

Original Paper

Investigating Teenage Pregnancy in Sierra Leone.

Case Study: Portee Community in the East End of Freetown

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Abstract

This study attempts to answer the question related to the causes and effect related to pregnancy on the educational and holistic development of our school going teenage girls and as well as out of school going teenage girls. Firstly, this study endeavors to identify prescription of the respondent on the causes of teenage pregnancy. It also looks at the different perceptions about teenage pregnancy and the way it should be combated. The respondents also agree that parents don't talk about the consequences of planned or unplanned indulgence of sex. Secondly, this study attempted to find out the causes of teenage pregnancy and its effects on holistic development of our country as perceived by the respondents in terms of community factor. The finding shows that the respondents agreed to all indicators stated in the questionnaire. A self-made questionnaire was employed to gather data of the study, average weighted mean was used to find out the extent of teenage pregnancy among school going teenage girls as well as out of school going teenage girls. T-test was used to test the significant difference of the extent of the educational development when respondent was grouped according age, educational attainment, type of school attended and the socio-economic status of the family. Step-wise regression analysis was used to analyze which among the causes of teenage pregnancy greatly affect the respondent educational development.

Keywords

teenage pregnancy, teenage girls, educational attainment

1. Introduction

Presently there is no doubt to say that teenage pregnancy is on the increase, causes leading to that are varied to name but few that would be dealt with as the researcher continue with his work. Poverty, lack of education and so on.

1.1 Background to the Study

According to the multiple indicator clusters survey (MICS) it was reported that 36% of girls aged between 15-19 years are married or in Union. That is one in every three teenage girls. Given that these girls are considered married and adults, it is not surprising that they become pregnant. Child bearing is End of their duty it is this 36% more than half (58%) are married to men ten years or more their age. However, even the girls who are not married are falling pregnant.

In recent research done by UNICEF a lot of girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy. This is indeed destructive for the future of our young women and that of the Country. A teenager is a person or child moving from childhood into adulthood with the age range differing by cultural tendencies. Teenage pregnancy has caused a major hindrance or impediment of rural community education particularly so with the girl children. It has hampered the development of the nation's human resources potential base; therefore, it is a cause for concern does identify and find solution to it.

This menace is caused by boys of school going and non-school going for instance "okada rider", fishermen, teachers, drivers, adult in the Community family members and every sector of the community. Lack of parental care, poverty, peer pressure and materialism had greatly contributed to the high rate of teenage pregnancy.

It is God's utmost desire for young people or teenagers to grow up into adulthood in His instruction-principles and practices to take responsibility of carrying and controlling his creation. He (God) has translated such desire and will into religious mandate for parent to show true, faithful and committed stewardship over their children being gift by God himself.

The divine mandate, as seen in religious books (Holy Quran and Holy Bible) urges parents to love disciplines, teach and train children from childhood to teenage by way of preparing them appropriately for adulthood, responsibilities. Such preparation takes into consideration the provision of required need such as physical, social, emotional and spiritual, adequate advice or counseling comfort love control so that our teenagers could be directed and guarded into the right path throughout their life.

This is description of how life should be, which should help parents to discern and develop the individuality and special strengths as natural indignation that God has given our teenagers. Therefore, with the concentrating on teenagers, parent and other elders, will better develop the individual capabilities of our children, influence them for decision making to remain on the right path through out their time.

Many Parents in contemporary times are still influenced by the religious emphasis of their responsibilities as stewards and custodians, so much that they are in this discipline of God. But a good number of teenagers are seeking their own ways and tend to neglect and reject parental counseling in such a way that rejection are made in a bid to endeavor to meet their sociological, psychological and economic needs.

A good number of young girls both of school going and non-school going ages in the portee community are displaying such tendencies of disobedience to their parents when advised or counseled,

as opposed to hastily meeting their desires and needs. As a result, they are seen pregnant at early stages of their teenage lives at the detriment of their success in academic, moral and spiritual development undertaken vocational skill activities like gara-tie dyeing, soap making, tailoring etc. and some few lucky ones are gainfully employed as teachers due to their high level of education. It is however glaring that the peculiarities of this community have contributed to making a good number of our parents unable to meet with their children's holistic needs.

As a result, these teenage girls are indulged in random sexual intercourse with people such as fishermen, 'okada riders' teachers, drivers and other community members that could afford the price.

