follow-up questions on the bases of those responses. A tape recorder and a notebook were used because I wanted to analyse the data correctly and to remember what the participants said through listening to the tape repeatedly.

I interviewed three teachers per school. Teachers were selected by the principal of each school. Teachers were also engaged in small talk before interviewing them, in order to make them feel free and comfortable. Before the interviews, permission was sought to use the audio tape to record their responses, permission was granted. I read through the questions to make them aware of what was going to be asked. I interviewed them using focus group interviews, which enables them to share their experiences that they have encountered during their lessons. Focus group interviews enabled members of the group to share their experiences and to reach some kind of consensus about the problem (Bless, 1995:89).

4.11.4 Stage 2 – Teen mothers

Learners were also engaged in small talk, in order to make them comfortable, and to feel free to answer the questions. I sought permission from the learners to record their responses before the interview started and permission was granted. Learners were interviewed using focus group discussions and data were also recorded and transcribed after the session. I used the Tshivenda language of the learners and then translated the data into English.

4.12 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2010:360), documentary analysis is a non-interactive data collection method in which issues are investigated through a review of

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artifact or archival collections such as personal diaries, photos, video clips, minutes of meetings and other forms of organisational records.

It is very important to use document analysis in research, in order to find out what others have said about the area of study. However, if these documents are studied and analysed for the purpose of scientific research, the method of document study, as a data collection method, becomes effective. Bailey (1994:49) argues that when documents are studied, it is vital that the researcher evaluates the authenticity, or validity and reliability of the documents.

Initially, it was planned to analyse documents such as a register that may be used to record the names of the teenage mothers, as well as their attendance and performance. Unfortunately, such records were not available due to the policy of the Department of Basic Education, which is against any practice that may be viewed as discriminating against teenage mothers. The principals said that the Department's policy stresses the need to treat all learners fairly.

4.13 DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analysed thematically. Data analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing, emerging, or non-linear process. Data are analysed by identifying patterns and themes in the data and drawing certain conclusions from them (Mouton, 1996:111). A list of identified themes was made, in order to look for a connection between them (that is, the identified patterns were expanded). This came from direct quotes or from paraphrasing common ideas that automatically allowed themes to expand. The main aim was to end up with the key themes that describe the essence of study.

Data collected using the interview schedule were analysed as noted by Rubin and Rubin (1995:97), while the interview was still underway. This preliminary analysis helped me on how to redesign my questions so as to focus on central themes. In conclusion this chapter has outlined the research design and methodology for the study. The next chapter is data presentation and analysis.

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4.14 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research methodology. The qualitative phenomenological approach has been employed to illustrate factors contributing to teenage motherhood at the school level. The researcher mainly focused on the group interviews for the data collection process, where data was received against the literature. The data analysis enabled the researcher to identify the key themes from the findings in the study. The limitation of the study was also discussed. The researcher believes that the study will be of value to principals and educators responsible for supporting teenage motherhood and to learners to complete school education.

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CHAPTER 5
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Chapter 5 focused on the findings that emerged from the data. It gives a description of the findings of the study, relating to the educational achievement by teen mothers in the Vhembe District. The main purpose of this study was to explore the educational participation and achievement by teen mothers in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province South Africa.

The main objective of the study was to find out the factors that influence school participation and performance of teenage mothers. The specific objectives were:

- To investigate the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in schools in Vhembe District;
- To investigate factors that influence the rate of school attendance by teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy;
- To explore the nature of curricula support offered to teenage mothers in basic education; and
- To find out the school performance of teenage mothers before, during and after pregnancy.

The study was conducted with a cluster of six schools. Six principals were selected for face to face interviews. Eighteen teachers, three teachers from each school, were grouped together for focus group interviews. Sixty teen mothers were selected, and these were split into groups off ten for focus group discussions.

Data analysis resulted in the emergence of themes and sub-themes as shown in Table 5.1 below:

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Table 5.1: Emerging Themes

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
5.1 Factors related to prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the Vhembe District schools	5.1.1 Lack of sex education 5.1.2 Lack of training on teen pregnancy to learners 5.1.3 Child Grant Support 5.1.4 Peer Pressure 5.1.5 Poverty 5.1.6 Child-headed households and lack of parental supervision 5.1.7 Rape 5.1.8 Alcohol and drug abuse
5.2 Factors influencing school attendance for teenage mothers' prior to , during and after pregnancy	5.2.1 Lack of motivation 5.2.2 Lack of child discipline 5.2.3 Re-enrolment period for teen mothers 5.2.4 Stigma and labelling of teenage mothers 5.2.5 Absenteeism due to pregnancy related issues 5.2.6 Child grant collection
5.3 Effects of teenage motherhood on academic performance	5.3.1 Repeating of grades 5.3.2 Pregnancy related sicknesses 5.3.3 Inadequate parental support 5.3.4 Dropping out of school 5.3.5 Other coping mechanisms
5.4 Support provided to teenage mothers on curriculum issues	5.4.1 Support given to teen mothers before, during and after delivery 5.4.2 Provision of extra classes for pregnant learners and teen mothers 5.4.3 School suspension and re-enrolment
5.5 Identifying successful teen mothers	5.5.1 Identifying successful teen mothers

5.1 FACTORS RELATED TO PREVALENCE OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Teen motherhood is one of the problems facing society the world over. This social problem is widely documented (UNICEF, 2001; National Research Center for Women and Families, 2001; Treffers, 2003; Mayor, 2004). In many industrialised countries such as Britain and the USA, teenage pregnancy and parenthood (regardless of marital status) have, in recent years, been identified as social and public health problems that need to be confronted without delay (UNICEF, 2001:283). Treffers (2003:109) pointed

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out that, worldwide the rate of teenage pregnancy ranges from 143 per 1000 in sub-Saharan African countries, to 2.9 per 1000 in South Korea and Japan.

Teenage parenthood has come to be regarded as a significant disadvantage in a world in which there are increased demands for an extended education, and in which delayed childbearing, smaller families and careers for women are increasingly becoming the norm (UNICEF, 2001:245).

Mensch *et.al* (2001:289) maintained that although literature addressing adolescent fertility and childbearing in the developing world is large, few studies focus on the prevalence of schoolgirl pregnancy and its relationship to prior school experiences and subsequent educational attainment. Runhare and Vandeyar (2011) argue, in their study, which compared Zimbabwe and South African educational policy frameworks, that there is educational access to all children, including pregnant teenagers in schools. They found that both countries have Constitutional Bills of Rights and Acts of parliament that give equal educational rights to all citizens, including teenagers who fall pregnant.

In this theme, I identify and report on the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the Vhembe District schools where I conducted the study. This theme emerged from the factors that have contributed to the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the Vhembe District schools. Teenage pregnancy was found to be a serious problem in schools due to lack of training of principals and teachers on how to deal with pregnant learners. According to Kaufman (2001:66), about 16 million girls aged between 15 and 19 give birth each year and almost 95% of these births occur in developed countries. In 2002, the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in the world was found in sub-Saharan Africa, where 143 per 1,000 girls aged between 15 and 19 were pregnant.

According to Raj *et al* (2010:66) and Macleod and Tracy (2009:56), teenage pregnancy is associated with a number of negative healths, psychological and educational consequences, some of which only materialise a long time after the birth. Teenage pregnancy continues to be a community health problem warranting attention, especially in rural areas of southern Africa (Family Practice Journal by Cole McGrew, 1991:15). The rate of teenage pregnancy remains extremely high in many developing countries

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despite numerous efforts that have been made to try to deal with this problem (Department of Education, 2010:20).

In many developing countries like South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and others, teenage pregnancy is regarded as one of the major barriers to schoolgirls achieving educational success (Department of Education, 2010;27), Chigona and Chetty, 2007:3).

Chigona and Chetty, (2007:5) reviewed that teenage fertility is, in fact, the result of a complex set of varied and inter-related factors, largely related to the socio-conditions under which children grow. These factors include:

- When young people dropout of school early, often because of economic barriers and poor school performance, they are at significantly heightened risk for early pregnancy;
- When they grow up in residential areas where poverty is entrenched, they are at risk of experiencing an early pregnancy; and
- When both parents, and in particular the mother, is present in the home, the risk of early pregnancy is decreased.

When young women are involved in relationships where there is an imbalance of power, men decide the conditions under which sex happens. All too often, this involves coerced or forced sex (Department of Education, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2007:3).

Interviews with participants of this study revealed that, teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon that is unexpected, unprepared for and which even disrupts the career plans and aspirations of the affected teenagers. According to the Minister of Basic Education, Motshekga, teenage pregnancies are common in South Africa, and that it is one of the main problems affecting young people in schools (Department of Education, 2010:1). In her address to the National Assembly, Motshekga maintained that teenage pregnancy tends to negatively affect teenagers' future, as well as their physical and emotional well-being (Department of Education, 2010:29).

In 2009, the National Department of Education held a number of workshops in the Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape Provinces to address the issue of

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teenage pregnancy (Department of Education, 2010:21). Research conducted by the Department of Education in 2009 showed that teenage pregnancy is concentrated in rural areas where the rate of poverty is high and schools are under-resourced. These are some of the factors leading to the high prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the Vhembe District schools.

Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood are serious problems that South Africa and the whole world are facing today. This is supported by results found in all the six schools.

Indeed, substance abuse in South Africa is very high and it needs more attention. In fact, data from Cape Town has shown that when learners use drugs they are more likely to have anal, vaginal and oral sex, as well as full pregnant (Pluddemann, *et, al.,* 2008:34)

5.1.1 Lack of sex education

From the study, it was revealed that different opinions exist among principals about teenage pregnancy. The majority of principals indicated that the Department of Education should introduce sex education across the curriculum or in all the subjects that are taught in the schools.

Some of the principals in school 2 and 4 indicated that it would be beneficial to teach learners about safe sex because they are already engaged in sexual activities. Some of the principals had this to say:

> *"It is important for learners to be taught about sex education because these learners engage themselves in sex issues at an early age. I think the best thing to do is to introduce sex education at the primary level so that they would be aware that if one has sex with a boy, she would fall pregnant,*
>
> *"Social workers are needed in schools full time.*

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Principal 1 from school 3 mentioned that it would be a good idea if the Department of Basic Education introduces sex education in the curriculum in all the modules so that it becomes part of the learning area. Teacher 3 from school 2 indicated that it could be very important if the Department of Basic Education thinks of employing social workers in each and every school. The social workers would talk to the learners concerning sex issues and let them know that they have the right to inform any one if they are abused sexually because most of the learners fall pregnant due to abuse.

Teachers from school 3 and 6 added that it would be best if the Department of Basic Education could rely on stakeholders such as hospitals, Non-governmental organisations that deal with young people so that they can come and give lectures about sex education and also how to protect themselves from sexual abusers." It was also suggested by some teachers from school 4 that the schools should also invite those teen mothers who were learners in those schools and who were mothers during their study time so that they can talk about the consequences of having a child while still young, and also advise others not to have sex before they complete their studies.

> *"I was not aware that if I had sex with a boy I can fall pregnant. I didn't listen to my parents; I ignored what they told me and ended up being pregnant (Teen mother 4 from school 1)."*

Lack of knowledge concerning sex education, contraception, conception and reproductive biology is seen by many researchers as a contributing factor in teenage pregnancy. Seabela (1990:77) reports that two-thirds of their sample of 100 and 145 pregnant teenagers respectively were ignorant at the time of conception concerning the relationship between menstruation, coitus, fertility and conception. Mkhize (1990:27) investigated the source of teenagers' sexual information and found that the peer group plays a significant role in the transfer of sexual knowledge. This offers significant insights into how the young generation acquires sexual knowledge from peers, instead of parents who have neglected talking to their teenagers about sexual issues.

