

Psychological implication of teenage pregnancy

[Family](#), [Teenage Pregnancy](#)



TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS
IN GEORGE Treatise submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Magister Educationis in the Faculty of Education at the Nelson
Mandela Metropolitan University. BY GRACE SIBONGILE SETHOSA DATE OF
SUBMISSION: DECEMBER 2007 SUPERVISOR: Dr. J. McFarlane ABSTRACT This
study investigates the causes, consequences and possible solutions of
teenage pregnancy. It indicates that socio-economic factors play an
important role in the occurrence of teenage pregnancies. In addition the
study suggests that a range of factors, including, cultural norms and
individual needs, impact on the childbearing decisions of teenage females.
The study demonstrates that the most important negative consequences of
teenage pregnancy include dropping out of school, unemployment, single
parenthood and higher levels of poverty. An important finding of the study is
that policies and programmes aimed at reducing teen pregnancy rates, and
eliminating the negative consequences experienced by teen mothers and
their children, are unlikely to be fully effective unless they realistically
address socio-economic imbalances faced by many young women in South
Africa. ii DEDICATION I dedicate this study to my younger son Matthews who
needed my attention as it was his first year at University. I am proud of you
as a young man who has found his own way in life and I treasure you so
much, for all the patience you have shown towards me while I was going
through the difficult times of my life and in my studies. As from your high
school education I was involved with my studies, yet you never complained
instead you prospered in your own way and became who you are today. iii
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viii APPENDICES A — Letter to Western Cape Education Department. 59 B — Letters to the two school principals C — Notices of meetings to the parents D — Letters to learners E — Addendum A (Parents Questionnaire) F - Addendum B (Educators Questionnaire) G — Addendum C (Learners Questionnaire) 60 61 62 63 64 65 ix 1 CHAPTER ONE ORIENTATION

1. 1 RATIONALE Education in our schools has been changing drastically recently. It has become difficult to discipline learners because of the laws

and regulations accompanied by learner's rights from the Department and the South African Schools Act (1996). The issue of learners' rights has caused huge disciplinary problems and high failure rates in these two schools. Learners are not aware that rights always go with responsibilities. Pregnant learners are allowed to stay in school. In the olden days, pregnant girls were so ashamed and ran away from school even before they were called for a hearing. Kaiser (2000: 18) explains that teenage pregnancy is an international phenomenon with girls falling pregnant at an early age of 14. Statistic SA (2006: 5) indicates that " In South Africa teenage pregnancies have been on the increase". Mostly teenage pregnancies have negative effects, where teenage girls drop out from school prematurely and also minimise their chances of acquiring a good career to improve their lives in the future. In some cases teenage pregnancy leads to huge family conflicts. Boulton & Cunningham (1991: 36) explain how " the family suffers from embarrassment and disappointment and the effects of these experiences can manifest in outrage on the part of the parents towards the pregnant teenager resulting in non-communication with her and ultimately rejection. "

In a comparison between the United States of America and South Africa, the USA, as stated in the Family First Aid Help for Trouble Teens (2006: 1) " is the country with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy". Teen Sex and Pregnancy (2006: 3) also agrees that " in the USA each year almost 19 % of all women that become pregnant are teenagers. In South Africa a study conducted by Kaiser (2000: 18), revealed that 14% from a sample of 2000 teenagers have been pregnant or have made someone pregnant. Pick and Cooper (1997: 1), in their study on Urbanisation and Women's Health in

South Africa conducted in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, also found that " 53% of 659 female participants had been pregnant as teenagers". The magnitude of this phenomenon in South Africa is further reflected in the statistics emanating from a national survey undertaken by the Department of Social Development (2002: 39), which revealed that " more that 17 000 babies born in the period between 1999 and 2000 had teenage mothers". According to the latest reproductive health statistics in South Africa, Statistic SA (2006: 5) reveals that " the teenage pregnancy rate is still increasing". This report correlates with the findings by two other newspaper reporters, Nofemele (2005: 1) and Matyu (2005: 3) who highlight an alarmingly increased rate of teenage pregnancy at schools. 2 The extent of the phenomenon stimulates thoughts regarding the causes and effects of the high incidence of teenage pregnancy. These days educators are expected to deliver babies at school, without any training to do so. The schools are not allowed to expel a pregnant learner from school. Although I agree that expelling a pregnant girl is an unfair procedure, because the boys usually remain and continue with their studies and, possibly making more girls pregnant. My concern is the number of these learners who are becoming pregnant every year. Some came to secondary school already being young naive mothers who have babies to take care of. The second concern is that there is an issue of HIV AIDS, which is killing young people in numbers. 1. 1. 1 Socio-economic Although the school is doing its best to address the issue of teenage pregnancy, it has been clear that parents are not at all discussing the issue with their teenage girls at home. The reason might be the cultural values and norms, or socioeconomic problems, which in the end exacerbate the

problem. To make sure that safe sex and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies should be a responsibility that goes with sexual activity, I decided to embark on this study. Studies done world wide have revealed teenage pregnancies had a vast impact on the teenage girl, her family and the society at large. Early childbearing imposes a huge responsibility on a teenage girl which results in the dropping of performance at school and even dropping out of school. 1. 1. 2

Background The reality is, a big percentage of grade 8 learners who are under 14 years of age are already heads of households and are also having babies of their own. Some of them are involved with older men so as to get financial support from them and most end up infected by the HIV virus. What is more frustrating is that these learners can no longer suffer in silence, they are beginning to come forward to ask for help and answers that we as educators mostly don't have. This is the reason I have decided on this research. Strom (1986: 128) says " People who respond with simplistic answers to the pain of others undoubtedly mean well. The problem is that those nice-sounding phrases are much more comforting and encouraging to those who are saying them than they are to the people who are hurting".