They have enjoyed this act and forsaken the aspect of guiding against pregnancy. This social vice that has neglected the academic potential of our teenage girls, has been on an increase for the two consecutive years (2010-2012) within the Portee community in the eastern End of the city. Such negative signal is a cause for concern for the research work. The causes and effects of such social menace on our teenage girls in the Portee community are the focal aspect that this research intends to investigate and examine.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The causes of teenage pregnancy could be attributed to many reasons that range from sociological to psychological. The urge of fanciful materials against paying attention to their counseling and teaching fancies has so much attracted our young girls that their alternative for satisfying such emotions remains fixed on prostitution or sexual actions in order to meet up with social trends and fashions. This brought about waywardness, while social delinquencies are seen as means of improving and maintaining their social and financial or economic status in society. These dilemmas which generate the problem in contemporary societies has to do much with peer groups, persuasion of influences on teenage girls in misleading them to street life and drop outs. The problem is noticeable in pointing out to how much education or sensitization can restrain the negative effects of teenage pregnancy on our younger girls. To motivate and encourage others to be committed in pursuing education, as obvious in some area in the capital city.

1.3 Justification of the Study

It is unreservedly factual that teenage pregnancy is one of the major setbacks to young girl's education, as it impedes students with academic potential. It is equally disadvantageous to gender equality in terms of opportunities for education in the community. Therefore, the desire or Intention to investigate the causes and impact such menace that stagnated and destroy the academic, social a spiritual potential of our teenagers to act as usual and viable community members.

This study will provide information for parents, teachers, elders and leaders, as well as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, for guidance in fighting against this menace.

It will help parent with the appropriate mechanism that can be adopted to equip them with strategies of controlling and caring for their children needs. The study will add to the scarce literature on the causes

of early pregnancy and the impact on the holistic development of school going girls, especially within the age range of 15-18 years the study will help progress in the strives made by meaningful Sierra Leoneans and parents in the portee community towards individual attempts to minimize the problems.

1.4 Limitation of the Study

The study of teenage pregnancy problems is quite expensive, even beyond the scope of this research. The research is therefore limited to the particular psychosocial problem evident in the Portee community and how it is relatively impacting on the lives of our teenage girls in that area. It also specifically deals with school going teenage girls of 14-18 years the problems are discussed only in as far as they affect the teenager's physically, socially, emotionally, economically and spiritually.

However, research of this nature is subject to so many restrictions, inadequacies and challenges or constrains. Therefore, constrains encountered by the researcher in the courses of this study can be seen as finance.

Looking at the nature of the research entailing library and field or empirical investigations, so many funds are demanded to meet with the requirement of the researcher. The researcher thus experienced financial constrains in a bid enhance the compilation of the information collected.

The research spent so much time in dispensing the research instruments such as interview schedule, questionnaires etc. and assembling the appropriate information entailed moving from one street to another within the portee community such was done to facilitate the compilation and collection of accurate and most vital information correlation of the research work which cost so much. Due to the fact that most people in the community feel shy to speak to the researcher and some because of their busy schedule like fishing activity they found it difficult to save time and talk to researcher.

Therefore, the researcher went through so many constrains in order to get or acquire the right information.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

The previous discussion gave an introductory or introspective view of teenage pregnancy, its causes and effects on the holistic development of our school going girls, as well as out of school girls in the east End of the city, Portee Community to be specific. Over the years teenage pregnancy has being on the increase. In this generation having sex is considered "OK" but consequence come from those actions. The impact of teenage pregnancy on our girls tends to be quite sociological, psychological, economical and spiritual. This section reviews related literature as it focused on correlated concepts of teenage pregnancy in the bid to build up a comprehensive study. Different relations opinions and beliefs of various writers have been accessed to justify the impact of teenage pregnancy, its causes; problems associated with the issues discussed in the study.

The issues of teenage pregnancy are becoming more alarming as its incidence in the trend of teenage pregnancy in their community. Opinion and community leaders have realized and tried to find solution

to the problem especially with regards to child bearing tendency and its substantial economic consequences couples with the tendency of high proliferation in the area or community has become more worrying and alarming.

In addition the general upward trend of maternal mortality in Sierra Leone in a steady flow is at the detriment of our youths (especially school going girls) and is based on the involvement in risk taking ventures, such risk taking venture that definitely result to frequent deaths that have been proved to be primarily caused by teenage pregnancy.

It is therefore the intension of this review to interact with related variables in order to ascertain the impact of teenage pregnancy alongside its causes and problems or assess its effects on the education, poverty, socio-economic and psychological status of the girl child. Child growth and holistic development in relation to their participation towards community development and the factors contributing to the upwards trend in the number of pregnancies at a given period of time and within a particular location.

The interacting variable includes:

- i. The concept of teenage pregnancy.
- ii. Contributing factors to teenage pregnancy related issues.
- iii. Religion perspective on teenage pregnancy
- iv. Traditional Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy
- v. Family Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy

2.2 The Concept of Teenage Pregnancy

The concept of teenage pregnancy in the Sierra Leone contest has attracts a lot of attention and contribution or participation towards its eradication due to its negative consequences on our school going girls in rural and Urban Communities.