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Lack of information about sex also leads to myths such as the belief that the use of contraceptives may cause infertility, make them gain too much weight, or lead to big tummies. Parents shy away from the task of instructing children who are approaching puberty in sexual matters, and many believe that to inform them about contraception is to encourage sexual involvement (UNICEF; 2001:9).

In my opinion culture is one of the things that has made people believe in what they think. I cannot support the argument that contraceptives make a person become fat, it is a believe that people have in their mind.

One teen mother from school 6 said that:

> *"It is important for learners to be informed about the dangers of having unprotected sex with boys while they are still young."*

She further said that parents also should not shy away talking about sex education with their children, because they get wrong information that lead them becoming pregnant at an early age. People should move away from issues such myth that sex cannot be discussed between parents and children because they end up being informed wrongly by their peers.

> *The Life Orientation teacher from school 3 also had this to say: "I think now is the time when parents should consider talking to their children about sex because todays' youth are no longer the same as those of the past. These children are exposed to sex issues even though they are not informed. I think it would be better if parents explain everything because learners are informed by friends in a wrong way and they also like experimenting. Mm..., as teachers, we would be an addition on top of what parents have introduced to their children, and it could be a good strategy of reducing teenage pregnancy among girls. (Life Orientation teacher from school 3)."*

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Some of the Life Orientation teachers mentioned that even though sex education is part of their curriculum, they do not dwell much on it because the curriculum is not substantive and not enough information is provided. They further said that Life Orientation focuses mostly on the developmental stage at which teenagers are. However, the provision of sexual knowledge and skills is advantageous for development because it helps teenagers and young people to make informed decisions concerning their sexual behaviours (Chigona & Chetty: 2005:283). It is also advantageous to schools as poor performance by pregnant teenagers may lower school performance rates and reflect negatively on educators and the school in general (Sethosa, 2007:120). Rosen *et al.,* (2004:6) argue that school-based sexuality and health education is one of the most important and widespread ways to help young people improve their reproductive health.

Frost and Forrest (1995:45) showed that sex education can help prevent teenage pregnancies. They added that sex education programmes that are balanced and realistic encourage students to postpone sex until they are older. They also promote safer-sex practices among those who choose to be sexually active, and have been proven to be effective at delaying first intercourse and increasing use of contraception among sexually active youth. This was useful in the United States because many sex education programmes currently caution young people not to have sex until they are married (Landry *et al.,* 1999:233)

At the International Conference on Population in Mexico City in 1984, the international community voiced concern over problems related to the youth and, in particular, to teenage fertility. It was proposed that governments should make provision for adequate education for adolescent girls and boys. This sex education should include sexuality education and family life education. According to Chigona and Chetty (2007:5), most teenage pregnancies occur due to lack of information and communication about sexuality between parents and their children. Some parents do not talk about sex with young children for fear that they may get exposed to sex at an early age. Thus they end up avoiding the subject. This lack of communication about sex among families may lead to many things which may not have good results, for example, teenage pregnancy. As a

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result of these beliefs, which underlie learners attitudes towards sex education, parents and educators are not comfortable with young people discussing matters relating to sexuality (Majova, 2002:12).

The inclusion of sex education in the education of learners has been seen as vital in delaying learners from engaging in sex. Sex education also helps promote safer sex for teenagers.

This was also supported by Principal 1 and teacher 3 from school 2 and 6 who said that sex education is an important tool that can be used to delay of teenagers from having sex too early. It will help learners to get more information about how to avoid falling pregnant at an early age. Parents should also give themselves time to engage with their children and talk about sex related issues. They should point out the consequences of having sex while they are still young. They further said that parents should do what is important for their children because what culture imposes on them applied in the past. However, the new generation needs to be reminded not do things time and again. Participants also thought that parents should also rely on churches so that pastors could talk about sex related issues during their sessions, especially when they have youth conferences.

The study established that the rate of teenage pregnancies in secondary schools can be reduced and prevented through a number of strategies. These strategies included the introduction of sex education considering learners' age differences when approaching them, and networking with other community stakeholders, for example social workers, nurses, educational psychologists and religious leaders. Kaufmann *et al.* (2000:28) argues that sex education programme are most effective if they provide accurate information, and include decision making, assertiveness and negotiation skills, as well as life skills.

5.1.2 Lack of training on teen pregnancy to learners

Some of the school principals from school 1, 4 and 6, stated that they found it very difficult to know whether the pregnant learners were sick or were about to give birth. This lack of knowledge created a huge dilemma for principals. Most of the information

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shared by the participants indicated that teachers are unable to provide the necessary care required by pregnant learners for example, emotional and psychological support, because teachers are not trained to do so. It was also discovered that the academic performance of some of the learners who are pregnant was negatively affected.

Principal 4 from school 5 stated that, even though she was a woman, she could not do anything about a pregnant person. Only someone who has been trained to look after such people is needed.

Teacher 1 from school 1 said the following:

> *"I find it difficult as a male teacher to deal with pregnant learners because I don't have any idea of how to help because I have not been trained to look after such people. Even when they are not feeling well or they are about to give birth, I would not know the symptoms. I feel it is not good for me because the pregnant leaner might deliver in the class."*
>
> *"Eh..... This is something that can be dealt with by professional nurses or mothers who have passed those stages of looking after a pregnant person. The other thing is that they are expected to be treated differently, and they expect me as a person to understand their situation, and they also expect to be given special attention. Therefore, for me it is very difficult because I don't have the skills for treating a pregnant person nor am I trained as a midwife" (Teacher 2 from school 6).*

Teenage pregnancy was found to be a serious problem in schools due to the lack of training of principals and teachers on how to how to deal with pregnant learners. Majova (2002:23) argued that educators cannot fully advise teenagers on sexuality issues because they were not exposed to sexuality education in their own childhood homes and, besides their professional training did not include the subject of sex. Most educators therefore are still not sure what to do when they encounter the problem of teenage pregnancies in their schools (Masuku, 1998:32; Sethosa, 2005:45). Because of

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these difficult circumstances, educators become frustrated and do not know what to do to control the situation. They were never trained or equipped with the necessary skills to deal with teenage pregnancy (Sethosa, 2005:45).

The principal from school 4 mentioned that one pregnant learner gave birth on the school premises. Principals from all six schools and teachers from school 1 and 3 also said that it was difficult for them to handle pregnant learners as they did not even know when the baby was due for delivery or to help the pregnant learner when she goes into labour while at school. The principal from school 4 expressed frustration at the lack or delay of support from the health service providers because the ambulance only arrived after the pregnant learner had delivered the baby.

Bloom (2000:269) argues that teachers may need professionals to come and inform them about how to support pregnant learners when various situations arise. Specialized in-service training for teachers is needed. The assumption is that teachers should help teens under pregnancy. Unfortunately; some teachers consider the teen mother's situation a private matter and none of their concern.

One principal in school 6 said that:

> *"I have a problem in dealing with a pregnant teenager because sometimes she might have complications and I don't know what to do. The other problem is that the Department of Basic Education talk of inclusive policy where learners have to be accepted or admitted in schools regardless of pregnancy, but the problem is that, as a principal, I have no idea of how to deal with the pregnant learners as I have not been trained as a midwife. In view of this, the Department of Basic Education and Training needs to collaborate with the Department of Health, which to provide basic training to teachers on how to provide care for pregnant learners." (Principal, 1 in school 6)*

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Teacher 1 from school 3 also said that, dealing with a pregnant girl is very difficult due her condition and because he is just a teacher, but not a professional nurse who is trained as midwives.

It is apparent in this discussion that young people who have fallen pregnant for the first time need more attention. Dealing with pregnant girls requires people who have knowledge on issues pertaining to pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy is a challenge that requires knowledgeable people who have all the basic information on how to deal with pregnant girls. In order for these young people to be assisted when they are pregnant, the Department of Basic Education should collaborate with the Department of Health so as to provide health education programmes, especially reproductive health programmes. Even though South Africa promoted the liberal policy that allows pregnant girls to remain in school and to return to school post-pregnancy, educators should be trained to deal with such learners.

5.1.3 Child Grant Support

At Musina Municipality, one of the principals at school 6 indicated that,

> *"The numbers of teenage mothers are increasing in my school because every year I have a lot of girls who have given birth."*

He further said that some learners fall pregnant because they believe that having a child will help them alleviate poverty through the provision of a child support grant. "

The above observation was also supported by principals from schools 3, 4 , ,5 who also maintained that, in their schools classes are full of learners who have given birth and also those who are still pregnant. They further said that schools have problems during the day when grants are being issued because learners go away and come back the following day.

One of the teachers from school 4 had this to say:

> *" I find it difficult because, I have to repeat what I would have taught the previous day, in order to cater for the teen mothers*

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who were absent from class. In my own view, teenage pregnancy is increasing in schools due to the social grant, and these teenagers encourage each that they are enjoying the grant money, that is why the schools have a large number of teen mothers."

The majority of teen mothers indicated that the Child Grant is used to support the child, not the mother. Teen mother 3 from school 3 had this to say:

"ok… I became pregnant because I did not think that having sex without protection would put me in that serious problem, Mm…., and even the child support grant that people think is good is not how they think. Mm…. being a mother is a problem because it is not the issue of money but taking care of the child."

Teen mothers needs to focus on their studies; in order to make their lives better and the child grant enables them to place priority on school rather than on financial issues. The majority of teen mothers from school 2, 4, 6 also stated that teenagers should not fall pregnant in order to get child grant because it is too little.

While the child grant is not sufficient to cover all the costs required for them take care of their children, some teen mothers use the grant irresponsibly for activities such as gambling with the money or buying luxury items for themselves. Aguero, Carter and Woolard, (2006:55), argue that the provision of welfare to single mothers encourages dependence on the state and promotes teen and premarital fertility.

The teachers from all six schools said that, the child support grant gives schools problems because the day when teen mothers have to go and receive the child grant, miss classes. Beside, the money is used carelessly. The teachers felt that it would be better if the Department of Basic Education invited the Department of Social Welfare to come to schools to advise other learners who are not yet pregnant about the lolly of curtailing their dreams because of a small amount of money. Teachers also said that social workers, psychologists and professional nurses could teach learners about the lolly of falling pregnant too early.(Teachers from school 1, 2, 4, and 6).

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5.1.4 Peer Pressure

Some of the participants indicated that peer pressure, in addition to the issue of obtaining a child support grant, plays a major role in influencing teenagers to fall pregnant.

One of the teenagers said,

> *"My friends used to scorn me by telling me that I am a barren because I cannot give birth, not knowing that they want me to fall into their trap. Almost every day, the topic was babies and the social grant. Therefore, I decided to sleep with my boyfriend and I became pregnant. I have realised that I made a big mistake after having a baby because I am facing serious problems. My parents did not even help me or take care of the child. I was told to leave school and focus on the baby until the child reaches two years so that she can go to the day care centre. What I have noticed is that, friends can pressure you and end up in a very big mess."(6Teen Mother from school 3)*

One of the teachers had this to say:

Eh…. I have observed that, some of the learners cannot take decisions for themselves. Instead of following what their hearts tells them, they please their friends and do what others are doing, (teacher 2 from school 1).

Another teacher said that:

These learners need to be taught to be themselves and to know how to choose good friends. In this situation I think parents should also play a major role, in order to train their children to know what they need,(teacher 3 from school 5).