This made me realize that what these learners in crisis need is help — real, concrete, specific, down — to —earth help. . 3 1. 2 PERSONAL CONTEXT As an educator teaching learners from a disadvantaged background, it has become clear to me that the school is losing valuable and very gifted learners through pregnancy. These learners are promising students and could become good citizens who would contribute to the upgrading of the standard of living in our community. Since 2005 I took it upon myself to

identify and write down the names and numbers of pregnant learners and do a follow-up as to what happens subsequently. Most of them ended up dropping out at school, whereas others' academic performances dropped drastically. This contributes to the school's high failure rate. Therefore, I decided to bring the whole matter to the attention of the School Management Team, to be dealt with as a management issue. 1. 3

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT As a Grade Head and Life Orientation H. O. D., it became a serious concern to me that girls are still becoming pregnant in increasing numbers; even after all the interventions the school has introduced, such as HIV/Aids education and the introduction of LOVE LIFE counsellors during Life Orientation periods. The school management went as far as asking all educators to spend five minutes of their tuition time just to speak about sex education in classes. Just last year (2007) about 7 girls in grade 11 class was pregnant. Two of them did not come back to complete matric this year. Three girls gave birth during end of the year school holidays and three gave birth in January this year. It seems as if all efforts were in vain. That is why I decided to take it upon myself to do research about this important issue. 1. 4 SCHOOL CONTEXT Looking at both schools holistically, there are a huge number of very young learners compared to the past. Learners complete their grade 12 year at the age of 17 years. These learners are easily influenced by others in many ways. The whole issue of teenage pregnancy is affecting the pass-rate of these schools drastically. As Hill & O'Brien (1999: 14) say " helping is not an easy task for anyone especially when helping a minor". As educators we are expected to play more than one role in education in the process of helping learners to reach their adulthood.

One has to bear in mind the new laws of our Education System and be careful not to overstep one's mark or to be on the wrong side of the law. 4 1.

5 DEMOGRAPHICS The schools that the study focused on are situated in a rural township part of the Western Cape, where poverty plays a significant role in the community. Both schools have been identified by the Department of Education as non-school fees schools; a number of parents are unemployed and mostly uneducated and those that are working are mostly low — income earners. The community consists of coloureds and blacks, who are really not sure of their own identity because of the integration of different cultures. This is mostly clear when learners are struggling to read and write their own mother tongue, which is IsiXhosa. In considering this research I thought of the words of Struwig & Stead (2001: 12) that state " Human behaviour does not occur in a vacuum". Therefore it is necessary to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the environment or social context of the research participants. Sometimes the behaviour of individuals is inextricably related to the environment in which they are situated. 1. 6 PURPOSE When a teenager becomes pregnant, an additional economic burden is placed on the family, particularly in the lower income class. There are high risks of being infected by the HIV/ Aids virus which is dominating in the impoverished Southern Cape community. In view of the aforementioned problems, the study is an attempt to make a meaningful contribution to address the problem of teenage pregnancy. 5 JUSTIFICATION

1. 7. 1 Introduction It is clear that teenage pregnancies have wider implications on those involved, including their performance at school. In some cases learners become suicidal when they discover that they are

pregnant and infected with HIV Aids. Some situations are too embarrassing to discuss with anyone. It's unpleasant for me also to hear the details of an incestuous relationship, horrifying rape or an adulterous affair. The other problem when eliciting the truth from the affected learners is the issue of being biased. I understand that sometimes the picture portrayed may not be accurate or portraying the real happenings or events. These learners will only tell their side of the story as they see it; so it's for me to deduce reality. Being a woman, there is an inclination to take the female's side of the story. Hill & O'Brien (1999: 16) argue that "educators are working in a society that is depressed, full of problems and are teaching 'sick children' — mentally, physically and spiritually. In trying to help these learners, educators need to explore their feelings, gain insights and make positive changes in their personal lives". They suggest that communication is the best medium of helping, whether verbal or nonverbal such as attending, questioning, expressing, reflecting, interpreting, disclosing and guidance". I believe educators need to develop a trust relationship with these learners in order for them to easily share their experiences. As educators are the people who make learning possible, their own beliefs and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and in their classrooms is of crucial importance. Educators can make or break these troubled learners. . It is because of these considerations that I have decided to base my study on the problem of teenage pregnancies.

1. 8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As all other researchers have done, the first phase of the research process deals with selecting a researchable topic by looking for a researchable problem or question. Creswell, cited by the following authors De Vos, Delport, Fouché— and

Strydom (2005: 178) warns " the term problem may be a misnomer, and that individuals unfamiliar with writing about research may struggle with this. " He suggests that " it might be clear if we call it the need for the study or consider the source of the problem, which in my case is a concern about the number of learners becoming pregnant and disappearing at school. Like any other researcher, I had to decide on the research methods that will answer my questions as suggested by McMillan en Schumacher (1993: 373). I did this by comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to finding out which method will be more applicable to my study. 6 Since it is clear that a number of learners are reported pregnant at school, I decided not to generalize on the issue or to make any assumptions about the nature of the problem, but rather to focus on the specific implications of these girls' pregnancies. This study focuses on the problems facing the School Management Team (SMT) at school with regard to these pregnant learners in particular by asking the following question: WHAT CAN THE SMT OF THE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RELATED TO TEENAGE PREGNANCY? This question will be broken up into the following sub-questions: What are the contributing causes of teenage pregnancies in township schools? What are the problems girls who fall pregnant have to deal with? What can the SMT do in addition to sex-education, to address both the causes and the consequences? 1. 9 DEMARCATION OF STUDY The reason for choosing two township schools is the fact that I am an educator in one of the schools and I am familiar with the other. Accordingly, I have access to people in both these schools, and to the various groups of respondents. Permission to conduct this research at the relevant schools has been

obtained from the Education Department of Western Cape and the principals of both schools. All participants had been informed prior to conducting the study with regard to the objectives of the study and that their participation was voluntary. No names appeared on the questionnaires, thus safeguarding anonymity. All information obtained was regarded as strictly confidential and only utilized for the purpose of the study. Respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time.