A modern psychologist C.H Benson in his book understanding children and youth (29 1967 p.69) defined teenage as a person or child moving from childhood into adulthood with the age range differing by cultural tendencies. He then described a teenage adolescence for modern psychology to discover youth and set it end as a life that has neither the characteristic of childhood not the maturity of adulthood “this description gives a vivid picture of a period to be transitional that physically puts the teenagers into a frame work of building into adulthood”.

Critically the term teenager is synonymous to ‘adolescence’ which gives an understanding of a period of childhood or a phase in life between ages thirteen and nineteen (13-19). This concept, according to professor Dresser, it is actually difficult to clarify especially when it pertains a period that constitute childhood. The difficult is particularly so as it contradicts the typical traditional interpretation of the term when the childhood stage is place between five and twelve (5-12). The traditional person however thinks that ages 12, 14 and 15 are stages of maturity of girls that makes them ready for marriage especially after secret initiation.

This description gives an encouragement and motivation for teenage pregnancy, which according to her, as expressed in her book 'Let have more teenage pregnancy' (2007, p. 4) teenage pregnancy is not the problem, but unwanted teenage pregnancy is the problem, with its child bearing outside marriage that cause all the trouble. Fredenca (2007) agreed that the dangers we associate with teenage pregnancy on one hand are behavioural, not biological drug use. STDs prior abortion extreme youth and lack of parental care. A woman's fertility has already began to decline at age 25 simple with a reason of the population control crowd which promotes and destroyed child bearing she concludes that early child bearing rewards a woman's health with added protection against breast cancer.

In contrast view on the necessity of teenage pregnancy a staunch Liberal sociologist, Hogan D.P (1986) disagrees as he states the young people absolutely must not have children. The younger generation must not produce a younger generation.

2.3 Teenage Pregnancy Related Issues

Frederica Miller, states that sex is the sugar coating on the drive to reproduce and drive overwhelming. It is supported to be its survival engine race. Fighting means fighting a basic bodily instinct akin to fight thirst.

The above assertion gives a strong support of having sex, irrespective of the partners' state or period of development. The most important connotation is that because sex plays a pivotal function in reproduction.

It must be carried out to meet its desired objectives, she also affirms with the justification of having sex for the course of pregnancies which leads to the survival of human race.

By the age of 18, a young woman's body is well prepared for child bearing; young men are equally qualified to do their End. Both may have better success at the enterprise than they would be in later years as some health risks caesarean section and down syndrome for example increase with passing years. Teenage pregnancy is simply term, can mean a girl between ages 13-19 carrying a baby inside her.

Hogan's (1985) disagreement lings on his conviction that bears two concerns, firstly the financial ability of young people especially Africans and Sierra Leonean in particular cannot suffice the smooth and convenient care taking of children. Secondly, he believes that young people are simply incapable of adult responsibility. His expectative is that young people will have poor control of their impulses be self-centered and emotional and be incapable of visualizing consequences and also with an assumption of teenage irresponsibility being noted in our estimation of the nature of adolescence, which involves our very ideal of the purpose of childhood. However, the sociological and psychological advancement made by researcher provide a foundation of care of fact to make this study quite cohesive.

Therefore, the researcher confers with candid assertions as justifications for the need to minimize if not eradicate teenage pregnancy as evident in the study area. However, it is without doubt, that the Sierra Leonean situation of teenage pregnancy trend is at an extreme alarming rate that the figures accounted for the eastern End of the city deserves special attention and concentration, death of our young school

going girls have occurred as a result of the prominence in teenage pregnancies. Some years ago, a notable magazine, The Independent Observer revealed that Sierra Leone has one of the highest mortality rates in the world. A confirmation of the above statement was made by Dr. Sokana, a health reproduction specialist working with United Nation Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in Sierra Leone as he comments material mortality cases reported involve girls with teenage pregnancies, some of whom while hiding out their pregnancies, decided to register with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA's) who feed them with concocted herbs as a substitute of the required clinical services from gynecologists.

This is a clear indication of the high level of risk bearing attached to teenage pregnancy. Generally speaking more women die from labour, profuse bleeding and a good number of complications of pregnancy and infections after delivery.

AUNICEF report also stated that:

A Sierra Leonean woman has a one out of six chances of dying in child birth. A prominent reason for such assertion is due to young mother narrow pelvises, which can lead to obstructed labour.

Female genital excision, which is almost universal in the Country, is another complication factor according to M.S.F it has been clearly evident that the use of traditional medicine seems very hazardous in that, one mixture in particular can estimate contractions and also cause reputed disease. Dr. Francis Smart from the reproductive Health Division of the Ministry of Health in collaboration with Sahr More Junior and Damy Glen wright noted that high blood pressure, common in teenage pregnancy causes girls to go into convulsion, comma after giving birth and such babies die and the risk of losing even the mother is great. Some of our teenage girls are being accidentally impregnated by their male student.