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A lot of teenagers fall pregnant unintentionally mainly because of the pressure given by their peers. Schools need to have psychologists who can talk to learners about sex education and encourage them not to listen to what their peers say. Learners focus on their studies instead.

One of the six principals indicated that:

> *"What we observe in our schools is that when learners are together, mostly those who fall in to a group, if one becomes pregnant, the whole group will become pregnant too. This shows that when they are together they influence one another. They tease each other by saying that if you don't have a baby at your age; it means you are barren and that it is better to have unprotected sex and end up becoming pregnant. This makes the teenage pregnancy statistics to be very high in schools."*

> *The majority of teachers indicated that, teenage pregnancy is very high in their schools because in one class one may find that there are more than ten learners who are pregnant. One of the teachers in school 1 said that, in his school, learners are 1000 and 45 in number. Learners who are pregnant might be more than thirty if counted because they have three classes of grade 10, and learners who are pregnant are more than 10, in that grade if the other grades are considered, there could be more."*

On the contrary, teacher 3 from school 4 said that:

> *"The pregnancy rate is quite low because the school, parents and the school governing body came up with an agreement indicating that whoever gets pregnant is not allowed in school and that thepregnant learner would be forced to stay at home until she has given birth."*

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Both the teacher and the principal of that school indicated that, the school not follow the inclusive policy because it needs to bring morals to learners.

Peer pressure was seen as one of the contributory factors towards teenage pregnancy. Learners encourage each other on issues that let them be in difficult conditions that end up destroying their future. Indeed many learners became pregnant due to pressure from others. They explained in this manner: The majority of teen mothers from school 3, 5 and 6, for example, mentioned that peer pressure plays a major role in the lives of many teenagers because some learners they do not follow their hearts. Instead they listen to friends and put their trust on them.

5.1.5 Child-headed households and children without parental supervision

The study revealed that a child-headed family was one of the major causes of teenage pregnancy. Some teachers from school 5 indicated that the high rate of teenage pregnancy is further compounded by the issue of child-headed households. They further mentioned that some learners stay alone in their homes and that they do not have anyone to support or guide them. This increases their chances of falling pregnant and also makes them vulnerable to being raped. One of the principals had to say this:

> *"Most of our learners stay alone, while others stay with their grandparents. Some parents have died due to the high rate of HIV/AIDS that is affecting our communities and South Africa in general. Some parents whose spouses have died get married and leave the kids behind and others are working, so the children are on their own, taking care of their siblings (Principal 3 from school 6)".*

The principals also stated that the children of parents who are working far away from home are likely to fall pregnant because they are left alone without supervision.

The majority of the participants said that it is very difficult to cope with the situation of being in a child-headed household. Looking after a child and managing school work simultaneously is extremely difficult. One of the teen mothers stated that it was very

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difficult for her to manage the two things (that is looking after a baby and doing school work) because her situation was totally different from other teen mothers. The teen mother had to say:

> *"I was on my own due to the fact that my parents passed away and I was the eldest of them all. We were four and I was 15 years. It was very difficult to study. My siblings were also young, and, therefore, could not assist me when I wanted to study. I made a plan that, I should put this child on my back so that, she can sleep, then I will start reading."*

She further said that, on some days she fails to sleep because the baby would be crying, when that happens she cannot study. The worst part is when the baby is sick, she does not know what to do, she also cries. During the day her neighbours assist her by taking care of the child and they encourage her to study. She pointed out that it is not easy to take care of the child when one is young and also studying. She says she has learnt from her mistakes and tells her siblings not to do what she did.

Teen mother 5 from school 3 also had this to say:

> *"Mm..., my parents sent me to my boyfriend's home so that they would take care of their child, and in other words I was forced to marry. It was very difficult for me because all the domestic chores were done by me after school and I did not get much time to study. Eh..., the problem is if the child is sick, I have to take care of the baby. My in -laws did not do anything to help me until I informed my parents about the situation and they came and took me home."*

Some of the teachers from school 2 mentioned that parents are the backbone of the family; if children are left alone on their own anything might happen. Sometimes children engage in sexual activities due to the situation that they are facing, such as lack of food in the family and not having decent clothes. They further said that learners who do not have parents need support from social workers who can provide food and clothes to

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them. If supported, these children would not engage in sexual activities. Schools also need to identify learners in their schools who are orphans so that they can provide support for those learners.

5.1.6 Rape

Some of the principals indicated that some teenagers fall pregnant due to rape, and some do not tell anyone about their situation. One pregnant teen said that the reason she became pregnant was due to rape. She did not tell anyone because she was afraid of her parents and did not know what had happened her parents saw the changes in her body. The following are the participant's words on this issue:

> *"I was called by my cousin who is 25 years old and he asked me to give him water inside the house. When I entered the house, he grabbed me, and said I should not scream. He took off my skirt and my underwear, he put me on his bed and slept on top of me and pushed something inside my vagina. It was painful and he told me not to tell anybody because he will kill me. I kept the secret but it was painful because I was not well. I used to sleep a lot and, my uniform was not fitting me because I had gained weight. Therefore my parents became suspicious because I was always vomiting and complaining about stomach pains. They asked me, what the problem was, and I told them that I did not know but I was not well. They took me to the hospital, and it was found that I was three months pregnant. Therefore, they decided not to terminate the pregnancy. At that time, I was 12 years old and in grade 7 (Standard 5). They asked me what had happened and I explained everything to them. They reported the man and he was arrested. But I gave birth when I was thirteen years old. My parents encouraged me to go to school and I went back when I was 14 years old and attended grade 8. Presently I am in grade 10" (Teen mother from school 6.)*

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Learners need to be taught to report cases of rape and every situation that happens to them so that they can receive help. It was reported by learners that many young girls get pregnant due to rape (5 Teen mothers from school 3, 4, and 6.)

The principal from school 4 had this to say:

> *"I blame parents who do not tell their children about taking care of themselves. We all know that, these days people are very wild, men are behaving like animals. Eh..., what I can say is that parents should talk to their girl children that no one has a right to their bodies, they should be taught that, they should refuse what they do not need and not allow anyone to rob them of their lives ."*
> *(Principal 1 from school 4)*

5.1.7 Alcohol abuse

The majority of teachers from school 4 and 6 indicated that their schools were situated in rural areas, near lodges, bottle stores and taverns. During break time, instead of eating food, and learners buy liquor and also home brewed beer. This was supported by principals from school 3 and 6 by who indicated that learners are controlled by alcohol and that sometimes, they call their parents to come and witness what their children were doing.

Alcohol and drug use increases an adolescent's chances of unprotected sexual intercourse and, in turn, pregnancy (Kirby, 2002:33). Studies in the US report that between a third and half, adolescent pregnancies are the result of alcohol (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1996:45)

Two teachers from school 3 and 5 also indicated that, some learners smoke dagga and other types of drugs. These teachers further said that classes that come after break time are very problematic due to the behaviour of learner's who are high on drugs. They disrupt class making it difficult for the others to listen to what is being taught. The class would be smelling dagga and other learners would be complaining about the smell.

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5.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS PRIOR TO, DURING AND AFTER PREGNANCY

Teen motherhood is one of the problems facing society the world over. This social problem is widely documented (UNICEF, 2001; National Research Center for Women and Families, 2001; Treffers, 2003; Mayor, 2004; Population Council, 2006). In many industrialised countries such as Britain and the USA, teenage pregnancy and parenthood (regardless of mental status) have in recent years been identified as social and public health problems that need to be confronted without delay (UNICEF, 2001). Treffers (2003) pointed out that the worldwide rate of teenage pregnancies ranges from 143 per 1000 in sub-Saharan African countries to 2.9 per 1000 in South Korea and Japan.

Teenage parenthood has come to be regarded as a significant disadvantage in a world which increasingly demands an extended education, and in which delayed childbearing, smaller families and careers for women are increasingly becoming the norm (UNICEF, 2001). The urge to experiment, ignorance amongst teenagers and the feeling of rebellion associated with adolescence have an impact on the teenage pregnancy rate.

The majority of teen mothers from all six school said that before they became pregnant, they had good intellectual abilities which helped them to focus on their studies. They further said that they used to attend their classes on time and not even dodge classes. One teen mother from school 3 said that, she used to have friends who always dodge classes and even though they were very close, the friend did not tell her that she was pregnant. She influenced her to dodged classes as well. This learner had this to say:

> *"I followed what my friend was telling me, and when we dodged classes we were going out with our boyfriends, and ended up being pregnant. It was very difficult for me."*

Teen mother 1 from school 3 also said that: "My *academic performance was good before I became a mother because my focus was on school work only".* During pregnancy it was very difficult because sometimes i would sleep or I would be ill. I could

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not concentrate on my studies and as a result I failed my class tests. She further said the following:

One day I was called by a life orientation teacher who asked me about my performance which was very bad and I was also asked why I looked unwell because I was no longer the same as before. I did not respond. What I did was only cry, because it was very bad and lended telling the teacher that I was pregnant. After having the child, my academic performance was drastically affected due to the additional responsibilities that come with having a child.

Most of the teen mothers from school 4 and 5 stated their academic performance deteriorated due to these competing priorities such as looking after the baby, doing domestic chores, and also focusing on their studies.

This was also confirmed by teacher 2 from school 1, who said that, pregnant teenagers have a tendency of absenting themselves from school on a regular basis and the reason behind that is because they have to attend ante-natal clinic consultations, they suffer from pregnancy related-sicknesses and feel unsafe feeling in the school. The following verbal quotes reflect these feelings:

> *"Yes it is on and off. Sometimes they come, sometimes they don't come and in a week they may come for only two days. (Teacher 3 from school 1)"*

Three teachers from school 1, 5 and 6 also mentioned that, the attendance is not satisfactory due to that fact that the pregnant learners have to go for check-ups. Sometimes they feel sick, and their attendance is not good. They further mentioned that due to large classes, that are so full, and the situation is not conducive for pregnant learners because when learners go out during break time, instead of moving out well, they push one another. Those who are pregnant may be injured. Usually, an expectant person needs to be given space. They must not be pushed or be squeezed somewhere (Teachers from school 1, 5, and 6).

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Teachers reported that some learners owing to their pregnant state have a bad or negative attitude towards school authorities and they absent themselves from school regularly, claiming that they are going to the clinic. The teachers further said that pregnant learners also have a tendency of hiding their pregnancy from school authorities. They also have problems participating in (Physical education training (PET) activities. One teacher had this to say:

"There is a lot of absenteeism, bunking of classes, dodging from school, and so on (Teacher 3 from school 4).

5.2.1 Lack of Motivation

Educational outcomes in these schools have been substandard for a myriad of reasons including lack of motivation from learners. One of the teachers indicated the following:

> *"These learners lack motivation towards education. I think they don't even see the importance of education. What I have in mind is that they need someone to talk to maybe they can change their behaviour."(Teacher 3 from school 6)*

Another problem attributed to low learner motivation and poor attendance is that some students do not take their education seriously. The study found that some of the teen mothers dodge classes frequently and intentionally during school hours and that they do not complete their school work. Time spent out of the classroom is often unstructured and unsupervised. This can result in young girls behaving irresponsibly, adding to the numbers of pregnant learners in the schools.

Learners need strong motivation to accept or fully embrace education. These learners should realise that education is the key to success, and that without it, they will suffer in life. The study revealed that during their spare time or when they dodge classes, they engage in sex. Therefore it is important to motivate them so as to make them wakeup and face reality.

