

Original Article

TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD: CAUSES, IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS OF ADULT EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS.

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Abstract This study investigated teenage motherhood, the causes, implications and the possible intervention by adult educators and social workers. It particularly examined the factors responsible for teenage motherhood, including illiteracy, poverty, child abuse, peer pressure, lack of parental care and government factors, particularly in rural communities of Ekiti State. The study also examined the implications for teenage motherhood on the teenagers, the child and the society at large. The study examined the interventions of adult educators and social workers in Ekiti State. Findings from the study revealed that adult educators will assist victims of teenage pregnancies educationally and socially and make them fit back to the society. It also revealed that social workers will create awareness for teenagers against unplanned pregnancy and provide helping tips for those who have fallen victims. The study recommended that government and parents should provide enabling environments for teenagers, particularly the girl child in schools. Also, social workers should provide

Keyword: Teenagers, pregnancy, motherhood, adult education and social workers

Introduction

Attaining a marriageable status is the responsibilities of mature women, who are emotionally, psychologically and economically stable. However, the observed situation today shows that teenage girls generally are sexually active and enters motherhood early. It is so rampant that girls between thirteen to nineteen years now get pregnant at an alarming rate (Alabi & Oni, 2017), that is, girls who have not reached adulthood becoming pregnant (Wikipedia 2016). In Nigeria, teenage pregnancy occurs in both rural and urban areas, but are more prevalent in rural areas, particularly in the northern part of the country than in the southern part (Alabi & Oni, 2017). On the effect, most

pregnant teenagers are usually rejected by their lovers who impregnated them leaving them with the option of either aborting the pregnancy or becoming single mothers at an early age, thereby subjecting them to stigmatization (Ashimolowo, Ojebiyi and Arala, 2013). However, Ekiti State is not exceptional, the rate at which teenage girls are entering motherhood in rural communities of Ekiti State is particularly becoming worrisome. Illiteracy and low level of education appears to be the major factor responsible for teenage pregnancy. Observation shows that the girls who are non-literate and have illiterate mothers are mostly found becoming pregnant.

Relatedly, poverty is also seen to be responsible for teenage pregnancy in rural communities. This is

because, poverty hinders some parents from providing the care, guidance and support needed by their teenagers, which may cause such teenagers to ask for help somewhere else and become pregnant as a result of poverty. Accepting gifts also makes some men deliberately take advantage of the poor teenagers and lured them into having sex (Alabi & Oni (2017). Teenage pregnancy can also be caused by lack of parental care, resulting from breakdown in communication between the parents the child (Alabi & Oni, 2017) particularly on issues relating to sex. When a teenage girl is not free to talk to her parents about sex, she will be more convenient to turn to friends for direction on whether or not to have sex, which may result to misinformation on pregnancy. Peer influence also results to friends influencing others on the decision to have sex even when they do not fully understand the consequences associated with the act (Alabi & Oni, 2017). Attesting to this, Elekeh, Enwereji & Odina (2021) decried that peer pressure and financial problems have been the main causes of teenage pregnancy, which at the end may always push them out of school and resulting to early marriages or death. WHO (2022) also reported that child abuse is another factor responsible for teenage pregnancy. For instance, a girl who comes from a poor background and was subjected to selling on the street have a greater chance of being raped. This according to the report has increased the rate of unintended pregnancy, estimating it to about 120 million girls under the age of 20 years who have experienced forced sexual contact in one way or the other. In the same vein social media happened to be another major cause of teenage pregnancies. It was confirmed that exposures to sexual content on television, sexuality in the media, pornographic and sex chat rooms by teenagers, could likely tune them to engage in sexual activities Oladeji & Ayangunna (2017).

However, observations have shown that teenage motherhood has a lot of consequences on the teen girls, their families and the society at large. This may include, such teens leaving the school early, poverty, socio-economic challenges, diseases, health complications and death. Tinuola, (2014) posits that teenage pregnancy resulted to high rate of school dropouts, teen motherhood, poverty,

insecurity, diseases, even deaths as a result of complications during abortion. WHO (2022) also reported that a large number of teenage girls who are supposed to be in school are pregnant and are often exposed to risk of child bearing and abortion, and in the process, some died or lose their babies because they are not always mature enough to handle pregnancy and the stress involved. This is to say that, teenage girls who bear children early often forsook educational pursuit, and their unplanned children are also regarded as major sources of children in orphanage homes. (Langham, 2015). Unplanned marriages also result to forcing such girls on men who are not good husbands or good fathers and as a result live as single mothers. On health implication, teenage pregnancy is also regarded as a life-threatening on the reproductive health of the teenager and economic constrains the families and the nation. Elekeh, Enwereji & Odina (2021) confirmed that about 11% of all births delivered by adolescent worldwide ends in serious complications especially for those between the ages of 13–19 years.