Teenage pregnancy is therefore of utmost concern, Dr. Smart further commented that early marriage is high and school dropout also causes teenage pregnancy and more so a large percentage of teenage girls entering marriage in their teenage. He also unfold a statistic that (27%) of girls are married before they are 15 years old while majority (62%) are married before their eighteen birthday, such girls are expected to become pregnant so long as they are married.

He opined that accompanying health complication are most worrying issues around teenage pregnancy. Teenage mothers are more likely to have difficulty in labour, often leading to a permanent change in the anus and bladder called fistula or they develop high blood pressure known as eclampsia, which can kill them. A report submitted by a non-governmental organization save the children states that annually thirteen million (13,000,000) children are born to women under the age of twenty (20) years.

About ninety percent (90%) of this figure could be found in developing countries like Sierra Leone. The highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the world could be found in sub-Sahara Africa where women often marry at an early age.

In the Portee Community for instance eighty seven percent (87%) of women surveyed were married and fifty three percent (53%) of this proportion had given birth to children before the age of eighteen (18) years.

But girls out of ignorance and unscientific approach to life still continue to be pregnant in their teens without the slightest hesitation. Making situation very difficult for them in addition, a Gender and Human Right activists, shown attest that early marriage is not only risky for teenage girls but it's also a human right violation once perpetrated them by poverty, traditional practices and discrimination teenagers involved in early marriages are mostly seen in risk taking especially in terms of complications experienced during pregnancy. The young girls to see themselves as potential sex workers capable of assuming motherly roles.

Pregnancy on the other hand point to a period of having an off-spring developing in the uterus of a woman or young girl, being perpetrated by sexual intercourse. Herold Brook Millennium (200) defined pregnancy as the period when the female carries a developing baby with her body. He confirms that the female of almost all special of mammal goes through pregnancy before given birth and in human being it last for nine months. His research proves that pregnancy begins when an egg (female cell) and a sperm male (cell) unite in a woman body the union is called conception.

Man Love J. (1998) in his research on adolescence pregnancy and child bearing risk affirms that the increase in teenage pregnancy and birth rates among Africans remain high based on biological deception in the development of adolescents' sexual organs and urges. Coupled with their behaviours as seen in having sex early no use of contraceptive, living disadvantaged and neighborhood or with single parents, have older sexually active or pregnant sibling or were sexually abused.

In some societies like the Portee Community, illiteracy and poverty are important factor in the rate of teenage pregnancy; due to this they often see early marriage and teenage pregnancy as a blessing because it is a proof of the young girl fertility and also a source of income or financial support for the family.

Furthermore, teenagers lack knowledge of and access to conventional methods of preventing pregnancy (use of contraceptive) as they may be too embarrassed or frightened to seek such information from parent or elders. It is strongly supported that peer influence also plays an important role in the right rate of teenage pregnancy.

Over half of unintended pregnancies were from women not using contraceptives. In other cases contraceptive are used but prove to be inadequate. In experience adolescent may use condoms incorrectly or forget to take oral contraceptive (tablets) correctly. Also because of the conciseness of the facilities of young girls, they always try to attract the opposite sex either from their body structure or from melting looks and the young boys muscular development ready.

2.4 Religion Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy

Many studies suggest that the link between teenage pregnancy and religion indicate that religious teenagers are having sex more often than non-religious teenagers. However, that may not be the case. It

could simply be that religious teenagers are not using protection as much as non-religious teenagers that are having sex. The other explanation is that the number of teenagers having sex might be close to the same in every state, but the number of teenagers terminating the pregnancy before giving birth might be higher in non-religious states. Many religions frown on purposeful termination of pregnancy-abortion. This might lead to more teenagers carrying the baby to full term and delivering the baby instead of terminating it early on in the pregnancy.

Many religious states might also focus more on abstinence-on instead of the realities of teenage sex, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Because of this attitude toward abstinence and against contraception use, these religious cultures could be leading more teenagers toward unsafe sexual practices indicating the link between teenage pregnancy and religion.

In fact, teenage pregnancy statistics do show higher numbers of abortion rates in less-religious states. Other factors to consider with this link between teenage pregnancy and religion include other aspects of the teenager's background, race, culture and socioeconomic background—all factors that can play a role in whether or not a teen is having sex, having safe sex or practicing abstinence. These practices are the link to the rates of teenage pregnancy. With about three out of every 10 teenage getting pregnant each year, the numbers of teenage pregnancies are still high in the past decade.

Some researchers attribute the cause-and-effect idea to the link between teenage pregnancy rates in general or among those religious teenagers. Some teenagers will promise themselves to remain a virgin until marriage. However, in the heat of the moment decide to go ahead and have sex with their boyfriend or girlfriend. Because they are unprepared to have sex, but go for it anyway, they are taking that chance that their sexual intercourse could result in a teen pregnancy.

