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TOPIC:

**PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS TEENAGE PREGNANCIES: A CASE STUDY
OF MUSANHI SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MUTOKO DISTRICT**

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ZIMBABWE, JUNE, 2024

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to the Almighty God for his everlasting mercies and to my family for the never-ending and over enduring support.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study has been triggered by the rampant dropouts of girls in secondary schools owing to premarital pregnancies as evidenced by the number of girls dropping out of school in Mutoko district. Many newspapers are also publishing girls ranging the age of fourteen and above impregnated by older people and they are consequently dropping out of school and expelled from home. The researcher seeks to examine whether parents perceive it as a problem or not. It is also in the interest of the research to explore the parents' perceptions and opinions on how the problem can be managed. The labeling theory will help the researcher to explain the stigmatization associated with teenage pregnancies and how labeling reinforces negative character in the teenager involved. In this chapter the researcher is going to look at the background of the study, problem statement, importance of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and definitions of key terms.

1.2 Background of the study

The issues of teenage pregnancies is a disturbing phenomenon in contemporary societies. More and more girls are becoming sexually active at young ages than before. According to Akpor and Phetoe, (2017) the world is a global community of people with diverse culture and beliefs. They also posit that factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy are categorized into personal, psychological, societal, media, pressure, family reasons and economic reasons. Chiweshe (2017) postulated that parents have positive bias about their children and are unwilling to accept that their children can be sexually active. Communication about sex remains a complex and difficult understanding in Zimbabwe. Ncube and Mudau (2017) noted that any form of sexual behavior between boys and girls before marriage was a taboo. They argued that only after the marriage ceremony could a man have the right to sexual activity with the woman he marries. This was maintained in the society by through sex education which was tasked grandmothers for girls and grandfathers for boys.

It is however, unfortunate that contemporary societies are facing the problem of premarital pregnancies at alarming rates due to modernity. Modernisation has come in such a way that it attacked culture as old fashioned and impediment to development hence the mischievous behaviour among adolescents. Literature also shows that parents are now lagging behind because they are failing to educate their children about sex as such they think that issues like

sexuality ,human reproduction and unmarried parenthood are usually viewed as sensitive and belonging to the private domain, Chiweshe (2017).

1.3 Problem statement

The main problem which has triggered the researcher to embark on this study is that many girls are dropping out of school because of teenage pregnancies. This might mean the end of their dreams about the future and girls who have dropped out of school face hostility from family and society in general. As a result the majority of these girls have joined prostitution because of poverty. Thus there is need to understand parents' perception towards teenage pregnancy. Similar studies have been done in other countries, however the researcher had decided to replicate it in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Importance of the study

The study is going to be important in that it is going to examine parental perceptions towards teenage pregnancies thereby looking at the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies .It is also going to be help teenagers in avoiding teenage pregnancy and encourage those facing consequences of teenage pregnancy to proceeds with education through formal and non-formal education .It is also sought to promote gender equality between boys and girls responsible for the teenage pregnancy.

It is going to be important to the community in that community members will find ways to reduce the cases of teenage pregnancy but not neglecting the teenagers. Teenagers not involved are to learn from their colleagues' mistakes and will not follow the same track. It was hoped that from the findings of this study information to assist teenagers in avoiding teen pregnancy and assisting teen mothers could be generated.

1.5 Objectives of the study

1. To examine whether parents perceive teenage pregnancy as a problem.
2. To explore parents' perceptions on how teenage pregnancy can be managed.
3. To assess the effects of rejecting on abandoning pregnant teenagers.
4. To explore how parents can be assisted to come up with solutions to problems associated with teenage pregnancies in order for their children to advance educationally.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What are parents' perceptions towards teenage pregnancy?
2. How can teenage pregnancy be managed?
3. What are the consequences of teenage pregnancies?
4. How can parents of affected teenagers be assisted to develop positive attitudes towards their children?

1.7 Definitions of key terms

1. Teenager: refers to a person with age which is below twenty years but not younger than thirteen years, Lall (2017). Referring to this study a teenager is a person who has reached the child bearing stage but cannot be able to hold a mother's responsibility because of the tender age.
2. Pregnancy: Is the presence of developing a foetus in the uterus. Amod Z (2019). According to this study pregnancy pregnancy is carrying the unborn child in the mother's womb.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The successful implementation of the research has been affected by the following factors:

1. Lack of adequate information as a result of possible unco-operation of respondents.
2. The school staff could not provide adequate information for fear of the school being tarnished.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

The successful progression of the study may be affected by the population of the sampled participants since only a small sample from Chimoyo C in Mutoko district is going to be used to represent Mutoko district.