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5.2.2 Lack of Discipline

The majority of teachers mentioned that ill-discipline is one of the challenges that schools are facing. Some teachers believe that it is due to the cancellation of corporal punishment that learners are no longer listening to teachers. They lack respect for their teachers, and do as they wish because of their rights. Teachers, in some schools, indicated that even if learners do not complete their schoolwork, teachers are not allowed to punish them. This lowers the end of the year results. One of the teachers from one of the schools mentioned the following:

> *"If I punish or beat a learner, I am opening a door for myself to be expelled from school because the Department of Education will dismiss me (Teacher 2 from schoo1)."*

Sometimes teachers are teaching, learners go out without asking the teacher, and when addressed, the learners will dismiss the teacher rudely and say they have a right to go to the toilet.

Discipline in each and every sphere is needed to promote development towards learners' education. Learners need to be taught respect straight from their homes. Schools are facing serious problems due to the ill-discipline that learners present in the classroom. Many of these pregnancies happen because of bad behaviour. Misbehaving and too much freedom and rights affect the performance of learners in schools.

5.2.3 Time when teen mothers are expected to come back to school

The majority of principals indicated that there is no designated or specified time period for teen mothers to report back to school. Returning to school depends on the health of the teen mother after giving birth. Some principals said that the school is informed by the parents that teen mothers should come back a year after delivery. Some educators were of the opinion that teenage mothers are not likely to return to school after giving birth due to lack of parental support. Studies conducted by Hofferth, Reid and Mott (cited in Kearney 2008:458) have shown that there is a difference between teenagers who gave birth at high school level and those who waited until they were matured in the

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number of years spent at school. They observed that teenage mothers complete fewer years of schooling than women who do not give birth prior to the age of 30. The study conducted by Sodi (2009:21) reveals that in many cases, teenage mothers are not in a position to go back to school after delivery as they are forced to look after their children. Others are prevented from going back to school by their physical health conditions which do not make it conducive for them to go back to school.

Because of these problems, it is difficult for a teen mother to go back to school. In most cases, teen mothers develop forms of resistance which foster them to delay their going back to school. Kaufman, Wet and Stadler (2001:261)) showed that most of the factors depend on the girls' ability to simultaneously manage logistics associated with mothering and schooling. Despite the Bill of Rights and Acts of parliament that give equal educational rights to all citizens, including teenagers who fall pregnant or teenage mothers, circumstances force them to quit school or sometimes prevent them from return to school. Runhare and Vandeyer (2011), in their study, however, maintain that there is a policy by the Ministry of Education and Sports and Culture on mainstreaming pregnant teenagers in formal education. The policy states that learners are allowed to continue learning till they deliver and that they should come back after delivery.

5.2.4 Stigma, labelling and spreading of false rumours about teenage mothers

The majority of teen mothers indicated that teachers and school administrators scorned them and made them feel unwelcomed at school. Teen mothers said if they came to class and other learners were making noise, the teachers would say it was the pregnant girls who were making noise. Such treatment by many of the teachers, consequently embarrass the pregnant learners and lessen their desire to come to school.

According to the findings of this study, teen mothers felt that some teachers did not empathise with them, and that they were expected to perform and behave just like any other learner in their respective classes. The teachers and fellow learners put a good deal of pressure on them without really understanding what the girls were going through. For instance, teen mothers were sometimes ridiculed in front of classmates whenever they failed to meet the class requirements. One student had this to say:

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"Mm..... I was reminded of being a mother by the teacher and I was told that I should not think that I am very special because of my situation. Therefore I ended up responding back very badly towards the teacher and, at that moment I was also crying (Teenage mother 6 from school 4)."

It is not only teachers and school administrators who create an unwelcoming environment for pregnant mothers, but pregnant learners also indicated that friends spread rumours about their pregnancies. Pregnant learners also indicated that friends no longer socialised because of their pregnancies. In some instances, friends pretended to be supporting them, when in actual fact they were not. In addition, the principals of schools said that some learners teased teenage pregnant learners.

Some teachers from school 2, 4, and 5 reported that pregnant teenagers reacted negatively to of falling pregnant whilst at secondary school. Some teachers pointed out that some learners separate themselves from others or show withdrawal behaviour. They also said that, these learners develop some defence mechanisms when asked questions about their pregnancies. They also become aggressive towards other learners.

One of teen mothers from school 1 explained that:

> *"I did not want to come back to school in my situation of being a teen mother because I knew that I would be made to feel ashamed by teachers and other learners, especially girls and female teachers. They will teach about you every time."*

The results revealed that teen mothers go back to school without undergoing any counselling to prepare them to deal with the stigma, parenthood, and schooling. As such, most of the teen mothers get overwhelmed by their situation in school and some fail to cope, resulting in them dropping out of school. All the teen mothers who were interviewed expressed concern that they had never been offered professional counselling on how they should prepare themselves to face their new situation. One teen mother had this to say:

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"Nobody offered counselling to me and even teachers did not counsel me when I came back to school" (Teen mother 7 from school 4).

According to the principals of schools, there is no provision for professional counselling for teen mothers when they come back to the school system.

"One of the principals from school 4 said that we don't have any provision of professional counseling as a school and we don't have any counseling for these teen mothers."

The results also found that when a teen mother quarrelled with other learners, they usually pick on her situation as a mother. Sometimes this behaviour makes them uncomfortable when they are in the school environment, consequently affecting their learning and collaboration with their fellow learners. Four teen mothers from school 3 and 6 said others gossiped about them and said unkind things about their situation. Some of the teen mothers had this to say:

"Sometimes students would be talking to one another laughing and looking at me but when I come close to them they would stop talking so I knew they were talking about me because I have a baby (Teen mother six from school 1)."

" One of the teachers said that, through my observation, the problem is when a girl has a baby always thinks that when people are standing and looking at her, it means there were talking about her and this is because the learner or a teenage mother does not have self confidence. "

The other teen mother indicated the falling:

Sometimes it is like one is in a fashion show because when one walks down the corridors everyone is looking at her, you are really at the centre of attention, but this makes me feel out of place, but I

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can't stop coming to school because I need to be educated so that I can support myself and my baby" (Teen mother 3 from school 2).

On this issue, Pillow (2004:11) argued that "all teen mothers need support and help. They need support that any mother parenting as a single-parent with limited income needs."

Teenage mothers do encounter some form of uneven treatment in their respective classes. Although they are still regarded as children by their parents due to their age and financial dependency, among their peers or classmates, the opposite is true. The remarks passed on by classmates make them feel isolated at times. It is important for peers to accept other learners even though they are teen mothers. This would boost their spirits. For them to be called strange names or to be attacked because of their motherhood position is the hardest challenge they face in class.

A teen mother from school 3 had this to say:

"Some of us feel disturbed by what female teachers always to teen mothers. If the performance of one of the teen mothers is poor, the teacher concludes that, one stone cannot kill two birds, meaning that, we cannot take care of a child and at the same time do our school work."

Another teen mother from school 5 said the following that:

"Mm..., I feel disturbed mostly when boys, give examples of teen mothers where it does not fit, sometimes they utter statements such as that the class has a bad smell and mothers who are breastfeeding are the ones who smell. This is a very disturbing situation and teachers do not say anything even though they see that it is a very bad example that can destroy the morals and confidence of a person (Teen mothers from school 5.)

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It would appear from the findings that teen mothers encounter different types of abuses in schools, which range from stigma, labelling and false rumours about teen mothers, to being used as examples and being given nicknames. It also emerged from this study that teen mothers suffer an inferiority complex, and lack confidence because of the belief that others are laughing or gossiping about them. Chigona and Chetty (2008:271) noted that when other learners quarrel with a teen mother, they usually pick on her situation as a mother. Teen mothers are uncomfortable when they are in the school environment, and this affects their learning and collaboration with fellow students. These findings concur with literature for example, Davidow,(cited in Mpanza, 2006:5) states that teen mothers and pregnant teenagers are mocked and ill-treated by educators to the extent that they would leave school without the knowledge of the headmaster. Swann *et al.* (2003:4) argues that support for young parents to continue with education will improve educational and employment outcomes for parents, mother/child interactions, and social outcomes for children.

5.2.5 Absenteeism due to pregnancy-related issues

Without knowledge and training about teenage pregnancy and health related issues, the majority of principals stated that they found it difficult to know whether or not the pregnant learner was sick or when she was due to give birth. Teenage pregnancy is linked to different sicknesses. While at school, pregnant learners often sleep in class or even collapse due to high temperatures. Another frustration expressed by the principals is those pregnant learners 'behaviour changes. They become moody and make it difficult for teachers to deal with them.

It was also stated that it is very difficult for pregnant learners to cope with the situation because pregnant learners do not come to school on time, miss classes, and leave academic work undone when they visit antenatal clinics. As a result, they lag behind other learners.

Those who are pregnant, when asked about their low attendance rate, indicate that sometimes, they do not feel well and, therefore, decide to stay at home. One of the teen mothers said the following:

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"I don't have parents, I am staying with my grandmother, and when my child is sick, I don't come to school because I have to take the child to the clinic and I end up not going to school. Having a child when you are a teenager is a problem because you need to take care of the child (Teen mother 8 from school 2)."

Teen mothers should know that raising a child requires that parents be involved in childcare responsibilities for 24 hours a day. This is not a choice, but the responsibility of being a parent. It is true that teenage mothers, like any other parent, find it is difficult to leave a child behind with a baby sitter when the child is not in good health. Under such circumstances, teenage mothers are forced to look after their children. Ramalebane (1995:2) views this challenge as an ambivalent role which the teenage mothers fulfil. They are expected to be mothers to their children and at the same time to behave like ordinary school girls when they are in class.

All these circumstances fuel absenteeism, which make their learning challenging as well as it focus on their studies difficult. This issue of absenteeism is supported by Ntombela (1992:23) who regards the challenges of teenage mothers as the "core cause" of school interruption and frequent absence from school.

5.2.6 Child Grant Collection

In all the selected schools, the majority of teachers complained about the high rate of absences on days when the Child Grant is being issued. Parenting teens go to the pay point, in order to receive financial support. The majority of teenage mothers indicated that they cannot send anyone to collect the money on their behalf because they are required to scan their thumb when claiming the money, in order to prove that they are the rightful persons to claim it.

Teacher 1 from school 3 said the following:

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"Mm…, during my life orientation class, because it comes in the morning as a first period, I face problems because if it is the day for grants, I cannot give tests because a lot of teen mothers would not be in class. Therefore I find it challenging. I also consulted my colleagues, in order to find out if they are facing the same challenge, and found that they are."

The majority of principals from school 3, 4 5, and 6, also mentioned that absenteeism is the most challenging factor in their schools on days when they have to collect the child support grant. They also talked about the ante-natal days for pregnant girls as also contributing on girls' absences from schools.

5.3 EFFECTS OF TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Learners who became pregnant while at school experienced significant changes in their academic performance. One of the teen mothers said that her performance was good in the past before she became pregnant. She attributed this to the fact that she was alone and had no attachment to disturb her with her schoolwork. She further explained that it was easy for her to achieve higher marks because she got help from teachers and friends. One teen mother indicated the following,

"During pregnancy, it was very difficult for me to focus on my studies because I always felt tired, dizzy and sometimes sick. I did not study due to pregnancy complications. Some of my peers and teachers used to scorn me and blame me for slumbering in the class even though it was too hot. My performance deteriorated because I liked sleeping and did not concentrate on my studies" (Teen mother 5 from school 4).