There might also be a link between religious teens that tend to get married at a younger age, around 17-20 compared with non-religious teenagers. These teenagers who are married might have planned pregnancies, but fall into the category for a teenage pregnancy because of their age. Regardless of the reason, there is a clear link between teenage pregnancy and religion.

To prevent teenage pregnancy, it is important for teenagers and their parents to be realistic about the possibility of teenagers having sex. Knowing how to practice safe sex is one of the best ways to prevent teenagers from continuing to get pregnant. Teenagers need to consider learning about the resources available to practice safe sex with contraception even if they are worried about the religious implications. Practicing safe sex, or finding ways to stay abstinent from teenage sexual intercourse can help the teenage pregnancy rate to decline.

2.5 Traditional Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy

The researcher aimed to explore indigenous methods used to prevent teenage pregnancy from the perspective of traditional healers and traditional leaders. Furthermore, it aimed to explore with traditional healers and traditional leaders whether these methods have relevance today as form part of teenage pregnancy intervention. The findings of the study revealed that traditional healers and traditional leaders are concerned by high rate of teenage pregnancy within the community. They felt

strongly that ignoring indigenous cultural practices due to modernity has led to major non-resolvable social issues such as teenage pregnancy, spread of HIV/AIDS related diseases, poverty, drugs and alcohol misuse. The research findings also revealed that there is a high demand for re-instituting elders' and family roles in addressing the erosion of cultural practices and traditional methods. Traditional practices such as virginity testing (BONDO), non-penetrative thigh sex, physical maturity examination as well as traditional ceremonies were identified as indigenous methods previously used to groom girls and to prevent teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, traditional healers and traditional leader were totally against contemporary teenage pregnancy interventions and policies around this issue, and have mixed views towards the idea of combining modern and traditional methods for teenage pregnancy prevention. Based on the findings of the research, recommendations were made regard to collaboration between Sierra Leone government and indigenous experts so that to deal effectively with teenage pregnancy.

2.6 Family Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy

The research presented here sought to identify the effects of teenage pregnancy and childbearing on the teenager's family of origin by examining changes across time in mothers' parenting within families in which there was either a pregnant teenager or a parenting teenager. The mothers of pregnant and parenting teenage would monitor their children less, be more accepting of early no marital parenting, have lower expectations for their other children, and communicate more about sex and contraception with their other children. This research also assessed other aspects of mothers' attitudes, such as their perceived importance of childbearing, the problems associated with early parenting, and the best ages to reach certain life course transitions. Differences in these mother characteristics across time in families in which the daughter was originally pregnant would reveal how mothers changed as a result of their daughter's giving birth. Differences in these mother characteristics across time in families in which the daughter was originally parenting would reveal how mothers changed across their daughter's first year postpartum.

This research also contrasted the mothers of never-pregnant teenagers with the mothers of pregnant teenagers and the mothers of parenting teenagers. Mothers' monitoring of their children, their attitudes about sex and childbearing, and their communication with their children were compared. Differences in these characteristics among mothers could reveal the within-family risk factors that preceded the older daughter's pregnancy. That is, low parental monitoring, low expectations, permissive attitudes about sex, and poor mother-teenagers communication all have been shown to relate to teenage sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. Thus, in the research presented here, the mothers of pregnant and parenting teenagers are expected to do less monitoring and to have lower expectations, more permissive sexual attitudes, and poorer communication with their children than the mothers of never-pregnant teenagers.

This research also sought to determine how mothers' time spent caring for their new grandchildren impacts their ability to supervise their own children. It was expected that as the number of hours that mothers spent caring for their grandchildren increased, mothers' monitoring of their own children would decrease. Finally, the mothers of parenting teenagers answered questions about how their older

daughter's childbearing had affected their daughter's life. Mothers' responses to these items were analyzed across time to determine whether a mother's perceptions of the effects of her daughter's childbearing changed across the daughter's first year postpartum.

Over a decade Sierra Leone has seen an increase rise on teenage pregnancy once again. There have been many solutions out there in the open that can help reduce teenage pregnancy but some have failed to do so. This literature review will answer the following questions:

- 1) What is causing the increase rise on teenage pregnancy?
- 2) What can schools do to help decrease teenage pregnancy?
- 3) How effective is comprehensive sex education?

Throughout this literature review, both points of views of this issue will show the reasons teenage pregnancy is on the rise again and what we can do to try to decrease the number of teenage pregnancies there are in Sierra Leone today.

