

## TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Teenage pregnancy continues to rise in today's society. It is estimated that about 16 million girls are married off every year (WHO, 2018) contributing to the number of teenage pregnancies across the globe. In Nigeria, 23% of females aged between 15-19 years are bearing children. This can be attributed to illiteracy, societal practices and poverty encouraging girls enter into sexual relationship at an early age. This condemnable situation leads to numbers complications which include; sexually transmitted diseases, school drop outs, pressure on the health sector, increased mortality to mention but a few. These impacts of school enrollment and drop out have significant implications on national development and therefore needs to be tackled urgently. This study therefore, seeks to analyze the influence of teenage pregnancy on secondary school education in Nigeria using a case study of Obio-Akpor L.G.A, Rivers State. The instrument for data collation was a semi-structured questionnaire and the data obtained analyzed employing SPSS version 2.0. A total of 802 respondents responded to the interview making the rate of response 96.2 %. Majority of the respondents were teenagers and 151 (18.1%) being parents. Findings from the study revealed that teenage pregnancy significantly impacted school enrollment, that a significant percentage of teenagers are pregnant before 15, lack of education of parents and teenagers increased the probability of teenage pregnancy, poverty and drug abuse increased the likelihood of teenage pregnancy while teenager mothers 61.2 percent likely to withdraw from school because of the financial obligations of being a mother. In addition, the study makes a number of recommendations which include; sensitization programs should be initiated by relevant bodies to educate the populace on the impact of teenage pregnancies, Policies that facilitate better health care services for teenagers should be deployed by government and non-government organizations, Government and non-governmental organizations should make contraceptive services easily accessible and affordable, School-based daycare facilities should be provided for soon to be/already teenage parents, Psychological help should be provided to students in secondary to help them deal with pressures of peers and societal stigmatization.*

**KEYWORDS:** teenage pregnancy, education, Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

All over the globe, societal challenges such as corruption, stigmatization, tribalism, social inequality, public health challenges to mention but a few continue to impede the development of nations. One of significant societal challenges generating debates amongst researchers and plaguing developing and developed societies is the teenage pregnancy as its impact on societal advancement, mortality rate, educational enrollment/attainment as well as child and psychological development has reached alarming levels globally (Gueorguieva et al., 2001; Alabi & Oni, 2017; Gyan, 2013). Teenage pregnancy therefore, can be described as the pregnancy by an adolescent or under-aged female between the ages of thirteen to nineteen years (Alabi & Oni, 2017). According to Brown (2013) it is a societal problem that sees adult functions such as sexual intercourse, nursing and reproduction performed by an individual deemed by the society as a child. Furthermore, it can be defined as the process of pregnancy that is occasioned by the drug abuse and sexual exploitation of a child (Ekefre, Ekanem & Essien, 2014). As such, it can be deduced as the situation where an under aged girl undergoes physical and psychological functions usually reserved for adults.

It is an unwelcome phenomenon which ensues amongst academically and financially challenged females (Undiyaundeye, Agba & Mandeun, 2015). In the Nigeria, a report by the Demographic and Health Survey establishes that about 23% of females aged between 15-19 years are bearing children while 10 percent of adolescents residing in rural areas are already bearing children compared to the 32 percent of adolescents in urban locations (DHS, 2013). Thus, indicating that teenage pregnancy is on the rise in the country (Egbule, & Ugoji, 2000)

In Asia, Africa, Middle East and some parts of Europe, illiteracy, societal practices, rebellion, media, poverty and peer pressure encourage girls to enter into sexual relationship at an early age. According to Onyido & Brambaifa (2018) child marriage is universal issue that is popularly practiced in developing countries and current estimated projects that about 16 million girls are married off every year (WHO, 2018). In addition, poverty and educational attainment force girls into sexual relationships without realizing the risk to sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, abortion, depression and low educational involvement they expose themselves to (Moronkola & Idris, 2000; Tang, Gao, Yu Ahmed, Zhu, Wang & Du, 2011; Gyan, 2013). According to Chiazor, Ozoyam Idowu, Udume & Osagide (2017) teenage pregnancy leads to early entrance into poverty and informal labour. Buttressing this viewpoint, a number of studies have established the correlation between teenage mothers and poverty (Tamkins, 2004; Undiyaundeye, Agba & Mandeun, 2015). According to Anochie & Ikpeme (2011) teenagers mothers are likely to have challenges in their educational attainment and in the long run become a burden to the society at large as such there is need to tackle this condemnable trend. This is particularly true because

studies have established the preventive impact of education on teenage pregnancy (Brosh, Weigel & Evans, 2007; Ekefre et al., 2014).

### **Causative Factors of Teenage Pregnancy**

A number of factors influence the rise in teenage pregnancy and they include;

#### **Education**

Education has long been identified as a critical variable in the eradication of poverty and ignorance in any society (Ekpo et al, 2009). The rise in teenage pregnancy in Nigeria can be attributed to ignorance and illiteracy on the side of the teenage and parents. According to Undiyaundeye et al (2015) the educational attainment of teenagers and parents influences the probability of teenage pregnancy.