One of the teen mothers from school 3 explained the following:

"After having a baby it was worse than when I was pregnant because now the baby has added to the workload. During study time, I could not focus because the child needed my full attention. When the child cried and I would have to take care of the child and

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time would be moving. At that time I would be tired and sleepy resulting in me not doing anything. Consequently, i repeated grades, Mm..., it was very difficult indeed."

During pregnancy, the majority of teen mothers showed that it was very difficult for them to score good marks. They indicated it was not easy because they had to hide their pregnancies. However, it was not always possible because some of them vomited and remained tired. They further mentioned that when their parents discovered their pregnancies, it was not good for them at all. At school, some peers, after discovering about their pregnancies, laughed at them and made their lives miserable.

The majority of teachers pointed out that teenage pregnancy and parenting are significant contributors to high school dropout rates among teenagers. They further said that teen pregnancy for girls aged 14-16 is three times higher than that of older teens aged of 18-21 years.

The majority of the teen mothers indicated that their school performance changed drastically after giving birth. Looking after the child and doing school work are two different things and they both need attention. Teen mothers found that they were failing tests and exams, and this resulted in them to repeating grades. The other thing is that, they did not have enough time to discuss school work with their peers because after school, the children needed their attention.

Some of the teen mothers revealed that they changed for the better because of the support they got from their homes. Their performance improved and they moved on to the next grade.

One of the teen mothers from school 6 said the following:

"Life was so simple and sweet, and I used to do whatever I wanted during my spare time, but now it is difficult because I have the responsibility attached to my school work and of taking care of the child. I did not listen to my parents when they were giving me

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advice, now I am in trouble and it is not reversible, (Teen mother 3 from school 6.)

Information derived from the participants revealed that Maths and Science subjects are the most difficult for them. They further reported that these two subjects need time and a sober minded person a person who is not tired because both subjects need thorough understanding and they involve calculations. Some participants indicated that even though their parents are taking care of their children so that they can study, Maths and Science still remains very difficult.

One of the teen mothers said the following:

"My parents have taken my child along with them to Johannesburg, but it is not easy to pass Maths and Science if you are not a hard worker. I am trying my best and I have told myself that all these subjects are the same; they differ only by name and content. Therefore, I studied both of them and I am passing" (Teen mother 3 from school 6).

A teen mother 2 from school 3 also had this to say:

"Eh..., we don't give ourselves time for studies. We concentrate on leisure things, such as watching movies and also cell phones and being on different social networks. Lastly, is that both teen mothers and those who are having children are the same because failure rates in schools are very high regardless of whether one is a teen mother or not." (Teen mother 2 from school 3)

The majority of the participants said that, it is very difficult to cope with the situation. Looking after a child and managing the schoolwork simultaneously is extremely difficult. One of the teen mothers said that it was very difficult for her to manage the two things that is a baby and school work, because her situation was totally different from that of other teen mothers. Some of the participants said that their parents looked after their children, and this enabled them to manage their school work more easily. Some of the

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teenage mothers pointed out that, although they are married, it is very difficult to manage both caring for the child and doing school work because after school they have to cook for the family and wash clothes for the husband and the child. All these duties face one person, and it is very difficult for such a person to cope with the situation. They also said that this situation has drastically affected their academic performance.

The majority of teen mothers indicated that, it is very difficult to look after a child and themselves, and also to focus on their studies. They further said that when a child is sick, one has to focus on the child and forget about the studies. One cannot concentrate on whatever is taught in class because one would be thinking about the sick child at home. Teen mothers also said that they are teased and given names by their peers for being teen mothers. This stresses them and they lose focus. They further said that having a baby when they were still teenagers made life difficult, and that this could destroy their future.

Some of the teachers indicated that the performance of some of the pregnant learners deteriorated after falling pregnant because of absenteeism due to pregnancy-related issues and also the feeling of tiredness especially when the girl is about to give birth. Some teachers maintain that whether the academic performance of a pregnant learner drops out or not will depend on the learner's intellectual ability. One teacher gave a scenario where a very brilliant learner fell pregnant and this negatively affected her performance, resulting in her failure at the end of the year.

5.3.1 Repetition of grades

The majority of teen mothers said they had to repeat grades due to the pressure they were facing. Some had to repeat classes after giving birth because of failure to pass subjects. They further indicated that repeating a grade has negative effects because teachers and their peers scorn them. This negative treatment demoralises them.

One of the respondents said the following:

> *It was very difficult to cope in a class while I was repeating. Teachers and my peers always talked about pregnancy and teen*

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mothers in the class. Therefore, I decided to drop out. But at a later stage I decided to go back to school. At school, teachers do not treat teen mothers very well. If you fail, they just say, how you can cope with school work while you are breast-feeding. Some learners will be saying that, this class smells very bad because of the teen mothers. I felt very bad and I have realized that having a baby when you are still young is not good (Teen mother 4 from school 3).

One of the teen mothers during group discussion indicated the following:

"I had a baby in 2010 and it was very difficult to cope with my studies. Repeating a class has helped me because I studied very hard in order for me to pass and go to the next class. I told myself that, I must study very much so that I can support my child (Teen mother 4 from school 1)."

Some of the teen mothers indicated that repeating a class was detrimental to their development because it added an additional year for them to complete their school. They added that as teen mothers who are repeating classes, when they write tests and fail, teachers make an example of them in front of other learners and say that they cannot hope to pass when they have babies. They further said that their peers taunt them saying, "this so and so's mother" and they no longer use their real names.

When it comes to the issue of performance, the majority of teachers indicated that some teen mothers have learnt from their mistakes and are performing very well or above average. But there are other teen mothers who have lost direction. Their academic performance is poor despite the efforts put by teachers to provide them with extra lessons. Teachers revealed that, some of the teen mothers have a problem in Mathematics and Sciences. They perform badly in those two subjects. But in life orientation and other subjects their performance is not bad.

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These learners need more time for Mathematics and Science. They also need constant guidance from the teachers. Being away from class due pregnancy, therefore, makes it difficult for teen mothers to learn Mathematics and Science.

Again, where pregnancy interrupts an adolescent's education, a history of poor academic performance usually exists. Mpanza (2006:25) maintains that once the baby is born, the teenage mother needs more time parenting the baby and much of the responsibility is carried out during the night, which leaves the teenager with less time to do homework the ultimate consequence of this being the teenage mother failing to concentrate in class because she would be feeling drowsy and exhausted. This leads to poor performance in school subjects and failure in her exams. Agarwal (2006:21) supports this statement when he states that after giving birth, the young mother finds it difficult to keep up with her peers where academic performance is concerned, and she is forced to repeat classes.

5.3.2 Pregnancy related sicknesses

The majority of the participants from school 2 indicated that it was very difficult to cope with schooling when they are pregnant. Some teen mothers confessed that they try to hide the pregnancy from their parents, peers and teachers.

The following verbal quote reflects the above ideas:

> *Mm..., I still remember the time I fell pregnant. My health was no longer the same. I used to feel dizzy, depressed, aggressive, and I was also vomiting due to some odours that others could not smell. At home I always slept and this was something i had not experienced before. Even during class time, sleeping became a habit to me. When I discovered that I was really pregnant, I did not tell anyone including my parents, and I was also thinking of doing abortion. Mm..., unfortunately, my parents were already that something was wrong (Teen Mother from school 1)".*

Some of the teenage mothers from school 3 explained that:

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Teen mothers further said that pregnancy comes with some health-related complications such as vomiting, and feeling too tired to wake up in the morning (Teen mothers from school 3).

In support of the above quote, Richter, Norris and Ginsburg (2006:2) stated that pregnant teenagers experience trauma, fear, shame and embarrassment of having to reveal an early pregnancy to family, partners and peers.

When it comes to participation, the majority of teachers indicated that a lot of teen mothers do not participate well in the class. Sometimes they fall asleep and when you ask them why they are sleeping, they mention that their children did not sleep well at night. Other teen mothers indicated that they were very tired due to the domestic chores they do at home.

Parenting needs a mature person who is responsible enough to take care of children. For a teenager it is very difficult because most of the time is meant for to growing up. Becoming pregnant puts a lot of pressure on the teens and if they are not ready, they become stressed and always feel sick. However, they are afraid to stay home because their parents or guardians may inquire why they are not at school.

One of the participants said this:

> *"Pregnancy affects one's performance. I became pregnant in March, and we were about to write the quarterly exams. It was very difficult because I always felt drowsy and I didn't know that I was pregnant. It was difficult for me to study because I also liked sleeping. My performance was very bad because some days I would not go to school. My concentration in the class when the teachers are busy was also affected because I used to feel like my peers were smelling badly and I felt like vomiting. I was always going out of the classroom. In my view, being pregnant while studying is very bad because it has different consequences attached to it (Teen mother 9 from school 2)*

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This was also supported by Bezuidenhout (2004:40) who argued that falling pregnant while at school or at an educational institution generates a set of problems for which the teenager has to find a solution. When a person is pregnant, anything can be felt due to hormonal influences.

Teen mothers further said that, it became a burden to their parents because parents had to look for a day care provider to look after their babies, while they were at school. One of the teen mothers said that during her pregnancy, she used to ask for permission at school, twice a month, in order to visit a physician to consult about her ill-health.

5.3.3 Lack of support from parents

Some of the teen mothers reported that their parents were reluctant to provide support to them. They further said that it was unfortunate their parents did not know what they were going through as teen mothers. Some of the Life Orientation teachers confirmed that some parents would just ignore their children's' needs for the baby and try to turn the teen mothers away. Non-supportive parents informed the teen mothers that it was their decision to have children so it is their responsibility to cope with the situation.

Pillow (2004:11) argued that all teen mothers need help and support. In support of the above, Arlington Public School (2004:261) reports that adolescent mothers face difficulties and girls experienced undue pressure from parents, peers and teachers. On one hand they receive little support from schools and their homes, while on the other they are usually misunderstood (Arlington Public School, 2004:261).

Teen mothers added that there is also a breakdown in communication between them and their parents because they are no longer in good favour. Teen mothers said that when they complain about being scorned by their peers and teachers at school, the family tells them that this is what they wanted and that they have to face the consequences. They further said that even when they are not feeling well, they keep it to themselves because there is no support from their parents.

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5.3.4 Dropping out of school

The results revealed different views from the respondents regarding dropping out of school. Some schools have fashioned their own policies and have an agreement involving the school, parents, and the school governing body that when a girl becomes pregnant, she must stay at home and come back after giving birth.

One of the teen mothers from one of the schools said the following:

> *I continued with schooling and I had no problems, because I was healthy and my parents were very supportive. I tried to work very hard even though sometimes I felt very tired because of the pregnancy but I tried to concentrate on my work (Teen mother 6 from school 6).*

Some teen mothers explained that, it was very difficult because they were not given any chance to rest. From school, they had to do domestic chores such as cooking and washing the dishes. It was very painful because they were constantly reminded of their situation and many suggested they should just stay at home because they are wasting a lot of time and the energy of the teachers. Therefore, they decided to drop out and go back to school the following year (Teen mothers from school 2, 4, and 6).

The findings, thus, revealed that, teenage childbearing is often associated with numerous disruptions for girls, especially when it comes to school attendance. The girls need tremendous support to deal with the disruption (Theron &Dunn, 2006:261). These mean that teen parents face an overwhelming number of difficulties. Parental and peer pressure are far more common than support and understanding. Managing to care for an infant and devoting adequate time to school work is a great challenge for teen parents (Arlington Public School, 2004-264).