2.7 What Is Causing the Increase on Teenage Pregnancy?

The increase rise on teenage pregnancy have left many wondering what is happening today in our country (Sierra Leone) especially the eastern part of the capital, portee to be specific, but what they need to search for is what is causing the increase rise on teenage pregnancy to become a serious problem. According to Dr. Alvarez (2010), "our society has created a cultural that makes having sex OK, and creating an environment where promiscuity is accepted." Many have believed that today's social media and the internet is highly exposed to everyone and can be one the reasons on the rise of teen pregnancy, such as Alvarez has concluded. Others might disagree otherwise such as Alexander Wright; a psychologist who was interviewed by the British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C) to see what he thought about the cause of rise of teenage pregnancy was due to the social media and the internet. Wright disagrees on the idea that social media and the internet have to do with the cause of teenage pregnancy. He explained as followed: Today's generation is different from the past generations, teens are going to have sex no matter what, the internet or social media has no effect to cause teen pregnancy, parents just need to be able to know how to communicate better to their teenagers to have safe sex and consequences that may come from their actions. (Alexander Wright, interviewed, 2010)

Although, can this really be the reason why or could it be the lack of education given to teenagers about sex? Research by Cynthia Bowers (2010), concluded that the main cause can be that no one is paying attention to girls who are living in poverty, whose birth rate has never declined since the past decade but increased over 60%, and the fact that schools lack sex education. However, it can be interpreted that many factors such as poverty, the media, internet, or even peer pressure can be leading factors on teenage pregnancy. For the past decade, the Government can also be the blame for not seeing the increase rise on teen pregnancy coming mostly from those who live in poverty.

2.8 What Can Schools Do to Help Decrease Teen Pregnancies?

Schools can contribute to reducing teenage pregnancies by offer sex education at Senior Secondary schools. Schools have the choice on whether to provide access to contraceptives and provide sex

education to students in Senior Secondary schools. Although, studies have shown that if schools included education on sex and pregnancy prevention as part of the health education curriculum it can indeed delay sexual activity among teenagers and increase safe sex (Parnes, 2010). Teenagers just need self-motivation to avoid sex or practice safe sex. Informing teenagers by offering sex education and information on contraceptives can provide a broader perspective for each individual. Although, religion or moral reasons cause many people to strongly oppose making sex education available in Senior Secondary Schools (Kirby, 2000). However, if the Government provided Senior Secondary Schools with sex education classes can it influence teenagers to avoid sex and decrease pregnancies?

2.9 How Effective Is Comprehensive Sex Education?

Comprehensive sex education can for the most part be considered to people as having no effect on teens to avoid sex, but others can see it has a way to decrease teen pregnancies in America. According to Advocates for Youth (2009), comprehensive sex education programs helped youth “delay onset of sexual activity, reduce the frequency of sexual activity, reduce number of sexual partners, and increase condom and contraceptive use.” Organizations such as Advocates for Youth encourage others to spread the message that comprehensive sex education programs are effective. Schools may consider taking a more approach to comprehensive sex education programs for Senior Secondary school, but it also depends on each community schools come from. Researchers who also studied the impact of sex education on teenagers said that they found that teenagers that take comprehensive sex education reduced having unproductive sex by 60 % (Advocates for Youth, 2009). However, many disagree with the idea of comprehensive sex education being effective.

Many have said that sex education will send confusing messages to teenagers and lack common sense. According to Christine Kim (2010), comprehensive sex education programs have had no effect on teenagers’ sexual behavior and these programs caused no reduction on teen pregnancies or the increase of contraceptives. If comprehensive sex education failed to do reduce teenage sex, then the effect of teenage pregnancy would see no results or maybe an increase on teenage pregnancies in the Country. Although without proper information about sex to teenagers, the Government might see no effect also on teenage pregnancies. With different perspectives on comprehensive sex education, it will depend on the Government or even schools if they wish to decrease the increase on teenage pregnancies through comprehensive sex education.

3. Research Methodology

This section deals with the methods and instrument used to assemble and analysis data which is reflective of the study on academic background. The study focuses on the causes of teenage pregnancy and the subsequent effect on the holistic development of our teenage girls that are currently going to school as well as non-school girls as evident in the east end of Freetown.

The Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children’s Affairs is fully aware that the dropout rate for teenage girls is higher than that of boys and also that pregnancy and subsequent drop out of the teenage

girls from school contributes to the very disparities the educational policy seeks to eliminate. Teenage pregnancy, especially when unintended, is correlated with negative effects for the child and the mother. Girls who withdraw from school due to pregnancy would have otherwise continued in school had they not become pregnant. Literature studies have investigated the degree to which pregnancy related school dropout is a major cause of gender differences in educational attainment (eloundou-enyegue & strokes, 2004).

