

# Effects of Teenage Pregnancy on Academic Progression of Girls in Primary Schools in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County

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**Abstract-** Teenage pregnancy involves females under the age of 18 and it is interplay of several factors social, biological, economic and psychological. Teenage pregnancy has been widely studied, but attention in relation to Africa has been largely limited to its prevalence. In particular, little work has been done on the effect of teenage pregnancy on academic progression, since the girls' enrolment in Ainamoi sub-county is fluctuating. Walberg's theory of educational productivity and Positive and the roots of motivation theory was the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. The study targeted a population of 500 teacher and 100 head teachers from public primary schools in Ainamoi Sub County, Kericho County. A sample of 150 teachers and 30 head teachers were drawn from Ainamoi sub County. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and adopted a mixed methods methodology. Both open and closed ended questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were used as methods of data collection. Simple random sampling techniques were used to identify respondents to the questionnaires. The findings showed the 33 (0.4%) out of 7609 (100%) became pregnant, 16 (48.5%) of the pregnant girls came back to school while 17 (51.5%) dropped out completely. Findings also revealed that socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy which included lack of knowledge by the girls, Peer pressure and the influence of mass media; socio-economic effects of teenage pregnancies especially poverty caused most of the girls to engage in sex. Recommendations included; Teachers and administration should work as a team so that counseling programs of the affected could be developed and used effectively.

**Index Terms-** Academic Progression, School Dropout, Teenage Pregnancy

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Dania (2010), personal hygiene should be observed throughout life for healthy living. Recognizing hygiene habits for prevention of disease is important for children. In a child-to-child program, child can be an excellent health messenger and health volunteer in their own community. School children can learn easily to cultivate good habits and to mold themselves. Experts' advice that health education should be a part in school curriculum. All health issues irrespective of their sensitivity can be inculcated in educational programs in methodological and scientific way. It has got preventive, promotive and rehabilitative dimensions. The school children can be an excellent mode to transmit information. Here the researcher hope that they can be messengers of proper hygiene practices to other children, to their parents, to the family and finally to reach out the community.

In developing countries, young children spend much of their lives in the care of their brothers or sisters. Experts observed the need for teaching these older children to provide better care for their siblings. The importance of child-to-child programme is thus stressed. The child to child programme was first launched in 1978, by the Institute of Child Health, London. The main focus of child-to-child programme is activity oriented method of teaching, where emphasis is placed on the development of participatory approach of learning and teaching. In child-to-child programme the health educator may be a primary school teacher or a health worker.

A number of studies concur that many young girls dropped out of school as a result of pregnancy. In Kenya, a study conducted in 1985 estimated that about 10% of female students dropped out of primary schools because they were pregnant. In 1986, 11,000 Kenyan girls dropped out of school because of pregnancy. In Ainamoi Sub County, the girls' academic progression of teenage girls has been fluctuating over the years. However, whereas there had been issues raised with regard to teenage pregnancy and its subsequent influence on school dropouts (Newman, 2008), the literature available was really not about school girl pregnancy at all, but instead it was on the relationship between school exit and subsequent childbearing.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although pregnancy and motherhood do not always interrupt a schoolgirl's education they do introduce a new set of circumstances that influence future decisions related to the girl's education (Grant & Hallman, 2006:11). According to Panday *et al.* (2009:27) schoolgirl pregnancy can have a profound impact on the mother and child by placing limits on her educational achievement and economic stability as well as predisposing her to single parenthood.

Bezuidenhout (2008:44) states that an unmarried, pregnant teenager (schoolgirl) finds herself in the midst of a multifaceted crisis characterised by the emotional and physical reality of a pregnancy, the interruption of normal physiological and psychological development, a possible change in education and career pursuits, as well as in parental and kinship support, an increase in medical risks during pregnancy, and premature assumption of the adult role with its associated responsibilities. According to Karra and Lee (2012:4) pregnancy immediately places a teenager at an educational and economic disadvantage. She may now take longer to complete her studies, and may therefore be economically inactive for a longer period of time. She may also fail to complete her education, struggle to find proper employment and may have to make ends meet from a government grant or support from relatives.