1. 10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. 10. 1 Introduction

Mc Kenna (1997: 62) says " concept definition is done for the purpose of uncovering meaning", while Chinn and Kramer (1995: 92) believe that " appropriate theoretical structuring is essential, where a researcher bears in mind the knowledge of defining attributes". Walker & Avant (1995: 36) explain that " concept analysis tends to examine the defining elements of a given concept and exclude the irrelevant attributes". They go on to say " it's useful in refining ambiguous concepts in a theory and clarifying overused vague concepts, creating meaning about a phenomenon so as to provide valid precise operational definitions".

7 When a concept is perfectly analyzed it ensures a sound understanding of its use in practice.

1. 10. 2 Terminology

1. 10. 2. 1 Helper — is an educator who gives help and helpee — is a learner who needs help.

1. 10. 2. 2 (SMT) stands for School Management Team.

1. 10. 2. 3 Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) — The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1990) defines STD's as " Any disease (such as syphilis, gonorrhoea, AIDS, or a genital form of herpes simplex) that is usually or often transmitted from person to person by direct sexual contact".

1. 10. 2. 4 Teenager — A teenager according to Collins English Dictionary (1998: 557) is a person aged from 13 to 19 years of age and from this research point of view teenager is a

school going person between the ages of 13 and 19. 1. 10. 2. 5 Pregnancy - According to Sinclair (2000: 12) pregnancy is diagnosed according to presumptive, probable and positive signs. This is when a female takes a pregnancy test and the results are positive, which means she is pregnant. 1. 10. 2. 6 Teenage pregnancies as a management issue in township schools in GeorgeSchool managers are struggling to find the causes of teenage pregnancy and the problem is escalating and causing anxiety and lots of drop outs and high failure rates in schools. 1. 11 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS The study is divided into four chapters as follows. Chapter 1 This chapter provides an explanation of the reason behind the research and why it's important for the researcher to do this research. The role of the researcher in the study is also discussed, i. e. the background and experiences of the researcher as they may impact on the research process. This leads to the statement of the problem and the purposes or goals of the study. Chapter 2 This chapter explores the literature on teenage pregnancy beginning with the causes and progressing through a number of consequences and finally to proposed solutions. Chapter 3 This chapter focuses on the research methods used. This includes a discussion of the sampling strategies, data collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Chapter 4 This is a summary of the findings and recommendations; it also includes a discussion of the limitations of the research as well as suggestions for further research. 8 CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW 2. 1 Introduction The focus of my study is teenage pregnancy. It is divided into three sub-questions, namely the causes of teenage pregnancies, the consequences as well the possible ways to address the problem. At the end of the chapter a short paragraph will be written with

concluding remarks emanating from the literature study.

2. 1. 1 The role of literature review Mouton (2001: 87), explains the literature review as “ a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge, which helps the researcher to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that he/she is interested in”. So, in following Mouton’s idea, I would like to learn from other scholars: how they have theorized and conceptualised issues related to teenage pregnancy, what they have discovered empirically, what instrumentation they have used and to what effect. I also need to familiarise myself with the current state of knowledge regarding the research problem and to learn how others have delineated similar problems.

2. 1. 2 The issue of teenage pregnancy The issue of teenage pregnancy is often dealt with on a mere biological level. Life is more than just a biological concept; it also includes a psychological aspect. Nelson-Jones (1997: 13) explains that the “ psychological existence takes place within the biological life”. Nelson-Jones goes on to say “ A reciprocal relationship exists between the biological and psychological lives of a person, influencing one another”. So people who become psychologically disturbed are in need of help, such as interventions by the skilled teacher. The main objective would be that the person be enabled to help herself/himself in future to maintain and enhance his/her psychologically life. This implies that these people become aware of various options in life and utilise skills to make a choice in order to achieve an objective. Therefore it’s important for people dealing with teenage pregnancy to approach the problem from the psychological side as well. In March 1996 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution entitled “ World

Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2 000 and beyond". I understand they meant well, but the Programme concentrated only on protecting adolescent girls from unwanted pregnancies. There was no mention of the needs and programmes of action with respect to pregnant and parenting adolescents. To me it appears that once a teenager becomes pregnant, she is dropped from the 9 world agenda. Spear & Lock (2003: 120) agree that " for the past several decades, numerous studies have been done on the topic of adolescent pregnancy, and the majority has been quantitative in nature with relatively few studies that examine the personal perspectives and worldview of the adolescents who experience pregnancy and childbearing" Egan (1998: 24) suggests that when helping people one have to ask oneself the following 4 questions: What is the current scenario (problem, issue) to address? What is the preferred scenario (what is it that the person wants) What are the best strategies to get there (what shall be done to reach the goal) What action must be taken (how do we make this happen) Considering the above questions one can agree or disagree about the way one sees and approaches the problem of teenage pregnancy, but the success of any intervention will depend entirely on the question whether the person concerned is willing to commit himself or herself to change from an unacceptable behaviour to improve his/her life. The whole issue of teenage pregnancy will be addressed by considering the following sub-questions, causes of teenage pregnancy; consequences of teenage pregnancy and the solutions to teenage pregnancy.