The civil society is another potential beneficiary of the outcome of this research in their course of championing for the rights of the girl child in attaining education, while working towards narrowing down the gender disparities in the education study has also helped create an environment of clear understanding of teenage pregnancies in schools

The components of the research methodology discussed in this section are as follows: -

Research Area

- i. Research Procedure
- ii. Data Collection Methods
- iii. Data collection Analysis

3.1 Research Area

This study was undertaken in the east end of Freetown Portee Community to be specific. This Community was selected because of the predominance of the menace discussed than any other area in the east end of the city. The community is very prominent and consists of life supporting agencies and academic Institutions like the Portee tailoring Institute, Portee Youth Development centre, Secondary and Primary School such as Sierra Leone Muslim Union Secondary School, Pentecost Secondary School and so many Primary Schools. Health Centre etc.

3.2 Research Population and Sample

The study target (150) teenagers in the research area and out of this number eighty (80) are girls, twenty (20) are boys (12) school going and (8) non-school going selection of both boys and girls in the target group spread from the senior primary level to the end of Junior secondary school and senior secondary school level.

During the investigation a means of accessing independent information was expedited. Fifty (50) elderly and well experienced people that included parent civil servants, fishermen and others from various other works of life were targeted in the study. The sum total population size for this research work is therefore one hundred and fifty (150) the selection was not done on random basis but systematically done to represent every End of the community as specifically targeted.

It was done using the purposive sampling techniques.

3.3 Research Procedure

The sampling procedure was done through random sampling techniques.

Questionnaires were administered randomly by moving from street to street. The greater proportion of the population in the community constitutes women and children interviews of illiterate members were conducted in the targeted study area.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The nature of the study being a sensitive social problem required enough information gathering and coalition. The two main methods were library research and field or empirical research methods.

The library research methods were adapted to survey through written material and make inputs into the literature review of this research work. The fields or empirical research method was also used to ascertain the reality of the research problem. This method was adopted for this study as much information was contracted from respondents in their respective areas. Much effort was made to bring out the main causes and effects of teenage pregnancy with adequate complementary information by developing certain research instruments designed to reflect the actual feeling of respondents on the increase rate of teenage pregnancy in their community. Such instrument includes:

- 1) Questionnaires
- 2) Interviews with predetermined participants
- 3) Participants' observation.

3.5 Data Collection Analysis

The data collection on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy in the Portee community is presented and analyzed in simple calculations statistical tables and graphs. The analysis involved data on the major causes of the menace as evident in the study area and on the other hand the effect of such menace on the holistic development of our Teenagers living within the respective streets of the community, reflecting the responses of the sample people interviewed. The scores table charts and details are converted to percentages.

In all the major areas forty (40) respondents from each sector or facets of the sample population were investigated. The analysis further shows parents, stakeholders as well as teenage girls and boys' responses on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy as evident in their community. It clearly shows the status of teenager's parent, the factors that are causing problem, what is directly affecting the teenagers, parents and community members.

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Summary of Findings

This research was generated out of the desire of the researcher to point out one of the major hindrances or impediment of eastern community education particularly so with the girl child the researcher assumed before now that the religious decline in spiritual life of the children, teenagers and adults in the area coupled with the drastic increase in the standard of living of the people and educational

requirements were factors seriously militating against the general educational system or tread in the study area. But it was discovered that teenage pregnancy has played a great role in stagnating the teenage girl education as well tarnish other problems which affect girls in the community/area. In addition the researcher discovered from the findings of the study that teenage pregnancy in portee community has the absolute capacity to destroy or slowdown of our human development index that is already at an all-time low give between ages 12-19 years have a high tendency of debarring their own progress and destroying their future on the basis of teenage pregnancy. Several factors have actually been proved to be responsible for the increasing role of teenage pregnancy in our communities and the problem must be addressed in order to profitably manage the crisis. Most teenagers experience many of the same obstetric issues as women in their 20s and 30s. There are additional medical concerns for younger Mothers, particularly those living in the East End of the City for Mothers between 15-19 years, and at least two of every 10 between 11-15 years in the area. Figure is even worse for non-School going girls in the same community.

Some other parents in the Portee Community allowed their teenage girls to involve in sexual activity with adult male workers for survival.

Teenage girls are more likely to get pregnant if they have limited or no guidance from their parents. Many parents have busy lives that prevent them from providing the guidance and support that their young teenagers need to make good decisions on issues such as sex, according to the website parent Dish when a teenage does not feel that she can talk to her parents about sex either because they forbid sex talk or because they are not around, she will more likely turn to friends for direction on whether or not have sex, resulting in misinformation and possible teenage pregnancy may occur.

According to the chief, he expressed his fear as to what the future holds girls in Portee and the east end as a whole. He admonished human and child right Organizations to double their efforts in the Eastern end of Freetown. However, information about teenage boys shows that only two out of fifteen may have become teenage Fathers between 15-19 years of age, the problem actually lies with the girls. According to the family support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone Police in the Community Police Post, their hands are tied up by the community people as whenever they want to send a case to the Kissy Police for further investigation and action, they will decline their involvement they believe in settlement or settling such issues as traditional demands "Family". There is little or no form of parental supervision as all the parent, cares about is their fishing and petty trading. Most of this automatically leads to the issues of peer pressure. Parent within the wrap area encourage their teenage girls to have relationship with fishermen or boys in order to assist them in their fish activities and help them in terms of finances for their survival.