In one of the schools, one of the teen mothers said the following:

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> *"It was very difficult because I was staying with my father and no one would take care of my child. My mother passed away some years back. Therefore my father explained to me that, I had to stay at home for two years, to look after the child, at which point the child would be taken to a day care centre. Therefore, I dropped out for two years, and I was in grade 10. When I went back to school, it was not that easy because sometimes the child would not be well due to some sicknesses. This means I had to stay at home and look after the child. I missed a lot of lessons but the teacher in my school was very supportive and I was given some extra lesson, Having a baby when you are still young is a problem. I can advise others not to engage themselves in sexual activities matters because it can destroy one's future (Teen mother 4 from school 5).*

Another girl in a group discussion explained that:

> *"Due to the pressure I was encountering, I thought of getting an abortion. I sought advice from other people on how to abort. I got the information. During the process of preparing to abort, one of my friends told my parents that I am pregnant and I am busy with the preparation to have an abortion. At that time, I was not attending school properly. My parents approached me, and I was questioned about the pregnancy. I told them the truth. They said I must not do anything with the pregnancy, but that I had to go to school. They will support me and I should concentrate on my studies. It was not easy, I was no longer in the mood for studies and I didn't make it at the end of the year. Fortunately, I didn't withdraw from school (Teen mother 5 from school 3)."*

Some of the teen mothers from school 4 indicated that their parents were not supportive and that they were forced to stay with their in-laws. An inability to cope with their studies because of the multiple chores they had to do pressured many teen mothers to

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drop out of school and register the following year after giving birth. One of the learners indicated the following:

> *Even though I was not attending school, I felt so lonely, disappointed and ashamed of myself. It was difficult because even my boyfriend said the pregnancy was not his and, therefore, it was so embarrassing to me and my parents (Teen mother 7 from school 1).*

Some participants indicated that they did not drop out of school because their schools did not chase them away. Yet staying in school while pregnant was difficult because of the ill-treatment they get from peers and teachers. The situation was bad especially when teachers would make an example of them by bringing their situation to the attention of other learners. Their peers would also make jokes about them in class.

This was confirmed by one of the teenagers from school 2, who explained the problem in this manner:

> *"I dropped out of school even though the school was sending me away due to the pressure that I was experiencing because my peers were laughing at me (Teen mother from school 2).*

Teachers reported that the performance of some of the teen mothers deteriorated after they fell pregnant. The reason for the poor performance of the teen mothers given by the teachers include absenteeism due to pregnancy related issues and feeling tired, especially, when the girl is about to give birth.

Some teachers had this to say about the performance of the teen mothers:

> *Yes, they perform very poorly. The reason is because being a mother taking care of the child and studying is a hell of a job on itself (Teacher 1 from school 8)."*

> *Eh..., i had an experience where a learner, before she fell pregnant, she was excellent in class (Teacher 2 from school 5)*

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One teen mother explained it in this way:

> *Our performance has deteriorated significantly compared to the past before we get pregnant when we used to score high marks. Now; it is an embarrassment because our grades have fallen below those who perform badly in the class.(Teen mothers from school1, 3, 6).*

These teen mothers also mentioned that they have mood changes. One minute they are happy and another they do not want to speak to anyone. Fluctuations in moods, often made them end up insulting other learners, or responding poorly to their teachers. This further encouraged them to drop out of school.

Teenage mothers are often unprepared for parenthood and they drop out of school even before they give birth. According to HSRC (2005:55) although many girls who fall pregnant hope to return to school and the policy permits this, they find it hard they have to take care of their children and this interferes with their studies.

One teacher had this to say:

> *..., It depends on the learner or teen mother herself whether she has accepted the condition she is a mothers and that everything has to be done concurrently.*

They further mentioned that due to a lot of pressure that teen mothers are encountering, their performance is not as good as before they became mothers. (Teachers from school 3, 5, and 6)".

One of the teachers mentioned the following:

> *In grade 9 where I teach Arts and Culture, teen mothers perform very well. I believe that it is because they don't have a lot of pressure, their focus is on books or school work only (Teacher from school 4).*

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It was also revealed that, during pregnancy, not all learners perform very well. Some learners drop out or do not come to school every day when they are pregnant. Therefore, their performance deteriorates because they miss some lessons. The performance of teen mother is negatively affected because their interest is no longer in school work but in the child support grant. Due to a lot of work, which includes taking care of the child, studying and doing domestic chores, their performance deteriorates and, consequently they drop out of school.

There are, however, teenagers who do not take anything seriously. They do not come to school every day, they do not do their homework, and sometimes even miss tests. If they do write tests, their performance very poor.

Research studies in South Africa by Grant and Hallman (2006:345) and Hof and Richter (1999:68) revealed that pre-pregnancy school participation and performance were influential factors for teenage mothers who dropped out of school. In both studies, pregnant and former pregnant learners, whose performance had been poor before pregnancy, dropped out of school more than those who performed well academically. Grant and Hallman (2006:234) further concluded that, rather than pregnancy being the cause of school drop-out, it was the poor school participation by teen mothers which resulted in them falling pregnant and then dropping out of school.

Studies on schoolgirls by Grant and Hallman (2006), Manzini (2001), Mokgalabone (1999), and Chigona and Chetty (cited in Runhare and Vandeyar (2011: 4105), focuses on how teenage motherhood is a contributory factor to dropping out of school, poor performance and grade repetition.

Pregnancy and dropping out of school in fact, share many common social and economic antecedents,(Lloyd & Mensch, 2008:21) the most of which are poverty and poor academic performance. They further contend that rather than pregnancy causing girls to dropout, the lack of social and economic opportunities for girls and women may result in unsatisfactory school experiences, poor academic performance, and the endorsement of early motherhood.

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5.4 SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TEENAGE MOTHERS IN CURRICULUM

5.4.1 Assistance given to pregnant and teen mothers before, during, and after delivery

In cases where pregnant learners have missed some lessons, the 6 principals indicated that these pupils are given additional academic assignments to enable them to catch-up and make-up for missing lessons. The teachers and principals emphasised that these learners were given these assignments for purposes of continuous assessment.

At some schools, teachers are sent to the pregnant girl or parenting mothers' homes to provide them with additional academic support. Those who are back at school are given extra lessons during study time (Teacher 2 from school3). Some teachers, however, argue that some learners are very playful and do not consider school work as important to them. Some teachers indicated that the mothering learner can catch up with the contact time lost, depending on the support she gets from teachers or if she is motivated to work as hard. Other teachers from school 5 maintained that catching up will depend on the work load to be done, her willingness to work and the pace at which she works to accomplish the missed tasks.

The following verbal quotes support the above findings:

> *Yes, it is happening because you'll find that the learner did not write some tasks, and it will difficult for her to write all the tasks she missed (1 teacher from school 5).*
>
> *Due to the disturbance of the little child at home, they cannot cope (Teacher 1 from school 2)."*

Some teachers indicated that, some pregnant learners change for the better when they realise that they have made a mistake by falling pregnant. This was alluded to by some of the educators who said that, some pregnant learners changed after giving birth; they

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become more serious and more focused on their goals. They become eager to achieve their dreams.

One teacher explained in this way:

> *"Sometimes it is possible, eh..., she may study hard because she knows what she has done, and will work hard and walk an extra mile to cover the gap (1 teacher from school 3)*

The majority of teachers said that some pregnant learners seemed to learn from their mistakes and, therefore, should not be denied access to education.

> *Yes, it is important for learners to continue with their schooling because they do have aright to education equally the same as that of other learners.*

Some of the teachers indicated that having a baby for some teenagers opens their eyes. They now concentrate on their school work. This is seen in their improvements of their performance especially in a subject like Maths, which is compulsory to all learners.

One teacher stated the following:

> *Some do catch up and improve because they get support from home and support from school, where they are given special attention or given an individual support plan (Teacher 3 from school 1).*

5.4.2 Provision of extra lessons for pregnant learners and teen mothers

Special programs have been established at many schools to enable the learners to make up for lessons they missed when they were away. Learners who participate in these programmes are expected to complete all the tasks expected of them during the year.

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5.4.3 Coping mechanism

The majority of the participants showed that it was not easy being a teenage mother, but nonetheless they were supported from all sides, that is by parents, teachers, principals and their peers. This support encourages the teen mothers to study hard even though it is difficult for them due to the pressure they would be experiencing. They would sometimes feel tired. In order to studying proactively, they need a calm-minded approach.

One of the teen mothers said the following,

> *I was not always well. It was on and off, but the support I received from my parents and my in-laws made me concentrate on my studies and I passed at the end of the year (Teen mother 6 from school 3).*

However, in this study, not all learners said bad things about their parents. There are a few who acknowledged that their parents continued to support them.

Teen mother 3 from school 6, showed appreciation by stating this:

> *I thought my parents would not forgive me for what I had as a disappointed to the family. Mm..., what I have realised is that the love of my parents has not changed. They still treat me as their only child. As any parent, they have the right to be angry with me, but really they did not get angry. Instead, they insisted that I should go back to school and they will take care of the child.*

5.4.4 Drop out and back to school issues

The findings revealed that the majority of teen mothers returned to school after one year. The reason for the one year hiatus is that they have to attend to their children until they can be taken to day care centres. Some of the participants said that they were encouraged by their sisters, parents, principals and friends to go back to school.

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One of the teen mothers had this to say:

> *Due to my situation at home of not having parent, it came to my mind that I needed to go back to school so that I can work for my child. I approached my cousin who stays near my home for her to take care of the baby when I am at school and she agreed. This happened after I had stayed at home for two years. At the moment I am in Grade 11. I want to see myself somewhere and I will also encourage other teen mothers to focus on their studies (Teen mother 5 from school3).”*

The study revealed that teenage mothers who failed to get support from parents or other family members were more likely to drop out from school. The study by Grant and Hallman (2006:78) found that parental support in the form of material provision and baby minding was one determinant factor for school re- enrolment by teenage mothers.

One of the teen mothers said:

> *I want to show people that I can become something in life, especially my parents who have forgiven me for what I did (Teen mother from school 1).*

She further said that although she was goal oriented, a baby could not delay achievement of her educational goals and a baby is not an obstacle to achieving her goal. However, she acknowledged that it will take a little bit longer than expected (teen mother from school1)”.

This is supported by the Bill of Rights, section 29 found in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, which states that everyone has a right to a basic education. According to Chigona and Chetty (2008:265), it may be improper to deny teen mothers the opportunity to continue their schooling when they are ready to do so.

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5.5 IDENTIFYING SUCCESSFUL TEEN MOTHERS

5.5.1. Identifying successful teen mothers

The majority of teachers from school 1, 2 and 3, mentioned that many teen mothers, despite having a child during their school career, have been successful in life. They further indicated that some teen mothers are now working in different government departments.

The following verbal quote supports the above findings:

> *"Yes, in our school there are three teen mothers who have finished tertiary education and who are working at the moment. Mm..., it is possible, eh..., through the support from parents those teen mothers are working. One is social worker, two others are lawyers. Therefore, anything can happen through the support of the parents and teachers (1teacher from school 4)."*

Some teen mothers are working, while others are still struggling to finish school because of academic setbacks and failure to achieve certain academic standards.

One of the school principals in school 2 mentioned that, one of their former learners who had a child while at school is presently studying at the University of Limpopo.

The principal said the following:

> *Mm..., I am very proud of one of the teen mothers who succeeded in her career because she is a social worker. I use her to motivate other learners who want to give up in life, showing that there is still a future after being pregnant. Yes, I am really proud (Principal 1 from school1)*

Another principal had to say::

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Eh..., not all learners see things the same way. In my school I don't have any of the teen mothers who have reached university level as this school is situated in the rural areas. Once they see that they are not making it, they think of getting married. For me, as a principal of the school I try by all means to call other people to come and talk to teen mothers and these young girls so that they can see the importance of education, but all this is in vain. Even the teachers in my school; give to teen mothers' moral support so that they do not lose hope (Principal 2 from school 3).