#### **Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure continues to destroy teenagers all over the world (Hashmi, 2013). According to Chiazor et al (2017) friends are critical instruments of socialization and establish standards of behavior while serving as role models hence altering the sexual behavior and beliefs of the teenagers. In most cases they allow their decisions regarding sex be influenced by their peers (Widman, Choukas-Bradley, Helms, Prinstein 2016).

#### **Media**

Today's society has seen the rise of the media which has brought about industrialization, globalization, enculturation, adoption of western culture, education (Chiazor et al., 2017). As a result of this, the concept of sexuality has seen drastic changes over the years and certain practices once considered abomination are now accepted by the society.

#### **Rebellion**

Youthful exuberance has long been identified by scholars as part of the process of adolescence (Ayuba & Gani, 2012) as it sees teenagers rebel or agitate against the control or dependence on their parents and seek to indulge in acts that will cause pain and embarrassment for their parents. One of these acts is unprotected sexual practices that can invariably lead to pregnancy.

#### **Poverty**

The financial status of parents significantly impacts the wellbeing, education of teenagers. In some cases, these teenagers are forced to fend by doing menial jobs to meet their needs and that of their entire family. In certain scenarios, these teenagers are sexually exploited by people who are more

financially capable than they are and this potentially exposes them to pregnancy. According to Mangatu & Kisimbii (2019) teenage females from poor family background have a higher probability of being pregnant.

### **Stability of Family**

The stability of a family has an impact on teenage pregnancy in the sense that poor communication with parents, divorce, domestic violence can lead to teenage pregnancy (Quinlivan, Tan, Steele & Black, 2004). In addition teenagers have a higher probability of getting pregnant if they are not properly guided by the parents as researchers have established that teenagers raised in broken homes have a higher probability of becoming teenage mothers (Saikia, 2017).

### **Alcohol and Drug abuse**

The impact of drugs and alcohol on the lives of teenagers cannot be quantified. Scholars highlight that drug and alcohol use increases the probability of teenagers being exposed to rape, exploited (Alabi & Oni, 2017). In the sense that if a teenager is under the influence of drugs they can easily be subdued into sexual activities that increase their risk to teenage pregnancy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a quantitative approach for the research

### **Research Setting**

The setting for the research was Obio-Akpor L.G.A, Rivers State which has its headquarters located in Rumuodomaya town. It covers about 260 square kilometers and according to the last 2006 population census it has a population of about 464, 789. The Ikwerre people are considered indigenous settlers of the area. The area is a popular commercial center prominent for farming and trading in palm oil, cassava and kernel with numerous secondary schools scattered around the local government area.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for the research comprised of teenage mothers between the ages of 11-18, teachers and parents residing in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area

### **Sample and Sampling technique**

The sampling technique employed for this study is the stratified multi-stage sampling technique with some of the participants selected using systematic random sampling technique while others

selected employing simple random sampling technique the sample size was subsequently obtained employing the single population formula:

$$n = \frac{(z\alpha/2)^2 p (1-p)}{d^2}$$
$$\text{Hence, } n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.448) (1-0.44)}{(0.05)^2}$$

Where n= sample size

p = proportion of participants in Obio-Akpor LGA Area (44.8 %)

$\alpha$  = level of confidence = 95%

d =margin of error

Taking into consideration 10 % non-response rate and design effect of 2 for employing the multi-stage technique, the sample size = 837

## Research Variables

**Dependent Variables:** Sex, parent perception of teenage pregnancy, understanding of the consequences of teenage pregnancy by teenagers and parents, parent educational attainment, income of parents, societal pressure, age, school enrollment/completion after pregnancy.

**Independent Variable:** Teenage Pregnancy

## Instrumentation

The main instrument employed by the study for data collation is a semi-structured questionnaire which was administered to the selected population and in order to ensure reliability of the instrument, pre-test method was employed.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The data obtained was analyzing employing SPSS version 2.0

## Operational Definitions

Teenage pregnancy: is employed to refer to girl child below the age of 18years performing physical and psychological functions of an adult related to motherhood.

Impact: perception of teenage pregnancy, teenage school enrollment/completion after pregnancy and understanding of the consequences of teenage pregnancy by teenagers and parents.

## Analysis

A total of 802 participants responded to the interviews and as such the response rate was 96.2 % with majority of the respondents being adolescents (74.6%) and 151 (18.1%) being parents

**Table 1: Demography, educational attainment and socio-economic characteristics of respondents in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.**

Variable		Frequency	%
Age of respondents	< =12	163	20.3
	13-15	223	27.8
	16-18	334	42.9
	>18	72	9.0
Residence	Urban	45	5.6
	Rural	757	94.4
Educational attainment of respondent	Secondary Education	515	64.2
	No Education	246	30.7
	Secondary Education & above	41	5.1
Financial status of respondent	Dependent on parents	207	25.8
	Dependent on farming/labour	211	26.3
	Dependent on salary	194	24.2
	Dependent on trading	190	23.7
Sex of respondent	Female	651	81.2
	Male	151	18.8
Marital status of participant	Single	661	82.4
	Married	81	10.1
	Divorced	60	7.5
Livelihood of respondent	Student	770	96.0
	Organized employment/trader	10	1.3
	Daily Labour	22	2.7

