



International Journal of Advance Studies and Growth Evaluation

To Investigate the Challenges of Teen Pregnancies among School Going Children in Kazomba Compound in Solwezi District, Zambia

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Article Info.

E-ISSN: 2583-6528

Impact Factor (SJIF): 5.231

Peer Reviewed Journal

Available online:

www.alladvancejournal.com

Received: 27/July/2024

Accepted: 20/Aug/2024

Abstract

Adolescent pregnancy has long been a social, economic, and educational concern worldwide, in developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries. Studies on adolescent sexuality and pregnancy are very limited in Zambia. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the challenge of teenage pregnancy and its associated factors among schoolchildren attending schools in Kazomba Compound of Solwezi District, Zambia. Teenage pregnancy is one of the major challenges that many societies around the world are grappling with. Despite numerous efforts by the government and international and local agencies to eradicate teenage pregnancy, high rates of teenage pregnancy are still reported in schools. The Kazomba compound in Solwezi is not exempt from this unfortunate situation. Compared to the surrounding estates and villages of Solwezi, teenage pregnancies remain prevalent in the area (World Health Organization, 2018), of which 2 million girls are under the age of 15. Teenage pregnancy is one of the most serious. Adolescent pregnancy and childbirth are today a global health and economic challenge. The Government of Zambia has developed a strategy to achieve four major objectives: increasing adolescent access to quality reproductive health services, raising awareness and knowledge on reproductive health issues, strengthening multispectral partnerships, and designing and implementing reproductive health programs for adolescents and young people.

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Keywords: Teenage pregnancy, adolescent, peer pressure, sex education, cultural factors.

1.0 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy has been a persistent global challenge with significant social, economic, and educational implications, impacting both developed and developing nations. In Zambia, research on adolescent sexuality and pregnancy remains limited. Consequently, this study aims to examine the factors contributing to the high prevalence of teenage pregnancies among school-going children in Kazomba compound, Solwezi district, Zambia.

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by considerable physical, emotional, and social changes. Unfortunately, teenage pregnancy disproportionately affects adolescent girls, posing a major public health challenge that endangers both maternal and child health. Adolescent pregnancy and childbearing have become pressing global concerns, affecting both health and economic outcomes. A

2018 study revealed that approximately 18 million adolescent girls aged 15-19 give birth annually worldwide, with an adolescent birth rate of 53 births per 1,000 women (WHO, 2018). The majority of these births (95%) occur in developing countries, with two million girls under the age of 15 giving birth each year.

1.1 Problem Statement

Since 2008, the North-Western Province has seen a consistent rise in early and teenage pregnancies, with an average of 1,800 cases annually. Solwezi bears the greatest burden among the ten districts, accounting for approximately 488 (27.1%) of these cases each year. This surge has significantly contributed to school dropouts, particularly among girls, leading to increased maternal mortality, a rise in HIV incidence rates among young women, and a growth in child-

headed households. Illiteracy levels have also been climbing, and the 2010 census of population and housing ranked North-Western as the lowest in education attainment. Addressing these challenges is critical, particularly through comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services that can help teenagers understand the risks they face. In some communities, early marriage and traditional gender roles play a key role in teenage pregnancies.

1.2 General Objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate the challenges among school going children in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district, Zambia.

1.3 Specific Objectives

1. To establish how residents of Kazomba compound in Solwezi district view teen pregnancies.
2. To determine the causes of teen pregnancies among school going girls in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district.
3. To explore how social and cultural environment makes school children in Kazomba compound vulnerable to teen pregnancies.
4. To assess the impact of teen pregnancies among school children in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district.
5. To ascertain possible ways on how teen pregnancies among school children in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district can be mitigated

1.4 Research Questions

- 1 How do residents of Kazomba compound in Solwezi district view teen pregnancies?
- 2 What are the major causes of teen pregnancies among school going girls in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district?
- 3 How do social and cultural environments make school going girls in Kazomba compound vulnerable to teen pregnancies?
- 4 What is the impact of teen pregnancies among school going girls in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district?
- 5 How can teen pregnancies among school children in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district be mitigated?

2.0 Literature Review

Globally, the challenge of mitigating teenage pregnancy persists. To facilitate the completion of their education by young females, the incorporation of sexuality education into the curriculum has been substantiated by a needs assessment conducted by numerous researchers (UNICEF, 2018). These researchers contend that the provision of sexuality education for adolescents is imperative, given their active engagement in sexual activities and susceptibility to various sexual risks. Furthermore, educational institutions are perceived as optimal environments for delivering sexuality education, owing to the availability of human and material resources.

2.1 Regional Views on Teen Pregnancy

The highest prevalence of adolescent pregnancy within educational institutions globally is recorded at 143 instances per 1000 females aged 15-18 years in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. In general, women across the African continent enter into matrimony at significantly younger ages compared to their counterparts in other regions, resulting in an earlier onset of pregnancies. In the context of Nigeria, data derived from the Health and Demographic Survey conducted

in 1992 indicates that 42% of women aged 20-24 entered into marriage prior to reaching the age of 15, and 87% were married before the age of 18; furthermore, 53% of respondents reported having given birth before the age of 18.