4.2 Conclusion

From the data obtained from the research with the aid of the instruments used, the researcher is fully capacitated with facts to arrive at the following conclusion.

- ❖ Teenage pregnancy is actually a social problem or menace in the Eastern End of Freetown and that the pregnancy rate is high due to uncontrolled sex.
- ❖ That illiteracy, peer influence, materialism, poverty in appropriate parental care and control are the most outstanding cause of teenage pregnancy among girls in the area.
- ❖ Programs of reproductive health arrived at teenagers are often in a small scale and not centrally coordinated, non-governmental organization likes SNAP and ACF provide contraceptive advice for young girls nationwide and laws against child marriage have reduced but has not eliminated teenage pregnancy or the practice of early marriage.
- ❖ That the financial support given by government to educate and health care programs in relation to reproductive programs and welfare programs to create awareness on the issue of teenage pregnancy, have been misdirected or invested on other Country programs.
- ❖ That the socio-economic life style of the community youths are not controlled or adequately monitored to ensure pregnancy risk reduction among teenagers, should the status remain the same our human development index in the whole Country will be low in addition, our future generation will constitute more of an endangered species who will not be ready to care for attaining old age.
- ❖ That parents, government, non- governmental organizations, teachers, medical practitioners are all contributors to the problems just as the children (girls) themselves.
- ❖ That along with unwed Mothers even teenage Fathers posed a risk to the social and economic progress of society.
- ❖ Some elders in the Community believe that improved Female literacy and educational prospects will lead to a significant reduction in teenage pregnancy; others believe that increase in female literacy will lead to an increase in the age of at first birth. It was also observed that one fourth of adolescent mothers in the Eastern end of Freetown will have a second child within 24 months of the first.

4.3 Recommendations

Looking at the problems associated with teenage pregnancy and in order to minimize the rate and impact of such menace on our teenagers and to enhance the admission and retention of more girls in schools and increase the number of literate women in Portee thereby empowering girls and women in the east End to positively contribute in the socio-economic development of their community and the country as a whole, the following recommendation are advanced or suggested by the researcher.

- i. That considerable number of skilled medical practitioners be trained and encourage to stay and work for their Country, extra incentives should be directed to medical researcher efforts and the findings and recommendation implemented.

- ii. Joined up action, making sure branches of government and health education services work effectively.
- iii. Prevention of teenage pregnancy through better sex education and improving contraceptive and advice service for young people in service design.
- iv. That government adopts and seriously implements the teenage pregnancy strategy which is very good in coordinating the attempt to tackle both the cause and consequences of teenage pregnancy.
- v. Teenage Parents should use family and community support, social services and child care support to continue their education and get higher paying as they progress with their education.
- vi. The reproductive health issues are taught in schools as suggested by Matron Marion Davies. In addition, she suggested the legalization of abortion so that teenage Mother who can endeavour to terminate their pregnancies will not again do it in secrecy, so as to reduce the risk of dying.
- vii. That traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) whom teenage Mothers confide in should be scientifically trained and encouraged to quickly take teenage pregnancy cases to appropriate health centres and hospital especially when they discover that the case is critical.
- viii. Government should organize series of sensitization programmes example outreach, radio programs specially design for men and boys on their role in minimizing teenage pregnancy.
- ix. Government should enact laws and policies that will eradicate teenage pregnancy and see that are implemented to the latter.
- x. Improve conditions of living for the eastern people.
- xi. Girls who maintain their virginity till after the senior secondary school should be given rewards and awarded scholarship for further education.
- xii. Early initiation of young girls into the Bondo society should be discouraged.
- xiii. Legal action should be taken against parent for child abuse.
- xiv. Those men who are found wanting in pregnating school going children be brought to justice.
- xv. The media should encourage open dialogue and the health care system should guarantee confidentiality and non-judgments approach.
- xvi. Most teenagers actually rate their parent high on the list people they trust to give accurate information about birth control and sex. As parents you can help your teenagers in informing about birth risk of teenage pregnancy by speaking with him/her how you feel.
- xvii. Parent can do a lot to prevent teenage pregnancy simply by knowing whom your teenagers is hanging out with get to know your teen's friends and arrange to meet their parents this way you can establish common expectation make such your home is an open environment that other teenagers feel comfortable in.
- xviii. Show your teenagers that is more to life make sure that you encourage your teen's and let him or her see that there are other things that they can do before starting a family. Encourage your teens to get a good education and pay attention to his/her progress in school can go a long way towards preventing teenage pregnancy.

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