1.10 Summary

This chapter have focused on the introduction, background of study, objectives and the importance of study .Teenage pregnancy is more like fashionable today.Parents should find ways of reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy and those already pregnant needs support from parents .Therefore parents have an important role on the issue of teenage pregnancy.The next chapter is going to focus on the the literature review.

CHAPTER 2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is going to review relevant literature. This will help the researcher to find out if there are other studies which have been done pertaining the issue. This chapter is going to

review causes of teenage pregnancy in developing and in developed countries. It is going to also look at support needed by pregnant teenagers as well as attitudes of other stakeholders.

2.2 Causes of teenage pregnancy

2.1.1 Teenage pregnancy in Africa

The issue of adolescent child bearing has also become problematic in Africa (Akpor) however claims that social context of child bearing is changing drastically. In the past, young women tended to move directly from childhood to adulthood responsibilities. It is argued that the brief interlude between childhood and adulthood is lengthening because of schooling and other forms of training are delaying marriage in particular when girls find opportunities for education they seek to prolong their career ,a goal that most national policies as well as family elders declare in-compatible with motherhood (Ncube and Mudau 2017).Those who fall pregnant should be given a second chance to continue their studies and both the boy and the girl child should be affected so as to enhance gender equity as well as increasing completion rates of the girl child (Ncube and Mudau 2017).

According to Mafuya et al teenage pregnancy is common in communities and acceptable in families but at the same time increasing teenage pregnancy rates.Ncube and Mudau posits that some may deliberately fall pregnant knowing that they will be given a second chance.According to Mafuya (2016), teenagers conceive quickly after marriage .Poverty,inability of parents to pay school fees causes teen pregnancy. Chokomosi also noted that some got pregnant to prove their fertility this is as a result of lack of knowledge about sexuality and reproductive education, lack of parental care control and supervision and drug abuse.Some got pregnant out of misbehaving .Adult males in Polokwane said teen pregnancy is a result of lack of proper guidance and the adult females in North west said teen pregnancy is caused by sex for money to buy clothes and food. (Mafuya 2016).

2.2.2 Teenage pregnancy in developed countries

According to Lall (2017) , In London teenage pregnancy is caused by inadequate sex education in schools. Rudoe (2014) noted that teenage pregnancy was caused by drug abuse, negative influence from peers and being promiscuous failing to delay sex. As a result they end up pregnant and dropping out of school. Rudoe (2014) claims that young pregnant women face problems when they are allowed to remain in school .The challenges include being bullied, poor performance academically and institutional racism. In UK, Yadley (2008) reported that teenage pregnancies increased school dropouts and it is the teenage mothers who experience

stigma and people think young mothers depend on benefits. This encourage the teen mothers to work hard so as not accept the disapproval from teachers. The responsibilities of motherhood also resulted in greater determination and motivation around gaining educational qualification. (Vincent and Thompson 2010)

2.3 Support needed by pregnant teenagers

2.3.1 Parental support

Parents should give support to their children in order for them to proceed with education, (Amod 2017). According to Chase (2017), pregnant teenagers should be supported in order for them to succeed. Criticism and discrimination can affect academic performance of these girls who fall pregnant at school. The parents should also the role of handling some responsibilities especially mothers because these teenagers have no experience in motherhood, (Chiweshe 2017). Labeling also leads to poor academic performance of teenage pregnant girls They are motivated well they feel accepted by both teachers and pupils, (Vincent and Thompson 2010). Ncube and Mudau purports that pregnant teenagers are likely to perform poorly because of stigma which cause them to have low self esteem and lack of confidence. According to (Akpor 2017) parents should assist their children because in the Christian perspective abortion is a sin. And also they should be involved in sex education.

The teenage mothers needs to be empowered so that they know that can still do it bearing in mind that being pregnant does not mean the end of the world. Health workers and other stake holders should intervene and teach the teen mothers on motherhood skills and how to handle their pregnancy, (Chiweshe 2017). This will help them to handle pregnant related problems.

2:3.2 Developmental Support

Pregnant teenagers needs developmental support in order for them to have skills to handle their pregnancies and motherhood. This will help them to be able to handle some pregnant related issues like discrimination and stigma which will discourage them to proceed with education during pregnancy. When they are given developmental support there will be less risk of abortions ,suicides and school dropouts due to fear of embarrassment from fellow classmates. This can be done though provision of sex education by teachers and life skill councillors. (Chase 2017).