2. 2 2. 2. 1 CAUSES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

Introduction Rozakis (1993: 36) explains that " there's nothing new about young girls having babies. Historically, marriage and childbearing

come early in many cultures, but what is new is our awareness of the problems that early childbearing brings". There are many factors causing teenage pregnancy. Although one specific cause may be identified, research relating to these causes points to a whole array of factors leading to teenage pregnancy, e. g. peer pressure, sexual ignorance, the media, poverty, and broken homes.

2. 2. 2 The influence of media

It is clear from different sources that the media often plays a major role in influencing teenage pregnancy. Parents can hardly consistently monitor what programmes their teenagers are watching. Rozakis (1993: 24) believes that " Television is the main source of sexual socialization in many teenagers' lives in the USA". A study cited by Rozakis (1993: 34) indicates that " in a single year there were 20 000 sexual messages on television used to sell almost anything you can imagine: cars, travel, soft drinks, toothpaste, and clothing. Television also shows six times more extramarital sex than sex between husbands and wives". During the absence of any elderly person children become bored and want to experiment with many things including exploring TV channels as source of 10 entertainment. Devenish, Funnell and Greathead (1992: 113) agree that " the media also portray sex as fun and exciting". Bezuidenhout (2004: 31) adds that" sexually arousing material, whether it is on film, in print or set to music, is freely available to the teenager and such information is often presented out of the context of the prescribed sexual norms of that society". Schultz (2004: 11), in his empirical study, suggests that " sex educators, social workers, other helping professionals, and parents should work together to counteract distortions that affect adolescents' sexual development and sexual growth, and professionals and parents need to

recognize the reality and power of the media as an influence on sexual growth". All of the above can influence teenager's behaviour and encourage them to experiment with sex which will lead to unwanted teenage pregnancies.

2. 2. 3 Home conditions Schultz (2004: 14) explains that "professionals must put pro family values up front and recognize that the family is the leading source of sexual learning and that sex education is only a supplementary source". Cronjé, cited by Bezuidenhout (1982: 29), notes that 10% of a group of 189 mothers of children born out of wed-lock came from homes that can be described as morally poor. In her research Oosthuizen, cited by Macleod (1999: 21), concludes that positive sexual values are inculcated in homes where children especially girls, receives affection, and feels appreciated and accepted. As is the case with all other nations, parents are expected to take the responsibility of raising and rearing their children very seriously, emphasising their own norms, values and standards.

2. 2. 4 The influence of divorce The structure and organization of a family is seen as contributing firstly to sexual initiation, and secondly to teenage pregnancy. The type of structure which is mostly common problematic is the single-parent, female —headed household. Van Coeverden de Groot and Greathead cited by Macleod (1999: 21), in their sample of 265 white teenagers attending teenage clinics, found that most teenagers who lived with both their parents delay their sexual encounter much longer than those who lived with single parents. Buga, Amoko, & Ncayiyana, (1996: 523) on the other hand, argue that in their representative sample of school girls, there was a difference between sexually experienced girls and sexually inexperienced girls in terms of whether they were living with both parents or

not. This study looked deeply into the issue of single parenting and teenage sexuality, and these authors did not find any similarity that proves that when teenagers are staying with their single mothers they become sexually active at an earlier age. As far as teenage pregnancy itself is concerned, Boulton and Cunningham (1992: 159) in their research on black teenage girls found, in their sample of 145 black pregnant teenagers, that 35.9% lived with their single mothers 18.6% with kinfolk, 4.1% with siblings only, 3.4% with single parent fathers. They concluded that family disorganization is associated with black teenage pregnancy. In my own belief living as a single parent with your children does not necessarily mean that the family is disorganised. According to my own experience I agree with the latter authors that there is no proven suggestion that when teenagers stay with their single parents they will be sexually active earlier than those who lived with both parents.

2.2.5 Coercive Sexual Relations Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes (1996: 186) found in their qualitative study of 24 pregnant adolescent Xhosa girls that " violence emerged as a major issue with respect to teenage pregnancy". They go on to say that most of these teenagers indicated that they were deceived, coerced or intimidated into having sex initially, and that intercourse continued to have violent features. Buga et al. (1996: 33), in their quantitative studies indicate a somewhat less pervasive occurrence of coercion. They proved that by indicating that " 28.4% of the sexually experienced respondents in the survey of rural school pupils first had sex because they were forced to by their partners. Richter (1996: 56) found a similar ratio in her survey. In both these studies the word force has various connotations, from rape to verbal persuasion.

2.2.6 Cultural Factors

In the black culture teenage girls experience different kinds of sexual abuse which is imposed on them by their different cultural values. In some of these cultures sex is a subject that is never discussed with teenagers. Teenagers encountering physiological and other changes in their bodies find it difficult to discuss such issues with their parents, so they turn to their peers for advice. This also increases the chances of teenagers experimenting with sex, the outcome of which is sometimes an unwanted pregnancy. In South Africa, Bailie (1991: 104), cited by Macleod (1999: 15), says " It appears that parents play a very small role in transferring information to their teenage children". Caldas (1993: 16) in the United States cited by Macleod (1999: 17) also agreed " that parents play no role at all in the education of their teenagers". 12 Buga et al. (1996: 71) describe " cultural factors as taking a couple of forms, firstly the breakdown of traditional values and sexual control measures is seen as contributing to sexual behaviour conducive to unmarried teenage pregnancy, secondly, the cultural value placed on fertility are believed to encourage teenage pregnancy". Richter (1996: 85), in her survey of school children, found a gendered discrepancy where girls did not regard proving their fertility as important, while 30% of the boys agreed with the statement that boys will only marry a girl if she has proved her fertility.