## Teenage pregnancies

From the above results it can be established that about 615 (76.7%) of respondents were affected by teenage pregnancies before they reached 18 years. 60 % of girls got pregnant before their 15 years old and the mean pregnancy age ( $14.78 \pm 4.1$ ). More than 473 (59%) were teenagers who had no formal education and the remaining 288 (35.9 %) and 41 (5.1%) of the population were teenagers who had attained secondary school education and teenagers who had gone beyond secondary education respectively. Only 95 (11.8%) of teenage pregnancy were caused by poverty, 546 (68.1%) and 161 representing 20.1 percent of respondents perceived that teenage pregnancy were influenced by lack of education and drug abuse respectively. This viewpoint agrees with the proposition of Mangatu & Kisimbii (2019) which highlights that teenage pregnancy can be linked to poverty as girls residing in poor socio-economic conditions are more likely to partake in high risk sexual activities.

More than half of the respondents representing 58 percent believed that teenage pregnancy impacted livelihoods; on the other hand, about 77.3 percent perceived that teenage pregnancy impacted motherhood, 65.1 percent perceived that teenage pregnancy increased reliance on parents before they reached 18 years. This perception is in agreement with Gyan (2013) who opines that teenage pregnancy forces teenagers to engage in menial jobs to fend for their child as well as increase their reliance on their parents. The result further establishes that out of the number of teenagers who got pregnant, 121 (19.7%) got pregnant out of wedlock. One of the reasons behind this occurrence was due to peer pressure which accounts for 57.3% and the rest as a result of sexual violence and child marriage. This perception is in agreement with the argument by Kirby (2001) who opines that peer influence the sexual decisions of teenagers towards their sexuality and contraceptive use.

**Table 2: Perception of impact of teenage pregnancy on secondary education in Obio-Akpor LGA. Rivers State**

Variable	No	%
Social implications of teenage pregnancy	710	49.2
Withdrawal from school to avoid stigmatization	459	31.8
Withdrawal from the school as a result of financial implications	271	18.8
Sexual transmitted diseases	2	0.1

### **Impact of teenage pregnancy on secondary education**

The findings from the study highlight that 49.2 % of the respondents perceived negative societal implications for teenage mothers furthering this 65.1 percent viewed stigmatization as responsible for the reduction in school enrollment for teenage mothers. On the other hand, respondents were equally asked the financial implications of a new baby on secondary school enrollment by teenagers and their parents. 30.5% of this population perceived that parents would take the responsibility of the child while 61.2 percent perceive that the teenage girl would be forced to withdraw to meet the financial obligations of being a mother. These perceptions are in agreement with the propositions of Maemeko et al (2018) & Brosh et al (2007) who postulate that teenage pregnancy for secondary school student's impact on the lives of the student and their parents as they would be forced to withdraw from school.

## **DISCUSSION**

In this research, the prevalence of teenage pregnancy was 76.7% which is rather worrisome when compared with other parts of the state. The study establishes that the percentage of teenage pregnancy before 15 years was 60% of which 59.6 percent had no formal education. It also revealed that teenagers who got pregnant before 15, 63 % of them had parents without any formal education while among those married before 15, 97 % of mothers and 90.7% of fathers were uneducated.

The research revealed that the mean teenage pregnancy age was 14.78 and 3.7 % of respondents felt teenage pregnancy had no consequence on education in secondary schools and 11.8 % of respondent perceived that teenage pregnancy was caused by poverty while 68.1 % and 20.1 % respectively perceived it caused by lack of education and drug abuse. Furthermore, about 30 % of respondent perceived that parents would take the responsibility of the child while 61.2 percent perceive that the teenage girl would be forced to withdraw to meet the financial obligations of being a mother.

## **CONCLUSION**

Teenage pregnancy over the years has constituted significant educational and socio-economic challenges to societies. This rise in teenage pregnancy can be attributed to lack of education, poverty, sexual violence and peer pressure to mention a few. This study establishes that there are number of consequences of teenage pregnancy which include; abortion, early child marriage, sexually transmitted diseases, mortality, school drop-out and depression. It further stresses that one of the significant impacts of teenage pregnancy in the society is the reduction in school enrolment or drop outs in secondary education. This is as a result of the fact that teenage pregnancy has consequence on the teenagers, parents, the child, health sector and society in general.

## **Recommendations**

Upon analysis of the data and the resulting evidence obtained from the research, the following recommendations were provided;

- Sensitization programs should be initiated by relevant bodies to educate the populace on the impact of teenage pregnancies
- Psychological help should be provided to students in secondary to help them deal with pressures of peers and societal stigmatization.
- School-based daycare facilities should be provided for soon to be/already teenage parents
- Contraceptive education should be introduced in secondary schools.
- Policies that facilitate better health care services for teenagers should be deployed by government and non-government organizations.



- Policies that encourage secondary school enrolment should be introduced by policy makers.
- Government and non-governmental organizations should make contraceptive services easily accessible and affordable.
- Policies should be introduced to permit teenage mothers to remain in secondary school education.

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