2.2 SADC Views on Teen Pregnancy

In various Southern African Development Community (SADC) nations such as Malawi and South Africa, provisions exist that permit all pregnant female students to persist with their educational pursuits following childbirth, provided they remain in good health. Conversely, Angola and Mozambique currently lack formalized policies addressing this matter, although both administrations advocate for the continuation of educational endeavors among schoolgirls post-delivery. In Zimbabwe, however, a policy of expulsion is enforced for pregnant schoolgirls (UNFPA, 2013). The focus of family planning clinics in Zimbabwe predominantly targets married couples, consequently neglecting the needs and concerns of the youth demographic. Research conducted by Gallan and Maticka (2018) indicates that numerous school-based initiatives have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing knowledge, fostering tolerance, and imparting skills related to the mitigation of risk behaviors within Tanzanian educational institutions.

2.3 Local Literature on Teen Pregnancy

Zambia faces a significant challenge with teenage pregnancies, which is reflective of broader regional trends. The country's fertility rate stands at 6.2%, and teenage pregnancies have been on the rise in recent years. By 2020, the Ministry of Education reported over 1,500 teenage pregnancies among school-aged children in Zambia (MOESTVTEE, 2020). Specifically, in Solwezi district, there were 146 teenage pregnancies recorded in basic schools between 2018 and the first term of 2020, and 40 cases in four upper primary schools from 2018 to 2019 (MOESTVEE, 2020). These statistics highlight the urgent need for effective interventions to address teenage pregnancies. Integrating comprehensive sexuality education into school curricula is crucial, as many affected individuals are of school age.

2.4 Solwezi District Literature Review Analysis

Solwezi District is the provincial Capital of the North western province. It is a border town and the central commercial centre of the province. Solwezi district alone has a population of 239,051 (Census 2010) which accounts for 33.8% of the total provincial population. The district has three constituencies namely Solwezi Central, Solwezi. East and Solwezi West. Solwezi Central has the largest population in the district. There are 126,182 people in the constituency with only 59,908 people above the 18 years. This means that 66,274 are below 18 years and account for more than 50% of the local population. The main industry driving the economic activity is mining. The industry has attracted various supporting businesses in finance, manufacturing, services, agriculture and general trade. In the past few years, the district has had an increasing population. This increase is a twofold scenario covering rural urban migration and urban to urban migration. Mostly people come to look for employment in the mines and other supporting companies while others basically come for business opportunities.

2.5 Research Gap

Despite of all the effort the government is putting in place of providing free education, re-entry policy in schools, the

relatively high dropout rates in both primary and secondary schools in Solwezi district are still prevalent and alarming. At selected schools in Solwezi district teen pregnancies have always been increasing from year to year for girls. It from this reason that, the research will find out the factors leading to teen pregnancies at Kimakolwe Secondary School, Kawama Primary school and Tumvwanania Secondary school and the solutions to be provided. If solutions to this problem are not provided, the education levels for women will be negatively affected. Therefore, this has brought the concern of finding out the factors leading to teen pregnancies at the named schools of Solwezi district. In Zambia and North-western in particular in Solwezi district pregnancy cases among school children are on an increase. Evidence can be got from statistics at the police, hospitals and school administration.

3.0 Research Methodology

This chapter describes the procedure that was followed in conducting the study. It showed how the qualitative and quantitative research was used. The target population, sample size and sampling procedures for the study were discussed. Research instruments for the study will be explained in detail. Data collection procedures and data analysis for the study is also outlined like Descriptive study design, research design, population of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, sources of the data collection, methods of data collection primary data, secondary data, data collection techniques, focused group discussion, interview guide, pre-test, data analysis, tools for data collection analysis, tools for data analysis, limitations of the study and ethical consideration. This study used the mixed research because the research study was involved description and variables. This means that qualitative research relies on a research strategy that flexible and interactive. These include interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive designs were used in the study. The descriptive design was suitable to this study because it aims at collecting information from respondents on their attitudes and opinions in relation to the Role of Sexuality Education in Mitigating Teenage Pregnancy. The researcher used primary data which were obtained using semi-structured interview and Focus Group Discussions. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedures. The design might be considered mixed it employs qualitative and quantitative approaches at any stage, including research question development, sampling strategies, data collection approaches, data analysis methods, or conclusions.

3.2 Population of the Study

There are about 5130 adolescents in Kazomba compound. About 60% are teen mothers while 40% are school going children? Only 100 will be selected to give their views on teen pregnancy. The target populations from which the sample will be drawn consist of Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, Heads of Departments, teachers, police officers, health practitioners, social welfare and pupils from the three schools in Solwezi district. It is from population that a sample was drawn which adequately represent the population. It is a set of all cases of interest of the researcher.