2. 2. 7 Peer pressure Nowadays teenagers' preferred position is to stay away from their parents, to avoid to be controlled by parents. They rather listen to their peers than to their parents. Bell cited by Bezuidenhout (1982: 30) says that " during that time norms and values taught by parents start to fade out and are replaced by liberal sexual values orientated by peers". Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992: 226) mention that " peer pressure plays a role in

teenage pregnancy". Buga et al. (1996: 528) found that " 20% of girls and 10% of boys respectively indicated that they had initiated sexual activity because of peer pressure". Wood et al. (1996: 197) say " peer pressure takes a form of exclusionary practices (e. g. sending sexually inexperienced teenagers away when having discussions concerning sexual matters)". Again Mfono cited by Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992: 246) indicates that one of the dynamics operative in sexual relations is that boys and young men are under pressure to demonstrate that they are sexually capable. Rozakis (1993: 25) believes that " many teens are pushed by their friends into doing something they are not ready for, and really don't understand that peer pressure can be a very strong and persuasive force for sexual relations during adolescence".

2. 2. 8 Problem —solving behaviour

The Population Reference Bureau (2001: 13) reveals " financial constraints as a contributory factor in teenage pregnancies that exist among most families". Quoting from the report in the Herald of 19 October 2005 which identified " the poor home conditions and unemployment of parents as contributory factors that increase the rate of teenage pregnancy", some of these teenagers become pregnant in order to access the child support grant issued by the government. In South Africa an unknown percentage of teenagers are falling pregnant to get financial support from the government so as to be financially secure. Others want to move out of their step-parent's houses, with the hope of being cared for by their 13 boyfriends. Other rebellious teenagers, as explained by Kaiser (2000: 20) " by using drugs may intentionally or unintentionally fall pregnant because she seeks release from her frustrations and anger by indulging in sexual activity". Kelley, cited by Rozakis (1993:

26), argues that " many teens say that they became pregnant because they were careless in a moment of passion, and others want to have someone to take care of and love in return also being loved unconditionally". A reporter of Harper's magazine in the Bronx, New York April 1989 said" teens coming from poor families did not see any need to postpone pregnancy because they did not feel they have any control over the events of their lives" 2. 2. 9

Lack of information about sex and negligence Nicholas, cited by Macleod (1999: 17), says " parents play a very small role in transferring information to their teenage children". They mention various possible reasons such as " reluctance to discuss sex with their teenage children, including shyness, parents not receiving sexuality education at school themselves, religious reasons or fear that this may encourage early sexual engagement". Caldas in the United States cited by Macleod (1999: 18) mentions that " parents' ignorance plays a huge role, because parents believe that sex should only be taught by educators to teenagers". Boulton and Cunningham (1992: 120) report that " two-thirds of their two samples of 100 and 145 black pregnant teenagers in South Africa respectively were ignorant concerning relationship between menstruation, coitus, fertility and conception during sexual intercourse". Buga et al (1996: 78) explains that " this lack of knowledge concerning reproductive biology has been found to be a feature among the general teenage population". Bodibe (1994: 89) indicates that " in her study of 157 black rural pupils in South Africa, the rural adolescents had greater sexual knowledge than their urban counterparts, with age as a factor". Richter (1996: 48) found in her survey that " increased pregnancy preventative practice was not associated with either exposure to formal

instruction on reproductive health matters or to a constructed measure of knowledge or reproductive health risks, but rather with exposure to a supportive information environment". This simply means that they need to be exposed to a supportive information environment. Hanson, Myers and Ginsburg cited by Macleod (1997: 18) in their study of American sophomore students, came to the same conclusion that knowledge, as measured by self-report and sexual education courses, has no effect on the chances of a teenager experiencing pregnancy. Van der Elst (1993: 105) points out that, the term sexuality education is not a stable unitary construct but is a broad rubric whose meaning changes historically and contextually. Bam (1994: 28) surveyed schools in the former Department of Education and Training in the Highveld region of the former Transvaal. He says that " of the 61 schools that responded, 34. 4% indicated that sexuality education was conducted in their schools, although content analysis of the curricula offered in these schools revealed deficiencies in many areas, for example there was no discussion of amongst others, reproductive disorders, childbirth and postpartum period, pornography, various sexual behaviours and many others were not covered". The results of the survey also show a lack of information as to what was the follow- up programmes to cover the uncovered part of work. Sapire (1986: 422) says " It is known that sexually active persons, more often than not, first indulged in sexual activity without the use of contraceptives. Similarly, a visit to the general practioner or the family planning clinic for guidance takes place only after they have been sexually active for some time and in most cases the teenager is already pregnant". Both these facts may be the results of ignorance that need to be addressed

when dealing with teenage pregnancy. An article of the Sunday Times 9 March 2007 says "teenage pregnancy continues to rise yet only one in five parents discusses sex with their children. It's time to dispel some myths and start the conversation". This confirms the issue of lack of information about sex as a contributing factor to teenage pregnancies.