5.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This study found more similarities than differences in the manner in which participants from all six schools responded to the educational achievements of teen mothers. In all the schools, teen mothers were treated in the same manner when it came to catching up for time lost when they had to visit ante-natal clinics and also when they go to collect the child grant.

All the schools have taken into consideration that education is a basic human right for all people. Therefore, teen mothers and pregnant girls are not supposed to be expelled from school. The next chapter presents the recommendations of the study.

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CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of my study was to explore the educational achievements of teen mothers in the Vhembe District schools by tracking their academic performance. The study investigated the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in schools in Vhembe District. It also investigated how possible it is to attend school and perform well if one is a teen mother. In order to explore and understand the challenges faced by teen mothers before, during and after pregnancy, the views of teen mothers, teachers and principals of schools were gathered through interviews and focus group interviews.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the schools around the Vhembe District is very high and that it is influenced by different factors. Teenage pregnancy and teen motherhood forces these teen mothers to drop out of school, repeat grades due to poor performance and also not to attend classes properly. Studies on school-girl pregnancy by Grant and Hallman (2006:265), Manzini (2001), Mokgalabone (1999), Gordon (2002), Chigona and Chetty cited in(Runhare and Vandeyar 2011:4105), focused on how teenage motherhood is a contributory factor to girls dropping out of school, poor performance and grade repetition. The study found that teenage pregnancies and teen mothers 'academic performance deteriorates due to the pressure encountered both at school and home due to the responsibilities attached to teen mothers and it leads to school absenteeism. This is because pregnant learners have to attend antenatal clinic consultations, suffer from pregnancy-related sicknesses and have to contend with dual responsibilities. Swann *et al.,* (2003: 25) argued that it is good for pregnant and mothering teenagers go to clinics because this would improve their health.

It emerged from this study that teenage mothers usually suffer from an inferiority complex, lack of confidence and self- esteem because they think that others are

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laughing or gossiping about them. Chigona and Chetty (2008:271) noted that when others learners quarrel with a teen mother, they usually pick on the teen mother's situation as a mother. Teen mothers are uncomfortable when they are in the school environment and this affects their learning and collaboration with fellow learners. Pillow cited in Chigona and Chetty, (2008:263) describe the "discourse of contamination" that develops from the perception that the immorality of the teen mother would set a bad example for the student body at school, hence contaminating fellow "innocent" girls.

The study revealed that there are poor relationships between the teen mothers and their peers; and between them and their teachers, fellow learners and teachers mock them and claim that they fell pregnant deliberately. These findings concur with literature. Davidow, (cited in Mpaza, (2006:5), for example, argues that pregnant learners and teen mothers are mocked and ill-treated by teachers to the extent that they leave school without the principal's knowledge. It emerged from this study that pregnant learners and teen mothers need support from their teachers to catch up with the lessons they lost during their absence. Swann *et al.*, (2003:4) argued that support for young parents to continue education will improve educational and employment outcomes for mothers as well as and social outcomes for children.

The study revealed that teenage mothers generally perform poorly in class as compared to learners who are not pregnant. This may be attributed to lack of experience in motherhood, the inability to handle dual responsibilities, and lack of parental support. It was found that teenage pregnancies and early motherhood result in poor educational achievement, poor physical strength, social isolation, poverty and related factors. The findings of the present study are in line with Chigona and Chetty 's findings which show that most teenagers find parenting much harder than anticipated and experience motherhood at odds with their expectations and hopes.

This study revealed that teen mothers who chose to continue with schooling after having babies had reflected on their past mistakes, redefine themselves and set new standard of living, which informed their new behaviour. The statement made by teen mothers showed that they had reflected on their past and then made new decisions for

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future action. The new decisions made them to remain in school despite negative perceptions from people.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the participants indicated that education is the key to success; it opens all the doors for future. Therefore, it is important for teen mothers to continue with their studies so that they can improve their lifestyles. The education of teenage mothers is also important and must take place because the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa maintains that every child has a right to education. The other thing is that education is not an assumed privilege but a right. Teachers and their peers should treat teen mothers well; in order for them feel comfortable in schools. The following conclusions are drawn from the main themes that emerged from the findings of this study:

6.3.1 The prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the Vhembe District schools

I concluded that the high rate of teenage pregnancies is caused by factors such as lack of sex education, child support grant, peer pressure, poverty and child-headed households. The performance and attendance of schools with high rate of teenage pregnancy in the Vhembe District schools was reported by teachers within the six schools under study.

6.3.2 Teenage mothers and school attendance

Teenage motherhood has a detrimental effect on the education and future plans of school going teenagers. This is because teenage mothers attend school irregularly and sometimes drop out of school. They come to school late and sometimes not at all due to different problems they face as mothers.

6.3.3 Teenage mothers and school performance

I concluded that teenage pregnancy and mothering result in poor academic performance. The pressure of being a young parent results in teenage mothers repeating grades. One of the factors that leads to performance deteriorating is that,

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teenage motherhood comes with many responsibilities which make difficult for these learners not to concentrate on their school work.

6.3.4 Gender imbalances

This study revealed that most teenage pregnancies are a result of gender imbalance. Women are dominated and ruled by men. As a result of the patriarchal system, women are exploited because they are viewed as subordinate to men. Women are expected to labour freely for men, carry out reproductive roles, and in the process are also denied access to power. Women should be freed from their oppression. As a result, women have been left out of the development process because of the existing patriarchal system (Freeman, 2001:69).

Due to gender imbalances, young women also find themselves in relationships with men who dominate them. These men often use their masculine, patriarchal and financial powers to subjugate these young women. Some young women are forced to have children as a way of proving their love for the men. In other instances, young women deliberately fall pregnant because they believe only men will provide in their lives. This is done by young women in the belief that by having children for the men they are securing their future According to gender theory, gender imbalances can be addressed through gender transformation. This will help to protect and promote the rights of the marginalised and disadvantaged women. According to Wolpe, Quinlan, and Martinez, 1997;45), this can be achieved through educational policies and gender mainstreaming campaigns, which will alert policy makers and the public in general to the rights of girls and women

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood in schools is a reality that cannot be over looked. It needs the involvement of knowledgeable adults.

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6.4.1 Educator's training and skills development

Life Orientation is a new area needing considerable attention and resources. The Department of Basic Education needs to ensure that all Life Orientation educators are properly qualified and capable of teaching life skills effectively. It is important that the Department of Basic Education ensures that the training of educators in Life Orientation is not only done in theoretical terms, but that it should be more practical. This will ensure that these educators develop and acquire skills, competences and capacities to deliver lessons that will also empower learners with social problems.

6.4.2 Child support grant

Government should introduce a new method of issuing the child support grant. The money that is used as the child support grant by government should, instead, be used to create jobs for teen mothers, especially those who have completed their studies so that they can support their children and themselves. This will also stop the teen mothers from depending on the government child support grant. The same exercise will also help to discourage teen mothers from falling pregnant since they will know that they have to work to support their children. There are a lot of graduates from different institutions who are not working and it could be better to improve the lives of those who have skills rather than giving out money to teenagers who engage in sexual activities hoping to get the reward.

The majority of principals came up with a suggestion that, to deal with the high rate of pregnancies in schools government should introduce the social grant as an incentive to motivate learners not to fall pregnant. Some of the principals pointed out that there is a lot of absenteeism among pregnant girls due to antennal clinic attendance and other health-related issues.

6.4.3 Provision of mobile clinics in schools

Having health care workers in schools would also be helpful in dealing with teenage pregnancy. Health care workers can work together with educators to address learners' health issues, in general, and offer health education to learners. This will ensure that

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when an emergency occurs in school, there is a health-care worker who will respond immediately. Through the health care workers, learners will be taught about the consequences of indulging in sex when they are still very young. These consequences include falling pregnant, having STIs and HIV and AIDS. Learners should be taught about contraceptive use and also the importance of focusing on their studies. This could be done through health campaign workshops. One of the principals mentioned that, he would like the government to provide mobile clinics to the schools, where they would be taught about sexual activities, attended to while they are not feeling well and also for antenatal clinic.

This will help to deal with the problem of absenteeism which most of the principals complained about. This is the case because principals said that, most pregnant learners do not come to school if they have to attend antennal clinics.

6.4.4 The operational plan of the schools

Schools should be required to formulate school-based operational plans with clear guidelines, in order to meet the requirements of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. This will help to protect learners against discrimination and unfair treatment of those students with social problems like pregnancy and motherhood.

A supportive school environment for teenage mothers should not be viewed as a way of promoting teenage pregnancy and parenting but it should be seen as a means of developing a base line in which contextual information, effective interventions and support are given to the younger generation. The long term goal should be to eliminating the existing difference between boys and girls.

It is recommended that schools should collect, analyse and publish records reflecting the extent to which these young women successfully complete their education when they go to school after delivery. Record keeping should ensure that every child in the school gets individual attention, and it should promote awareness about the dangers of falling into the trap of becoming parents while one is still in need of education. The other thing to be recommended is that the department of education should give the schools

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permission to have record on the achievement of teenage mothers separately so that they could be easily tracked.

6.4.5 Integration of sexuality education in other subjects

The study recommends that sexuality education should be integrated into the learning areas and also that teachers should be given training on sexuality education during their undergraduate teacher training, in order to improve teachers' knowledge and skills. Sexuality education should also cover a broad area and be given enough time and attention. The curriculum should be flexible enough to allow interaction between teachers and learners so that the learners' specific needs and concerns are addressed. Sexuality education should provide a holistic picture of teenage sexuality, including positive and negative aspects. Sex education should be introduced fully in schools, as a learning area or subject. It should not be taught as part of Life Orientation only. Another option is to intergrate it into all learning areas so that each and every teacher can talk about it.

Bay-Cheng (2003:15) mentioned that the current approaches to sexuality education in South Africa give the impression that engaging in sexual activities is the wrong thing to do. It fully encourages young people to abstain from sexual activities until they are older.

From the findings, it was revealed that, different opinions the prevention of teenage pregnancy, were given by principals of schools. The teachers also added that teenage pregnancy can be reduced rather prevented. Only a few participants said that teenage pregnancy can be prevented. They argued that it is important to make teenagers aware of the importance of education and their future. The majority of the principals and teachers suggested strategies that can be used to reduce teenage pregnancy, for example, introducing sex and health education in secondary and primary schools, as early as Grade 7, inviting well trained health workers, educational psychologists and religious leaders to come and address learners about pregnancy and its effects. They further indicated that the Department of Education should introduce sex education in the curriculum in all the subjects that are taught in schools. Some principals indicated that it

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could be beneficial to teach learners about safe sex because they have already started having sex and are also using contraceptives.

A review of 56 curriculum–based programmes in the US, half of which were implemented in the school setting, reported that there is strong evidence that sex education can both delay sex and promote safe sex (Kirby, 2007:73). Two thirds of the programmes reviewed had a significant impact on at least one aspect of sexual behaviour, or lowered rates of pregnancy, child bearing, or STIs. The study recommended that sex education should be integrated into undergraduate teacher training courses to improve teachers' knowledge and skills and in teaching about HIV (Ahmed *et al.,* 2006:66). Visser (2005:78) also reported on the lack of commitment towards the programme by teachers and principals, organisational problems in schools (lack of allocated time and human resources) and competing priorities in the school system that contributed towards the limited implementation of programmes.