However, adult education through have been seen to play significant roles in rescuing the vulnerable in the society in every area of development, educationally, economically and socially. Adult education has been adjudged to offers people who no longer have the opportunity of attending school on a regular and full-time basis to undertake sequential and organized educational activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in their attitudes, knowledge and understanding for the purpose of identifying and solving personal and identified community problems (Liveright and Hygood (2001). It is also seen to see to the well-being of individuals and the society at large Adedokun (2019). The programmes of adult education are encompassing and covers the educational needs of individuals including; basic literacy, remedial education, extension education, lifelong skills, functional literacy, liberal education, extension education etc. These have provided opportunities for participants to continue their education in the formal and informal setting, equipping them with new knowledge, skills and competences that can help them to overcome unemployment poverty and dependency. The

objectives of adult education according to Omolewa (2006) includes;

Providing for those who for a variety of reasons have been kept out of the education system.

Helping the individuals and institutions with opportunity for re-growth.

Helping learners to tackle any problems they might be facing.

Offering people, the second chance and focusing on lifelong learning.

Providing an alternative access to further training and life-long learning.

Assisting people to understand their environments, knowing the economic and enterprises they can engage in.

Enabling individuals develop a sense of responsibility and make personal adjustments.

Enriching the non-literates, helping them to contribute to political and socio-economic development.

Helping the school drop outs to see themselves as still “being able” thereby becoming productive in the society.

Adult education therefore, have the potentials to intervene in the conditions the teenage girls might be facing as a result of unplanned pregnancies and single parenting. The programmes of adult education can also empower the teenage girls with skills in different skills including, metal work, soap making, weaving and so on (Alade 2013). Remedial Education in particular is germane in reshaping the lives of the vulnerable in the society. It will give opportunities to those who have dropped out of school to continue their education to the level of achievement made by their peers.

Moreover, social workers involvements and interaction with people and their social environment on issues affecting the individuals, groups and communities cannot be over-emphasised. They function mainly for the purpose of helping people accomplish life tasks, alleviating their distress and realising their aspiration and values. Social worker enhances problem-solving and coping capacities for people in distress, linking people with system that can provide them with resources, services and opportunities. They are out to help the helpless, vulnerable, safe families trapped in the vicious circle of poverty and protect the aged from abuse.

They are also responsible for helping individual, families and groups of people to cope with problems they are facing in order to improve their lives, Fanning (2018). They also help to manage challenging situation and complex risks for individuals and society, taking decisions with and on behalf of people within a complicated legal framework, balancing and protecting the rights of different parties Afolabi (2021).

The areas of intervention of social workers for victims of teens motherhood includes, collaborating with the stakeholders, the government, parents, educational institutions and social organisations to let them understand the factors causing teenage pregnancy and how they can prevent the prevalent teens motherhood. The understanding of these factors and its consequences are necessary to effectively mitigate the consequences of adolescent pregnancy (Skobi & Makofane (2017). According to the study, understanding these factors will help them to address the challenges, instead of the victims facing the reality of being pregnant, only after they have been rejected by parents, boyfriends, friends and peers, leaving them depressed, isolated and contemplating suicide. Thus, the intervention of social workers will assist teenage girls to overcome the challenges they face for the consequences of their actions. Another area of intervention of social workers is in monitoring and connecting pregnant teenagers together with others who are in a similar condition, sensitising them on the way out and reassuring them that they are not alone in their situation. These efforts have offer mutual aid to those grappling with feelings of sadness, contemplating suicide, frustration and lowness (Skobi & Makofane (2017). Social workers also act as mentoring agents to assist in providing social support from relevant stakeholders. They lobby the philanthropic and individuals to achieve their intervention strategies Afolabi (2021). They also create awareness and sensitisation through social media, television, newspaper, radio and bill boards for teenagers on how to prevent unplanned pregnancy. Social workers also encourage teenagers on the need to pursue their educational career or occupational goals that will make them take position of responsibilities in the society.

Methodology

The high rates of teens motherhood and the problems associated with it in Nigeria, particularly in Ekiti State rural communities has been a concern which needed urgent attention. The consequences include, illiteracy, poverty, diseases, health complications, death and so on. The study finds out longtime effects of teens motherhood in Ekiti State and Nigeria in general. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprises of all teenagers in Ekiti State secondary school's rural communities. The sample for the study consisted 100 teenage girls and teachers selected through purposive sampling procedure. A self-developed questionnaire titled Table 1: Showing the factors responsible for teens motherhood in Ekiti State

to what extent can these factors affect teenage mothers, the family and the society? Thus, the need for possible intervention of adult educators and social workers to rescue the situation and help the teenage vulnerable from the immediate and

“Teen’s motherhood: causes, implications and possible intervention” was used to generate data. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and mean scores.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the factors responsible for teens motherhood in Ekiti State?