2. 2. 10 Poor Socio-economic status as a contributing factor Macleod (1999: 22) indicates that "a relatively strong association has been made in the South African literature between socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy, however, there is little systematic research into this association, and that which has been done is fraudulent with problems" Examples of those studies in which the teenage pregnancy/poor socio-economic status were linked stressed the following:

2. 10. 1 Illiteracy and overcrowding Petersen (1996: 145) refers to a study of 122 pregnant teenagers presenting at the Paarl — East Day Hospital and says that "the majority lived in sub-economic housing and farm houses, characterized by crowding and lack of privacy". She concludes that poverty and low educational status play a role in unmarried teenage pregnancies. However, I found this conclusion unwarranted because no comparative sample is provided as to measure alternative situations, but she substantiates her arguments by saying that the majority of people presenting at this hospital live under poor conditions. Boulton & Cunningham (1992: 17) present four case studies of teenage mothers who come from low income homes, which indicate that "all these teenagers have histories of low socio-economic status and a high lack of illiteracy, which 15 concludes that these teenagers are perpetuators of the cycle of poverty". While this may be true for their outcome of a small sample, the implication is that it

extends to all teenage pregnancies are not necessarily valid. It appears that the association between poor socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy is far from conclusive. Researchers in the United States are still grappling with the issue, and it is recognized that there is a racial element to the debate. Hayward, Grady & Billy cited by Macleod (1999: 24) say " what is missing from the international and local literature is an analysis of the ideological effects of association, which is commonly assumed by many researchers. This position allows the poor to be blamed for their poverty and for the disaster of teenage pregnancy to be contained within the safe parameters of happening to the poor".

2. 2. 11 Poverty as a contributing factor

The pervasiveness of the teenage pregnancy/poverty association is seen in Boulton and Cunningham's work (1992: 85). They found that " in their sample of 145 black teen mothers homes the average number of rooms per dwelling was 3. 15, with the mean number of people inside being 6. 8" which forms the basis of association between teenage pregnancy and poverty. Mkhize (1995: 45) goes on to take a slightly different tact on the issue by assuming that there is an association between poverty and teenage pregnancy, by explaining some of the contributory factors that in the poorer urban areas there is a growing number of teenagers selling sex to older men, especially migrant workers living in hostels in the cities. He goes on to explain that the teenager establishes a bargaining role with the men but is in a poor bargaining position, and may thus accept risks such as falling pregnant. Kaiser (2000: 18) and the South African Survey (2002: 39) indicate " 16% of a sample of 2000 teenagers confessed to having sex for money and 20% of teenage boys from the same sample indicated that they had given

their girlfriends money in exchange for sex". The role that money or a lack thereof, plays in sexual exchanges which might result in teenager pregnancy, can be traced back many years. Gillham (1997: 13) shows the extreme categories of gross weekly household income by family type for Great Britain in 1993 as follows:

Family type	Income less than £100 per week	Income above £350 per week
Married couple	5%	56%
All lone mothers	46%	9%
Single mothers	60%	6%

16 The table mentioned above is used by Gillham (1997: 13) to indicate how poverty affects single mothers in Britain in 1993 which can be even worse in the 21st century. Hughes (1992: 112) argues that " there is often a sad connection between poverty and teenage pregnancy, where a large number of teen mothers coming from a poor background are expected to raise their children in a similar environment". The authors call this a circle of poverty. Rozakis (1992: 45) explains that " the really serious problem is that most of these teenagers born in poverty are not even developing the tools they need to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. They just don't have the drive or the role models or the motivation to break the cycle". A study conducted by the Attica Correctional Facility in Buffalo, New York, found that 90% of the prisoners/inmates had been born to teenage mothers. Whereas the authors disagree about the link between teenage pregnancy and poverty, on the basis of my experience I will tend to accept that the link does exist. (ETV) Special Assignment broadcast in June 2006 " that poverty and teenage sexuality go together" has also mentioned the same issue. They also stated that the causes of mainly sexual transmitted diseases like HIV and Aids spreading easily are the engagement of younger teenage girls in sexual

activities because of poverty, especially in the poverty stricken areas like South Cape Karoo". 2. 2. 12 Childbearing as a career choice for some young women The literature concerned with issues relating to teenage pregnancy and prevention, often begins with the assumption that most teen births are unintended or untimely. Geronimus (1997: 407) observes that " family planning advocates blur the distinction between teenagers at risk of pregnancy who avoid childbearing when given adequate information and technology, and those who would bear children even provided the same". Statistics published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1999: 236) suggest that " 22% of teen pregnancies and 44% of births to 15 to 19 year — old women were intended". The factors that affect the decisions of adolescent women to conceive are as complex as those that influence the decisions of adult women. Merrick, cited by Bissell (2000: 190), offers the definition of a career as being " selection of a role through which one implements one's identity as an adult and which represents one's life work". In the light of this definition, the decision to have a child can be seen as a deliberate career choice for some teenage women, the majority of whom are from lower socio-economic, racial and ethnic minority groups. Merrick cited by Bissell (2000: 191) carries on to quote Erickson's model which emphasizes the adolescent's need to develop a sense of identity and self through the cultivation of independence and a separation from family. She also suggests that such models are male oriented and from such a perspective, and that a woman 17 who primarily values relationships instead of individual achievement are immature personalities with dependency needs. On the other hand Testa et al. cited by Macleod (1999: 2) argue that " teenage pregnancy is not as

deleterious as it has been indicated". They argue that in South Africa early child-bearing represents a conscious choice of a stratum of disadvantaged adolescents for whom there is little advantage in delaying pregnancy; indeed it's actually functional in a variety of ways, e. g. greater access to familiar child care. Ron O'Brien, cited by Rozakis (1993: 36), explains teenage pregnancies as a roadblock to all kinds of things for young people and mostly teenagers who become pregnant are often those who can least afford a child. I totally agree with Merrick that teenagers, who do not see the need to improve their qualifications so as to enjoy better lives, instead choose to fall pregnant and depend on their boyfriends' and parents' mercy for the rest of their lives, are immature.