In their research Bhana *et al.* (2010:873) found that the presence of a pregnant girl(s) in a classroom is not only a threat to their own academic achievement but also to the collective academic performance of the class as well as the classroom harmony. In particular, most pregnant schoolgirls are not able to cope with the school's academic demands. Kramer and Lancaster (2010) in agreement with Lynch (2008) opined that in most Africa cultures, women are expected to subordinate their needs and desire to those of their children and families. Thus, students with infant have to grapple with the role of motherhood and studentship. As a student mother, the student blends two identities the role of which conflicts. To be a good student, one needs to be fully committed to the academic demands.

A pregnant schoolgirl missed some classes during the day when she was not feeling well, when the pregnant schoolgirl had to visit a clinic or doctor and during the final stages of her pregnancy, delivery and after the birth of the baby (Bezuidenhout, 2008; Changach 2012). Frequent absenteeism from school results in school girls missing a lot of school work e.g. lessons, assignments, tests, (Bhana, Morrell *et al.*, 2010).

Dhlamini (2009) stated that the future of most pregnant school girls was bleak as indicated by available statistics which showed that a third of pregnant school girls did not complete their schooling. Education played an important role in the future of young people as it prepared them for work and life as an adult. He noted that after the birth of the baby they were saddled with the responsibility of bringing up a child while they were themselves still "children" that were supposed to be in school. The possibility of furthering their studies, in order to qualify for choice career prospects, was remote because of financial constraints and the responsibilities of motherhood. Marteleto and Lam (2008:3) maintain that if a girl returns to complete her schooling after the birth of a child it is because of the support received from her family and being provided with flexible child care options. However, childbearing impedes on most girls' educational careers. Research has found that pregnancy in school often resulted in poor results, failure, repeating of grades and school dropout (Dietrich, 2003:29).

According to a research done by Vundule, Maforah, Jewkes & Jordaan (2001) in South Africa, the reasons why school girls were not using contraception included ignorance, fear of parents finding out, shyness in going to a clinic, and disapproval from the boyfriend. A study by Jonathan, Klein, & Committee on Adolescence (2005) showed that a school girl pregnancy had been associated with frequent sex without reliable or no contraception, sexual coercion, inadequate communication about matters pertaining to sex between partners, to prove one's fertility, poor socio-economic conditions and promiscuity. In the following discussions some of the reasons that emerged from the literature received attention. The following reasons for school girl pregnancy were Knowledge about sexuality, Peer pressure, Independence, Media, Poor socioeconomic conditions.

Every individual responded to sexual stimulation, but the teenager (adolescent), because of inexperience, was especially vulnerable as the intensity of the responses was confusing and difficult to understand (Ferguson, 2004). A study that was done in Norway by Macleod, (1999) emphasized that peer pressure sometimes involved exclusionary practices, as when sexually inexperienced teenagers were sent away during the discussion of any sexual matters. The educational stakes were also very high for young parents in the developed countries whereas a high percentage of young mothers drop out of school, which made early motherhood the number one reason for dropping out of school among young girls in these countries. In their research on schoolgirl pregnancy, Marston and King (2006) in South Africa established that lack of authentic knowledge about sexuality issue seemed to be one of the major causes of pregnancies amongst primary schoolgirls. Adequate knowledge about sexuality could only be obtained by education and the family milieu and parents were regarded as the most suitable to inform the child about sexuality issues (Bezuidenhout, 2004). However, in certain cultures sexuality issues were the least spoken about or discussed by members of the family, any sex topic was taboo (Rangiah, 2012). According to Newman (2008) mothers often failed to communicate the 'facts of life' to their daughters and information about menarche was acquired from an elder sister, peers or nurses from health departments who visit schools.