3.3 Tools for Data Collection

Seven data collectors (all of them will be college completed individuals working in different institutions) and two supervisors will be recruited for data collection and supervision respectively. Training on the methods, objectives, and other technical aspects of the study were provided to the data collectors and supervisors. Pre-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews were used to collect the data which was designed to address the research objectives. The questionnaire was prepared in English and then translated into the local language (Ki Kaonde), and then back translated into English language for its consistency. For the effective data collection the researcher measured the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to hundred (100) people.

3.4 Tools for Data Analysis

The research consists of qualitative and quantitative. For quantitative, data was collected through questionnaires, coded and then analyzed using statistical package in social sciences (SPSS). SPSS is used in the quantitative data analysis because it helps to obtain frequencies and percentages in an accurate, precise, easier and fast way. Method for verification and analysis of quantitative data has included frequency tables and across tabulation. This was done in order to understand patterns and relationships between variables. While qualitative data were collected through note taking in focus group discussion and open-ended question of the questionnaires was analyzed manually using content and thematic analysis. This technique involved compressing and categorizing many words into fewer content categories which are based on explicit rules of coding.

3.5 Summary

The study provides viable understanding of the challenges, causes, and impact, social and cultural of teenage pregnancies in Kazomba compound. Despite the many efforts by government, international and local organization to eliminate teen pregnancies, have continued being recorded in the schools of Kazomba compound of Solwezi district has not been spared from this scourge. The area continues to record the teen pregnancies compared to the surrounding compound and villages in Solwezi. Therefore, this study establishes the factors contributing to the high levels of teen pregnancies among school children in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district, Zambia. The situation of high levels of teen pregnancies in Kazomba compound has become problematic. There is therefore urgent need to address the problem. Workable strategies need to be arrived at; otherwise efforts that have gone in public awareness campaigns to sensitize girls on sexual reproductive health will be in vein.

4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 To Investigate the Challenges of Teen Pregnancies Among School Going Children in Kazomba Compound of Solwezi District

The service providers or implementers mentioned were the government, the NGOs, the government, and the private sector. The kind of services offered was raising awareness programs, counseling sessions and sexual reproductive health. The challenges faced in accessing the services in the compound were that of distance, financial challenge, illiteracy and fear.

The percentages from the data collected have shown that teenage pregnancies are viewed as a serious threat to among girls in various homes and the society at large. With this view in perspective, it is therefore critical to conclude that with a good political will the scourge of teen pregnancies can easily be fought. In order to make these services effective and always available, there is need to introduce as many programmers as possible. Alcohol and drug abuse have largely contributed to high levels of teen pregnancies especially in Zambia. When people get intoxicated with alcohol and drugs, they tend to display uncalled for violent behavior towards teens, family members and other people. This study has established that there is excessive abuse of alcohol and drugs in Kazomba compound; hence the high levels teenage pregnancies. School going children in this compound are also at high risk of becoming pregnant because research has indicated that children who grow up in unsafe environment tend to have pregnancies at their tender age. Further, teen's pregnancy may lead to physiological challenges, since the girls is not matured enough to bear.

4.2 Recommendations

- The study found out that cases of teen pregnancies are still high because of various reasons as indicated above. Therefore, in order to reduce the challenges of teen pregnancies there is need to consider the following recommendations seriously.
- The government should enact the school re-entry policy or programs to encourage teen mothers to continue their education with flexible school schedules and child care support. To keep girls in school, provide them with technical and skills training, support them in adoption health lifestyle and a successful transition to motherhood and to their children reach their full potential.
- There is a growing concern some of the counseling services provided in the compounds are insufficient and ineffective. With this view in perspective, there if therefore need to ensure that these counseling services are improved.
- To address these cultural and social factors, we need to create a supportive environment which empowers school going children to make informed decisions about their health, relationships and the future.
- Learners who are not pregnant in school should avoid discriminating against those that are pregnant. Teachers should teach learners who are not pregnant never to tease/bully and arouse the temper to those who are pregnant so that both learners should maintain harmonious relationships between themselves. This will alleviate the problem of low self-esteem and inferiority complex among pregnant teenagers in the classroom situation and the school premises.

Conclusion

The conclusion was based on the research findings on the challenges of teenage pregnancies among school going children in Kazomba compound. To eliminate this scourge in the world and especially in Kazomba compound of Solwezi district cannot be overemphasized. The low awareness levels and ignorance of the programs that addresses the teenage pregnancies among children and people in society has continued to be a major setback in this quest. Thus, the thrust of this research came from the need to better understand the phenomenon of the challenges of teen pregnancies in the compounds by delving deep into the problem and attempt to

establish the underlying factors. The study was able to identify some key variables that had a strong link to the teen pregnancies under Investigation which included; awareness, causes, impact, social and cultural factors. It also revealed that the inefficient procedures for dealing with teenage pregnancies is hampering on to reduce teen pregnancies; hence many respondents suggested that reforms be made for an effective approach to the problem.

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