2. 2. 13 Socialization and stereotyping as a cause

There are socially defined behaviours that are expected by people in the society to be fulfilled by males and females. These qualities are explained by Leigh, cited by Devenish et al. (1992: 110), " as nurtured in one gender and discouraged in another, e. g. boys don't cry; ladies don't say things like that! " She goes on to say " these roles vary from society to the next". Some parents influence socialisation by buying the so called " correct" toys for children e. g. dolls for girls and cars for boys. In some instances children are reprimanded for behaviour considered appropriate or inappropriate to their gender, e. g. nice young ladies don't act like that; or cowboys don't cry. Some children even copy what their fathers are doing to their mothers such as abuse, and start practicing that at school as a joke and later on in life real adopt it as an accepted norm to treat women badly. These adolescents are effective in enforcing gender roles amongst peers. Devenish et al. (1992: 110) says it starts in communities where a girl who wishes to drive a truck is

teased and ostracised, while a boy wishing to be a male nurse is also seen as weak. All of the above lead to teenage boys demanding sexual favours from teenage girls and end up making them pregnant, and again running away from their responsibilities of looking after the child, which they see as a female responsibility. 18 2. 3 CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY 2.

3. 1 Introduction Teenage pregnancy does not only affect one individual, it involves many other people directly or indirectly. When a teenager becomes pregnant, this does not only affect the physical, emotional and social well-being of the mother-to-be, but the situation has consequences for the father of the unborn child as well, and for the families of both father and mother of the unborn child. Bartell (1999: 23) says that in the United States " Each year approximately one million teenage girls become pregnant of which 10% are between 15 and 19, and 19% of the rest are mostly sexually active". She continues to say " it impacts tremendously on the entire family system, beginning with the pregnant teen and extending to everyone in the family who becomes a part of the process of the pregnancy and its outcome".

Macleod (1999: 35) says most researchers see teenage pregnancy as having a sequel; disruption of schooling, poor child outcomes and health risks associated with early pregnancy, demographic concerns and marriage and/or other relationship difficulties. In this section the focus is on the second research question which investigates the consequences of teenage pregnancies on a wide range of people and situations. 2. 3. 2 Confusion between adulthood and being a teenager The pregnant teenager finds herself in the midst of a multifaceted crisis situation which is characterized by the emotional and physical reality of a pregnancy; the interruption of

normal psychological development; a possible change in educational and career pursuits, as well as in parental and kinship support; other effects include an increase in medical risks during pregnancy; and the premature assumption of the adult's role with its associated responsibilities. Bartell (1999: 40) says " For a teen who is struggling emotionally with the transition to adulthood, without the support of a parent, a baby represents a recreation of her own childhood, a chance to parent her child in the way she wishes she had been parented herself". Olds et al. cited by Bezuidenhout (2004: 33) say " While the teenage mother-to-be has to cope with her own development needs, she must now also learn how to cope with the tasks associated with pregnancy and the needs of her unborn baby". The real situation and experience of teenage mothers was revealed in two qualitative studies published in 1995 by the Family Policy Studies Centre written by Speak, Cameron, Woods, and Gilroy and by Burghes and Brown all cited by Gillham (1997: 62), who say that " No matter how personally happy they were with their children, the young women took no great pride or pleasure in being single parents, they had not planned to be young single mothers or, in most cases, to become pregnant so young". These young mothers say they would have preferred setting up homes in an established relationship and not having their first child until they were in their mid-twenties. 19 2. 3. 3

Decision-making Calderon and Johnson, cited by Devenish et al. (1992: 113), explain that " the most dramatic of all developmental events in adolescence, is the increase in sexual desire, highlighted by new and mysterious feelings and thoughts associated with it". They go on to say adults generally agree that teen sex is not advisable because of the devastating consequences it

can have in a teenager's life. Devenish et al. (1992: 116) say that " the whole issue of teenage pregnancy has caused parents and educators to use fear to discourage sexual activities amongst young people by highlighting only the negative consequences in the hope that curiosity and the natural desire to experiment will be stopped". Unfortunately, using fear has been shown to encourage teenagers to have sex, and on the other hand, negative messages about sex can cause adverse effects for some in adulthood, resulting in sexual problems. One important consequence of a teenage pregnancy is the fact that it immediately forces some very vital decisions on the pregnant girls. Guttmacher, cited by Bartell (1999: 181), indicates that " during the first trimester of teenage pregnancy, the teenager must deal with important issues, such as whether to seek an abortion or to carry the foetus to full term". Although backstreet abortions may be available, she runs the risk of traumatic physical injury and may even lose her life. Even the decision to have an abortion may cause further emotional trauma. Bartell (1999: 182) continues that " the teenager may have feelings of ambivalence, guilt, denial, anger disappointment or sadness, and the emotional stress of having to decide to carry or terminate a pregnancy can be a tremendous burden for a teenager". Rozakis (1993: 1) agrees that " pregnant teens face many difficult decisions about the future of their lives, with huge consequences, an example of this is the fact that having a baby usually permanently affects the educational, job, and social opportunities for teenage mothers". If the teenager does not receive emotional support and understanding during this time of decision-making, she may undergo radical personality changes or even commit suicide. 2. 3. 4 Consequences for the family of the pregnant