The perception by many adolescent concerning friends' pregnancy, liberal attitudes towards casual sex, the use of alcohol or drugs, fear of hormonal contraceptives and poor school-based sexuality education was associated with schoolgirl pregnancies (Oni et al., 2005). School girls shared a great deal of their lives with the peer group; they went to school with them, participate in sport with them, spend leisure time with them and slept over at their homes (Burger *et al*, 1994). Matters that could not be discussed with parents in some homes were freely discussed with the peer group, for example personal problems, educators, parents, clothing, the future, sex, contraceptives, drugs, alcohol etc. However, the sexual information that peers had was not always authentic. Thus incorrect information received about sex from the peer group, peer pressure or the need of the teenager to be like her peers all contributed to causing unwanted pregnancies (Bezuidenhout, 2008). Burger *et al* (1994) maintained that relationships with peers and peer pressure played an important role during adolescence. They spent a lot of time together in groups and the individual had to conform in order to be accepted by the group. The implication was that conformity was either implicitly or explicitly enforced and schoolgirls often engaged in sexual activities to be accepted in their peer group despite the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy (Vundule, *et al.*, 2001). The adolescent schoolgirl conformed even if it meant a contravention of social or parental norms (Bolton, 2003).

Personal independence for the adolescent (schoolgirl) involved leaving the safety of the family environment and orienting into the world outside (Jonathan, Klein, & Committee on Adolescence, 2005). The adolescent must be physically and physiologically prepared to let go of their dependence on their parents (guardians) and to value identification with the peer group rather than attachment to the home and family (Burger, Gouws & Kruger, 2000). Becoming emancipated (independent) and gradually loosening her ties with parents they could not hope to contract adult relationships or develop her own identity and value system and became a member of society in the fullest sense. There were two sides to the independence of the adolescent schoolgirl, on the one hand the adolescent's readiness to take her own decisions and accept responsibility for them and on the other hand the parents' readiness to permit this (Very, 1990) .

Studies showed that parents were very reluctant to discuss openly and freely issues concerning sexuality and reproductive with their children especially the adolescents with focus on age group 12-17 years (Human Science Research Council (HSRC),2008; Panday *et al.*, 2009). Harrison (2006) said teenagers (adolescents) who experienced physiological and other changes often found it difficult to discuss these experiences with their parents. In need of information, they turn to their peers for guidance or seek information from other sources (e.g. books) to satisfy their curiosity (Panday *et al.*, 2009). Although there were health clinics available to adolescents where they can obtain appropriate information on sexuality matters, many did not use these facilities for fear of being identified as sexually active or the belief that such facilities were only for adult mothers, the elderly and the sick (Bezuidenhout, 2008).

The mass media with its sexualized content was also a contributing factor that perpetuated schoolgirl pregnancies as it gave teenagers easy access to pornographic and adult television programs (Oni *et al.*, 2005). Pornographic material and sexuality information was freely accessible via devices such as computers and cell phones. Devenish, Gillian & Greathead (2004) said teenagers had access to books, films, videos and magazines that are explicit in describing sexuality issues. Many were factually incorrect, creating unrealistic expectations from teenagers and increasing the myth about sexuality issues. In her research (Rangiah 2012) established that adolescent girls who were exposed to sexuality in the media were also more likely to engage in sexual activities. Bezuidenhout (2004) said that "sexually arousing material, whether it was on film, in print or set to music, was freely available to the teenager and such information was often presented out of context of the prescribed sexual norms of that society". According to Panday *et al.*, (2009) there was no question that television also contributed to sexual activities amongst school children.

In their research on teenage pregnancy Kanku and Mash (2010:567) found that teenage girls may feel the need to prove that they are able to have children before marriage. Although current research indicates a change in the belief that it is important to prove one's fertility before marriage, this value is still found to be one of the reasons of teenage pregnancy (Masemola, 2008:6).