Although evidence for the effectiveness of sex education in South Africa is not as convincing, the available international experience suggests that the question is not whether sex education should be provided, but how its effects can be optimised (Mukoma and Fisher, 2006:54). Incorporating many of the characteristics that constitute good programmes may assist in improving the outcomes of sex education in South Africa. In addition, well-designed evaluation studies are required in South Africa to demonstrate and improve the effectiveness of school-based sex education programmes. To ensure a distinct focus on pregnancy, life skills evaluation studies should also include responsibilities of parenthood, knowledge and skills required for successful parenthood, and the importance of planning for and timing of parenthood (NRC and IOM, 2005:87).

6.4.6 Parental involvement and transparency

Lack of parental involvement is identified as one of the most serious challenges for educators in dealing with teenage pregnancy. It is recommended that parents should talk to their children about sex education. They should also inform schools about the pregnancy of their children. Teachers indicated that society should also talk about the

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cultural indoctrination to their children on life issues. Parents, as primary socialisation agents, have a major role to play in solving this problem. I also recommend that schools, in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education, should workshop parents on sexuality education, so that the same message that is being delivered at school about abstinence and healthy sexual life styles can be reinforced by parents at home.

6.4.7 Availability of recreational facilities

Lack of recreational activities is a serious concern in rural areas. Most young people do not have anything to do after school and during the weekends. These tend to be another contributes to the high levels of teenage pregnancy. It is recommended that government provide recreational facilities in rural areas and also in all the schools so that learners will have some places to exercise instead of engaging in sexual activities.

6.4.8 Awareness campaigns on learner pregnancy in schools

The findings recommend that there should be campaigns by Health Department for all teenagers, for example, showing videos on how a child is born. This may discourage and enable teenage girls to think twice before engaging in sexual activities. The majority of teen mothers argued that, there were no programmes in schools meant for teen mothers. They further said that the best thing to be done is that sex education should be taught in Life Orientation because all learners knew about sex issues. Teenagers should also be taught about contraceptive use. The schools should invite people from the Department of Health to come and explain to learners, both boys and girls, how to use contraceptives.

6.4.9 Advising other learners concerning teen motherhood

The majority of teen mothers said that, pregnancy is bad and that it disturbs and distracts one from their goals and makes one's life miserable. Having unprotected sex is not good at all because a teenager may fall pregnant and have a baby. This might destroy her future totally. They further said that as teen mothers, they can advise teenagers who do not have children not to be misled by other teen mothers or their

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boyfriends. They also stated that teenagers need to be encouraged to take their parents' advice seriously and focus on their studies. They further said that, education is the key to everything because it opens doors for teenagers. From the above explanation, it has been shown that becoming pregnant is a bad thing because it destroys one's future.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

My study is unique in that its findings are based on primary data collected from principals, teachers and teenage mothers who are attending school. This study focused on the educational achievement by teen mothers in South Africa, specifically in the Vhembe District. Therefore, further research can be based on the management of teenage pregnancy by teachers in schools.

6.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Teenage pregnancy has been recognised as one of the major social problem affecting the educational achievement for learners in the Vhembe district schools. It was also concluded that various factors that contributed to prevalence of teenage pregnancy were child support grant, lack of sex education, peer pressure and so on. It has been concluded that to resolve the problem the following issues should be involved such as introducing sexuality education in school, parental involvement and transparency should be taken into considerations, and awareness campaign on learner pregnancy should be considered.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Semi-structured Interviews for school principals and Deputy Principals

INTRODUCTION

My name is **Mudau Thizwilondi Josephine**. I am carrying out a study on **Educational achievement tracking for teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.**

I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write and forward to me after the discussion. Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.

Thank you for your time.

Mudau T.J

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1. In what way is teenage pregnancy a problem in your school? Explain giving examples.
2. What, in your view are the causes of teenage pregnancy in schools?
3. What do you think should be done to deal with the problem?
4. Does the school have policy guidelines on learner pregnancy?
5. May you describe the policy.
6. How effective is the policy in helping learners?
7. How long do mothers take to come back to school after giving birth?
8. How do learners cope with schooling during pregnancy?
9. What does the school do to help pregnant and teen mothers cope with schooling during and after delivery
10. How does the school help learners make up for the work they lose when they get abscent due to pregnancy related problems? What happen on the lessons that they have missed during their absence?
11. What records does the school use to monitor attendance and performance of pregnant learners and teen mothers? Do you have any records pertaining teenage mothers in your school?
12. Are the numbers of teenage mothers increasing or decreasing? Explain why?

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APPENDIX B

Focus Group Interview questions for teenage mothers

INTRODUCTION

My name is **Mudau Thizwilondi Josephine**. I am carrying out a study on **Educational achievement tracking for teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.**

I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write and forward to me after the discussion? Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.

Thank you for your time.

Mudau T.J

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1. Good morning. How are you today?
2. How old are you?
3. In which grade are in?
4. How are you finding schooling in general?
5. Did any of you ever repeat a grade? If Yes, may you explain what had happened?
6. How did you find schooling when you were repeating: What are the good things and bad things for repeating a grade?
7. Now we know that all of us in this group have been pregnant or have a baby. Do you remember how old you were and in which grade you were when you became pregnant?
8. What happened to your schooling when you became pregnant? Please describe in detail.
9. Which subjects are you studying? Are they the same or different from what other students are doing?
10. Which subjects do you find difficult to learn because of your situation as a teen mother? Explain your answers?
11. During the period when you were pregnant, did you withdraw from school or you continued? If you continued, what problems did you meet with schooling?
12. What helped you to cope with your schooling during that time of pregnancy?
13. If you dropped out, after how long did you come back to school? Why did you have to drop out? What made you to decide to return to school?
14. How old were you when your child was born?
15. How do you manage to look after the child and still manage to do on your school work?
16. What problems do you face as a young mother who is attending school?
17. What can you say about the child grant with regards to you as teen mothers?
18. Now that you have a baby, what advise can you give to other learners?

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APPENDIX C

Focus Group Interviews for Teachers

INTRODUCTION

My name is **Mudau Thizwilondi Josephine**. I am carrying out a study on **Educational achievement tracking for teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province.**

I wish to start by thanking you for accepting to take part in this discussion. Please feel free to say anything. However should you feel that there are certain things you do not want to say in the presence of others, you can write and forward to me after the discussion? Remember the views expressed here are only going to be used for this study and there are no wrong answers. Also, you do not have to say who you are because only the ideas and not your name are important.

Thank you for your time.

Mudau T.J

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1. Good morning? How is your work day so far?
2. In your view, what are the major challenges that your school is facing?
3. Among these problems, how would you rate the problem of teenage pregnancy in the school? Explain your answer.
4. Have you ever taught a teenage mother? If yes when was that and at which school?
5. Do you remember of teen mothers from this school who have made it in life? If not, what are the reasons?
6. If yes, who are the examples, where are they and what are they doing?
7. How would you generally describe the following about teen mothers whom you have taught:

7.1 Behaviour

7.2 Participation in school activities

7.3 Academic performance in the subjects you teach

8. Do teenage mothers after birth look free in the class? Explain your answer.
9. In your view, is the performance of teen mothers as expected by the required standards? Explain your answer.
10. How would you describe the academic performance of teen mothers:

10.1 before they get pregnant

10.2 during period of pregnancy

10.3 and after being pregnant

11. Do you think there are marked changes in their academic performance during these periods? Explain your answer.

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12. Does the school require you to keep and monitor a record of what the teen mothers are performing? Do you think this is important? Explain your answer.
13. What problems do you find to be faced by teen mothers as learners?
14. How do you or the school help them?
15. Do you have lessons or ways on how to help teenage mothers cope with schooling?
16. If yes explain how and if not explain what the school should do.
17. Do you think teenage mothers are getting enough lessons in order for them to no to fall pregnant again? If yes explain how and if not explain what the school should do.
18. In your view, how does the social grant influence teenage pregnancy?
19. How is your school attendance and performance affected during by teenage pregnancy?
20. How can the school play a role in the education of their children pertaining to birth control?
21. Do class teachers keep a record of students who are pregnant in their class? If Yes, What information is included in the record? If No, how are they monitored?
22. What type of records do you have for teen mothers?
23. What can be done to eradicate the high rate of teenage pregnancy in schools?
24. Do you have anything that you want to say about what we have discussed?

THANK YOU ONCE MORE FOR YOUR TIME

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APPENDIX D

LETTER TO THE VHEMBE DISRICT SENIOR MANAGER DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

University of Venda
P. O. Box 5050
Thohoyandou
0950
10 July 2010

District Senior Manager
Department of Education
Vhembe District
P.O. Sibasa
0970

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS WITHIN YOUR JURISDICTION

1. The above matter has reference.
2. I **Mudau Thizwilondi Josephine** am applying for permission to do research in schools within Vhembe District. I am a PhD student at the University of Venda. My topic is **Educational achievement tracking for teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province**
3. Hope you will find this in order

Kind regards

Mudau T.J

Tel. 072 876 5126/ 015962 8223

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School of Education
University of Venda
Thohoyandou 0950
2010-07-27

Dear Principal,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am currently conducting research on **the Educational achievement tracking for teenage mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province,** and I have been granted permission by the **Department of Education Vhembe District** to conduct research in the school in which you are currently managing as it has been selected to take part in this research.

1. An interview will be conducted and it will take approximately 30 minutes.
2. There is no known risk involved in the research.
3. There are no costs involved.

You are assured that your identity and responses to this interview will be regarded as **extremely confidential at all times and that they will not be made available to any unauthorized user.**

Should you have any queries or comments, you are welcome to contact me, Mudau T.J at this contact number (0728765126) or (my supervisor) Dr Mutshaeni H.N at the address below.

Department of Curriculum Studies and Education and Management
School of Education
University of Venda
Email: nancy.mutshaeni@univen.ac.za
MUDAU T.J

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CONSENT

In terms of the ethical requirements of the University of Venda, you are now requested to complete the following section:

I _____,

have read this letter and understand the terms involved.

On condition that the information provided by me is treated as confidential at all times, I hereby (MARK the appropriate section)

☐ give consent

☐ do NOT give consent that the results may be used for research purposes.

Signature: ----------

Date: _____

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EDITOR DECLARATION

I, Dr Bevelyn Dube, of the Communication and Applied language Studies Department at the University of Venda declare that I edited and proofread the PhD thesis *"Educational achievement tracking for teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to Vhembe District" written by* Mudau T.J (Student number 9509355)

7/04/2014

Dr BEVELYN DUBE: BA, Grad CE, BA Hons (English), MA (English) University of Zimbabwe, DPhil (SU)
University of Venda
Department of Communication and Applied Language Studies
P.B. X5050
Thohoyandou
0950
RSA
Phone: (B) +27 (0) 15 962 8420
Mobile: + 27 (0) 847565524
Email: Bevelyn.dube@univen.ac.za or bevndu@yahoo.com

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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT
2012 -05- 21
PRIVATE BAG X2250 SIBASA 0970
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

REF: MS MUDAU T.J
ENQ: MANENZHE T.A
TELL NO: 082 868 3499

MS MUDAU T.J
P.O.BOX 1291
THOHOYANDOU
0950

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS: VHEMBE DISTRICT

1. Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research in schools within Vhembe District.
2. You are advised to conduct your research with the consent of the Circuit Managers and the Principals of the schools.
3. The process of researching should at no stage, disrupt the normal teaching and learning time.
4. Wishing you all the best.

.....
DISTRICT SENIOR MANGER

2012-05-21
.....
DATE

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