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
1	Illiteracy	42%	44%	10%	4%	100%
2	Lack of parental care	38%	52%	6%	4%	100%
3	Peer Pressure	34%	60%	4%	2%	100%
4	Child Abuse	39%	46%	7%	8%	100%
5	Poverty	41%	49%	7%	3%	100%
6	Environmental factors	61%	28%	6%	5%	100%
7	Government factor	59%	37%	4%	0%	100%

The above table shows that 86% agreed that illiteracy is one of the factors responsible for teens motherhood in Ekiti State, while 14% disagreed, 90% agreed that lack of parental care is another factor responsible for teens pregnancy, while 10% disagreed. 94% also agreed that peer pressure is also responsible for teenage pregnancy, while 6% disagreed. 85% of the respondents agreed that child abuse is responsible for teenage pregnancy, 15% disagreed. 90% agreed that poverty is responsible for teenage pregnancy, while 10% disagreed. Also,

89% of the respondents agreed that environmental factor is responsible for teenage pregnancy, while 11% disagreed. Lastly, 96% agreed that government factor is a factor responsible for teens motherhood, while 4% disagreed.

Research Question 2: What are the implications of teens motherhood on individuals, family and the Society?

Table 2: Implications of teens motherhood on individuals, family and the Society.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
8	Teenage pregnancy results to low level of education and early leavers.	28%	68%	4%	0%	100%
9	It resulted to stigmatization and social exclusion from the family and society.	40%	40%	16%	4%	100%

10	Teenage pregnancy leads to lack and abject poverty for the victims and her family.	68%	16%	8%	8%	100%
11	Teenage pregnancy leads to single parenting, dependency and burdened on the family and society.	20%	70%	6%	4%	100%
12	It resulted to child neglects and abuse, constituting problems for the society.	51%	32%	10%	7%	100%
13	It leads to diseases and health complications of the teenage girls and the unborn child.	35%	43%	13%	9%	100%
14	It may lead to loss of life of both the mother and child.	39%	48%	11%	2%	100%

Table 2 shows that 96% of the respondents agreed that teens motherhood resulted to low level of education and early leavers, while 4% disagree with the statement. Also 80% agreed that teenage pregnancy resulted to stigmatization and social exclusion from the family and the society, 20% disagreed, 84% agree that teenage pregnancy may resulted to lack and abject poverty, 16% disagreed. In addition, 90% agreed that teenage pregnancy resulted to single parenting, dependency and burden on the family, while 10% disagreed. 83% agreed

that teenage pregnancy may resulted to neglect and child abuse, while 17% disagreed. 78% agreed that the victim of teenage pregnancy leads to diseases and health complications, while 22% disagreed. Lastly on this table, 87% agreed that teenage pregnancy may lead to death of both the mother and child and 13% disagreed.

Research Question 3: What are the programmes of adult education for teenage mothers?

Table 3: Programmes of Adult Education for teenage mothers

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
15	Educating teenagers on personal health, sex education and health implications of teenage pregnancy.	70%	0%	30%	0%	100%
16	Functional Literacy education will empower the vulnerable teenage girls socially and economically.	48%	50%	0%	2%	100%
17	Remedial education gives opportunity for those who dropped out of formal schools to continue their education to any level.	38%	62%	0%	0%	100%
18	Vocational and lifelong skills equip the teenage vulnerable with different skills and small-scale businesses.	78%	18%	4%	0%	100%
19	Civic education provides social information and awareness for teenage girls on career developments.	46%	49%	3%	2%	100%

The result on table 3 shows that 70% of the respondents agree that adult education guide teenagers on personal health, sex education and on implications of teenage pregnancy will help curb the prevalence teenage pregnancies, while 30% disagreed. Also 98% of the respondents agree that

functional literacy empowers teenage girls socially and economically, while 2% disagree with the statement. Also, all the respondents, 100% agreed that remedial education gives opportunity for those who dropped out of formal schools to continue their education to any level. The result also shows that

100% respondents agreed that vocational and lifelong skills equip teenage vulnerable with vocational and lifelong skills in fashion design, hair dressing, tie-dye/batik, soap and beads-making, computer, small scale businesses. Lastly, 95% agreed that civic education provides adequate

information and awareness for teenage girls on career developments, while 5% disagreed.