Wood and Jewkes (2006:111) reported in their research findings that many girls was often pressurised to get pregnant at an early age. Amongst their respondents many girls described the importance of proving fertility in order to attain status and acceptance as a woman. They described it as having a "strong snake in the womb". Many of the girls also admitted that they fell pregnant because of the pressure put on them by a boyfriend or family members to prove their fertility. According to Macleod (1999:9) a girl's sexual partner also often wanted to prove his fertility by fathering a child and pregnancy will prove love and commitment.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Design**

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in manner that combines relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2007). The study adopted a descriptive survey research design; as such it was an intensive descriptive analysis of academic progression by teenage mothers. Descriptive survey research study allowed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The adoption of descriptive survey was useful for educational fact finding because it provided a great deal of information.

### **Study Area**

This was carried out in the schools in Ainamoi Sub County. The area was purposively selected because of the presence of teenage girls in primary school hence sufficiency in study population. The Sub County had seven educational zones and 116 primary schools. The sub county lies in latitude of 0.1828°S and a longitude 35.4782°E (Google Maps, 2016).

### **Target Population**

The target population of the study consisted of 100 primary schools within Ainamoi Sub-County. The study area has a total of 500 teachers of which 144 are males and 356 are females by the year 2010 (D.E.O. Office Kericho). The target population therefore consisted of 500 teachers and among these teachers are 100 head teachers. The study was biased in that the researcher targeted teachers and the head teachers/mistress.

### **Sample size and sampling procedure**

The sample size for the study was arrived at after taking 30 percent of 100 head teachers and 500 teachers as proposed by Orodho, (2009). Stratified sampling technique was used in selecting schools into zones, day and boarding, girls and, boys and mixed schools. Stratified and simple random sampling was used. Then simple random sampling was used to select 150 teachers and 30 head teachers.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher used questionnaires, interviews as the main tools for data collection instruments. The research instrument of choice for this study was the written questionnaire. The questionnaires were used because they are able to gather large amounts of data from many subjects very inexpensively. They are also easily administered and analyzed. The target population was also highly literate and therefore unlikely to have difficulties responding to the questionnaire items. The data collected through this study were collected through actual visits to the schools within Ainamoi Sub County. The structured questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The researcher used the class registers and class attendance lists to find out those who had dropped out of school and the reasons for their exit.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics including percentages and frequencies were used in analysis. Data was presented in pie charts and tables. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and the interviews were used to compare and contrast the findings from the questionnaires and there after descriptive discussion was given for the same.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher sought permission from primary schools for data collection purposes. This was facilitated through a letter of introduction from university. The letter also confirmed that the research was solely meant for academic purposes. The researcher also sought permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the School of Education of the University of Kabianga. The researcher also declared that the identity of the respondents was highly confidential. The research also undertook to accept any errors due to omission or commission while compiling the report of the study.

## IV. RESULTS

*Table 1: Demographic descriptions of participants by Gender (n=150)*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	58	38.7
Female	92	61.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1, it was revealed that day primary schools in Kericho Municipality have more of female teachers 92 (61.3%) compared to male teachers 58 (38.7%). It was also revealed that Day primary schools gave 150 (100%) participants; there were no participants in the Day/Boarding and Boarding Primary Schools. 22.6% more females than males formed part of the random selected research sample. This frequency distribution of the gender of the participants in the research sample can be substantiated by the following: The statistical data of the Department of Education shows that the (70%) of the teaching staff in schools are females (DoE, 2002:14). Females view teaching as a half-day work that affords them time in the afternoon to attend to their household chores (Duncan, 2011:9). Experience of the teachers was also used to describe the participants. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 : Demographic description of participants by experience(n=150)

Years	Frequency	Percent
1-3 years	42	28.0
4-6 years	38	25.3
7-10 years	35	23.3
11 years and above	35	23.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results in Table 2 indicated that 42 (28.0%) of the teachers had been in the teaching profession for one to three years. Another 38 (25.3%) of the teachers had been in the profession for four to six years. Teachers with the experience of seven to ten years were the least with 35 (23.3%) of the teachers. Finally, 35 (23.3%) of the teachers had been in the experience for eleven and above years. This could be explained by the fact that retirement age was increased from 55 to 60 years while recruitment of teachers has been done annually. This gives a representative sample as academic progressions in schools are concerned. The longer the experience the more the teachers understood the pattern of pupils as far as teenage pregnancy and academic progression is concerned.