teenage girl In many discussions of teen pregnancy, the impact on the girl's family goes unrecognized. In fact, having a pregnant daughter can evoke a considerable variety of feelings for her parents, amongst others their experience of the mere fact that now they know that she is sexually active. Pregnancy violates a sense of security of any parent that their child is still innocent and that she has never been touched. 20 Many parents react with anger to this kind of uncomfortable knowledge. Branyon, cited by Bartell (1999: 221), describes that anger, as " anger that is initially at the betrayal of the pretense, or reality of innocence, rather than with the actual pregnancy". All these authors (Boult & Cunningham, Dlamini & McKenzie, Ntombela), cited by Macleod (1999: 7), point out that " majority of parents react negatively and with anger or disappointment to the news of teenage pregnancy. This may be because they are embarrassed or because in poor communities the addition of another member of family stretches the family's economic resources". In the black culture where lobola plays an important role, the father of an unborn child must pay lobola to the teenage girl's parents for the damage caused by an unplanned pregnancy. This is described by Zondi, cited by Preston-Whyte (1992: 45), as " a ritual such as payment of reparation and cleansing ceremonies". If not, that pregnancy can cause a huge conflict between the two families. Many authors deal with the topic within the context of the structural constraints imposed by poverty. Boult and Cunningham, cited by Macleod (1999: 6), point out that " the greater part of the financial burden for child care of black teenage mothers fall on the young woman's family". Parents during focus group interviews mentioned the same issue, where two thirds of these women live with single-

parent families depending on old-age-pensions, which implies that the future well being of these infants may well be in jeopardy for financial reasons, see

3. 8. 5. 2. 2. 3. 5 Feeling neglected by peers Bezuidenhout (2004: 34) acknowledges that " besides the family, the peer group is arguably the most important socialization institution for teenagers". The discussion surrounding the effects of negative attitudes towards the pregnant teenager emanates from knowledge relating to the meaning of the peer group. Negative attitudes of friends towards pregnant teenagers have been cited as a reason for their dropping out of school and not fulfilling their educational goals. Amongst others Gouws, Kruger, and Burger (2000: 109), say that the " peer group is viewed as the comfort zone for the teenager as he/she is being nurtured in search for identity and meaning in life". Carmer (1994: 5) goes as far as saying " the pregnant teenager becomes isolated from her peers due to interests that now differ".

2. 3. 5 Consequences for the society The teenage mother, as a young person who is not working, might end up applying for a maintenance grant, which eventually increases the financial burden on state funds. In New York Rozakis (1993: 46) gave the following statistics of 21 pregnant teen mothers who make up a huge portion of the welfare population in the USA:

- o More than \$21. 5 billion is spent every year on welfare, food stamps, and medical assistance for teen mothers and their babies.
- o Each first birth to a teenager costs federal, state, and local governments an average of \$18, 700 every year for 20 years.
- o By the time the babies born to teenagers reach the age of 20, it is estimated that the government will have spent more than \$6 billion to support all these babies. A third of this money, i. e. more than \$2 billion, could have been saved if

teenage mothers had waited until they reached age 20 to have their first baby. Bezuidenhout (2004: 36) explains that “ for those teenagers who decide to run away from their homes, state funds are also used in tracing their whereabouts. Instead of using the amount of money to subsidise one teenager at school, the government has to use the money to search for the lost teenager. 2. 3. 6 Health risk In addition to educational, financial and parenting difficulties, the teenager is subject to health-associated risks. Research studies, among others, Macleod (1999: 2), show that “ adolescent mothers, especially those who are under the age of 15 years, have a higher incidence of birth complications such as toxemia, anemia, hypertension, low-birth-weight babies, prolonged and premature deliveries”. Boulton & Cunningham (1991: 54) say “ these complications increase the risk of the infant dying either at birth or within the first year of life”. Rozakis (1993: 37) agrees with other researchers that “ there’s a 13% greater chance that a youngster between 15 and 19 years of age will die while giving birth than a woman in her twenties. He goes on to say that teen mothers have a higher rate of giving birth to stillbirths and low-weight babies”. 2. 3. 7 Low self — esteem Brits and Pond, cited by Macleod (1999 : 20), provide a case study of pregnant teenagers, using a variety of projective tests and personality questionnaires where they concluded that “ these teenagers have a poorly defined sense of identity and low-image and self-confidence; the pregnant teens experience themselves as inadequate and inferior and are plagued by feelings of insecurity”. For me while reading their study it was not clear whether the poor self-concept is precedent or antecedent to the pregnancy. Sapire (1986: 122) argues that “ some teenage girls become sexually active

to boost poor body image e. g. small breasts, acne, and feeling of inadequacy, or just poor self-esteem". Research in the United States has challenged the poor self-esteem/teen pregnancy association. Robinson and Frank, cited by Macleod (1999: 21), found that there were no differences in self esteem between their sexually active versus nonactive groups or between the pregnant and non-pregnant group. In my final remarks I can not resist using the words of one teenager cited by Rozakis (1993: 39) who wrote " having a baby when you're a teenager, takes away more than your freedom, it takes away your dreams, it's like being grounded for eighteen years". I could not agree more, if only all teenagers would knew what they are putting themselves through. In conclusion I agree with most of the consequences of teenage pregnancy but differ with one particular issue of low self — esteem, by the mere fact that I could not ascertain whether these teenagers developed a low self esteem after being pregnant or before. Maybe they fall pregnant as a reason to have a sense of belonging. 2. 4

SOLUTIONS TO THE CAUSES AND PROBLEMS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY 2. 4.

1 Introduction Rozakis (1993: 50) argues that various sex-education programmes, school-based clinics, and new types of schools were tried in New York, but none really showed a decrease in teenage pregnancy. She says some people think that moral values are the answer. I believe that preventing pregnancy at a young age will help break the cycle of poverty and lack of education that has created many of South Africa's problems. Various authors highlight the possible solutions