Research Question 4: In what areas would social workers assists teenage mothers.

Table 4: Areas of social workers intervention for teenage mothers

S/ N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
20	Sensitising teenagers on personal hygiene, sex-education and on avoidance of unplanned pregnancy.	40 %	46 %	10 %	4%	100%
21	Connecting and monitoring the victims of teenage pregnancies for security and reassurance of hope.	38 %	52 %	6%	4%	100%
22	Engaging victims with social and economic activities that will help them solved their socio-economic challenges.	34 %	60 %	4%	2%	100%
23	Collaborating with governments, parents, schools and organisations for supports and acceptance of victim of teenage pregnancies.	39 %	46 %	7%	8%	100%
	Empowering the victims with necessary information that can help them play their roles and responsibilities in the society.	41 %	49 %	7%	3%	100%
25	Creating awareness on social media, radio, television, newspapers would curb teenage prevalent of teenage pregnancy in the society.	61 %	28 %	6%	5%	100%

Item one above revealed that 86% of the respondents agreed that social workers' intervention includes sensitisation of teenagers on personal hygiene, sex-education and on avoidance of unplanned pregnancy, while 4% respondents disagreed. Also, 80% agreed that social workers connect victims of teenage pregnancies for security and reassurance of future hope, and 20% disagreed. 94% agreed on engaging victims with social and economic activities to solve their socio-economic challenges while 6% disagreed. 85% also agreed that collaborating with governments, parents, schools and organisations for supports and acceptance of victim of teenage pregnancies, while 15% disagreed. 90% also agreed that empowering victims with necessary information would help them play their roles and responsibilities in the society, 10% disagreed. Lastly, 89% agreed that creating awareness on social media, radio,

television, newspapers will curb the prevalent of teenage pregnancy in the society, while 11% disagreed with the statement.

Discussion

The tables above revealed the factors responsible for teens motherhood to includes illiteracy, peer pressure, lack of parental care, child abuse, environmental factors and government factor among other. This supports Goldman (2013) who observed numerous cases of school dropout to include maternal mortality and morbidity, infertility, abortion and children being abandoned in gutters, dustbins, latrines and so on, which were the results of teenage pregnancies. However, on the consequences of teenage pregnancy as seen on table two, the victim of teenage pregnancy may end up dropping out of school, engaged in social exclusion, subjected to lack and abject poverty, single parenting and remained unmarried. On this,

Mathewos and Mekuria (2018) revealed a significant long-term social consequence for the adolescents, their children, their families and community, to includes less educational attainment and high school dropout, poor health and poverty. According to the study, the children of teenage mothers are also more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems and incarcerated at some time during adolescence. Health wise, Elekeh, Enwereji & Odina (2021) confirmed that about 11% of all births delivered by adolescents worldwide ends in serious complications especially for those between the ages of 13–19 years. WHO (2022) also opined that victims of teenage pregnancy lacked information and were not adequately educated on safe-sex either by their parents, schools or development agencies that could have enabled them deal with friends who lure them into sex prematurely. On the importance of adult education and teenage pregnancies, Adedokun (2019) establishing a link between women and empowerment, asserts that literacy education, remedial education, extension education, vocational education etc., have impacts the lives of individuals, family and the society. It stated that education makes a woman to become the first teacher to her children, empowers her family and bring positive changes to the society.

Conclusion

This study investigated teens motherhood, it examined the causes and the implications on individuals, the family and the society at large. Findings revealed that illiteracy, government factors, peer-pressure, poverty, lack of parental care, child abuse and environmental factors were factors responsible for the teenage girls entering into motherhood early. The study therefore, presented the programmes of adult education including; lifelong learning, vocational skills acquisition, remedial education, environmental education, functional literacy education, civic education, health and extension services and social intervention services as intervention programmes capable of rescuing teenage mothers and curbing the menace in Ekiti state and Nigeria as a whole.

Recommendations

The study recommended that government and stakeholders should make the school environments protective enough to shield teenage girls from unwanted pregnancy. Parents should always be available for their children, there should be flow of communication between them and they should pay attention to them on matters that relates to girls and sexual matters. Teaching of sex education should be made compulsory in all schools early enough in schools to avoid falling into the deceits of peer influence. Lastly, adult education centers should be established in all rural communities to train those who cannot complete formal education in order to acquire skills in various field to make them employable and become socially and economically stable. Since majority of the teenage girls dropped out of schools, social workers should educate teenagers through seminars on the importance of continuing their education, discussing sex education and the dangers of unplanned pregnancy with female students.

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