Table 3: Teenage Pregnancy in Ainamoi Sub County Kericho (n=30).

	Total number of girls enrolled	Number of pregnant girls	Percentage
Class 5	2175	2	0.1
Class 6	2069	2	0.1
Class 7	1205	15	1.2
Class 8	2160	14	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>7609</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0.4</b>

The results in the table 3 show that there were a small percentage of the girls in every class. 2 (0.1%) of the girls out of 2175 girls enrolled were reported to have been pregnant in class five, 2 (0.1%) of the girls out of 2069 became pregnant in class six. 15 (1.2%) out of 1205 girls enrolled became pregnant in class seven and 14 (0.6%) of the girls out of 2160 were pregnant in class eight. This implies that in class 5, 6, 7 and eight in public schools in Ainamoi Sub-County became pregnant in the year 2015. According to Panday *et al.* (2009:21) school girl pregnancy has grown in significance as a social construct and as such represents one of several indicators of burgeoning schoolgirl delinquency, sexual permissiveness and moral decay. In Ainamoi Sub-County, the rate of school girl pregnancy is an escalating epidemic as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 : Girls who drop out of School due to teenage pregnancy in Ainamoi Sub County (n=33)

Girls who Dropped out		
	Frequency	Percentage
Dropped	17	51.5
Came Back	16	48.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

The results in Table 4 showed that 17 (51.5%) of the pregnant school girls dropped out of school completely, 16 (48.5%) of the girls came back to school to continue with their studies. These show that, pregnancy of the school girls caused the girls to stop their education or delay the academic progression. This finding concurred with Grant and Hallman (2006:371) who found that only around a third of school girls reenter the schooling system post-pregnancy despite the fact that South legislation allows girls to return to school. This was confirmed by the 21 head teachers who said that pregnant school girls do not receive proper care from the parents hence may perhaps opt for early marriages. From these findings, pregnant school girls were faced with challenges that made them drop out of school. With proper care and support from the parents, some come back to school to continue their education. This finding concurred with Marteleto and Lam (2008:3) who maintained that if a girl returns to complete her schooling after the birth of a child it is because of the support received from her family and being provided with flexible child care options. However, childbearing impedes on most girls' educational careers.

Table 5: Girls who repeated and those retained in the same class in Ainamoi sub county (n=30)

	Frequency	Percentage
Retained	13	81.8
Repeated	3	18.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings in Table 4.6 indicated that, 13 (81.8%) of the girls who came back to schools were retained in the same class after delivery. 3 (18.2%) of the school girls who came back to continue their education repeated a lower class from where they were. In the findings, 81.8 % of the school girls who came back after (giving birth) were retained in their various classes.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that teenage pregnancy influenced academic progression. 33 of the teenagers became pregnant in class 5, 6, 7 and 8. Out of the 33 pregnant girls, all went home for delivery. 48.5% came back to school to continue their studies while 51.5% completely dropped out of the school due to pregnancy and opted to perhaps stay at home or get married to the person(s) responsible for the pregnancy. The study therefore concluded that there were Socio-cultural effects of teenage pregnancy which included lack of knowledge by the girls, Peer pressure and the influence of mass media and this had an effect on academic progression of the girls. Poverty caused most of the girls to fall prey to men who had money therefore enticing them to have sex with them and hence getting pregnant, this had an effect on the academic progression of the girls.

It was recommended that teachers and administration should work as a team so that counseling programs of those affected in schools is developed and used effectively. It seems most school; especially public schools have no counseling support in schools.

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