Chase(2017) also purports that if policies that allow pregnant girls to continue with education are properly implemented teen mothers will develop a positive attitude towards education hence encouraged to work hard and feel comfortable. They will not feel rejected and will not discharge themselves from school.

2.3.3 Physical care support

According to Matalala, pregnant teenagers should be given physical support to improve their maternal and child health. This will assist in making them remain in class so as to benefit from education. Ncube and Mudau (2017) also argued that abortions will be reduced if policies that allow pregnant girls to go to school are implemented because they will be taught proper upkeep of babies and themselves. Chokomosi (2018) noted that dual responsibilities can affect the health status of teen mothers so they need guidance and counselling in order for them to continue with education.

Ngabeni (2018) postulated that teenage mothers are affected by opportunistic diseases because of lack of knowledge about opportunistic diseases, awareness programmes and lack of knowledge about HIV and opportunistic diseases. He recommended the integration of life skills and health education the curriculum.

2.3.4 Societal support

According to Akpor, in Nigeria 22 out of 80 participants interviewed had an account on relating to a programme on the prevention of teenage pregnancy, 75.5 percent of the participants were not aware of any intervention programme which focus on the prevention of unplanned pregnancy. Out of 5 religious community leaders four community leaders and two parents cited church based teen programme organised by the society for family health. This helps to spread the message and providing information to many people. Intervention programmes helps in educating these adolescent girls in letting them know the consequences of teenage pregnancy. If various intervention programmes are employed teenagers will have more knowledge about the dangers of teenage pregnancy. Akpor also mentioned many intervention programmes organised by the society in Nigeria. These include parents, community leaders, church leaders and radio programmes.

2:4 Attitudes of other stakeholders

2.4.1 School

Teenagers who become pregnant whilst they are still going to school needs to be supported in schools in order for them to proceed with their education without problems. According to Amod et al in South Africa negative reaction from teachers and stigma affects pregnant learners in their school work. This is so because they end up feel out of place and humiliated, as a result their performance in class will deteriorate. Akpor claimed that in Nigeria one out of eighty participants cited sex education in schools. If sex education in schools is provided to all the students in schools the rate of teenage pregnancy will be reduced. Ngabeni (2018) argues that sex education to be done from puberty age. By doing so teenage pregnancy will be reduced.

2.4.2 Government

The government should employ strategies to prevent teen pregnancies (Akor 2017). In Mali girls are dropping out of school because of pregnancy and secretly marriages. Some will end up leaving the villages and seek work. Indirect links such as policies or programme should not be based on assumptions that delaying marriage will lead to lower school dropout or improved education will lead to delayed marriage (Bichall 2018).

2.4.3 Non Governmental Organizations

In the United Kingdom some pregnant teenagers face many problems at school and in the community. Some were assisted by other organizations in order to complete school. This was done through grants to take care of the babies and being supported in following the procedure of how to find access to make use of the policy which supports the continuation of teen pregnant girls to remain in school, (Vincent and Thompson 2010).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on literature which is relevant to the study. This will help the researcher to have an insight of the problem under examination. Relevant information will be used to analyse the data. The following chapter is going to focus on methodology, research design, population under study, sampling procedure and the data collection methods. In depth interviews and focus group discussions are going to be used to collect data.

CHAPTER 3 Methodology

3.2 Introduction

This chapter aims to describe methods that shall be used in this study and why the researcher preferred to use them. Methodology is concerned with detailed research methods through which data is collected. The next section shows the methodological parameters within the the

study is premised. This chapter is going to look at the research design population of study, sample procedure and the data collection methods.

3.3 Research Design

This research is designed principally under the qualitative paradigm. A qualitative research focuses on understanding individual perceptions of the world frame of thinking and references. (Ngabeni 2018) As such qualitative researchers study human beings in their natural settings as they attempt to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. According to Akpor and (Akpor 2017) the major advantage of qualitative research methods is that it is rooted in the voices and social experiences of the research participants, so since the researcher wanted to hear the perceptions of parents on teenage pregnancies as well as the voices of teenagers themselves, qualitative research was seen to be the most appropriate because it is rich in depth understanding of the phenomena.

3.4 Population study

A population is a group of elements or cases whether individuals, objects or events conform to specific criteria to which the researcher intends for sample target population, (Ngabeni 2018). In this study a population is the total number of participants who are selected to take part in providing information under investigation.

The population of this sample comprises of fourteen people is going to be used were selected in a ward in Mutoko district. The researcher will include six parents of six affected teen mothers Six affected teenagers are going to be interviewed so that the researcher may tap the views of the teenagers themselves. Two guidance and counselling teachers of the secondary school selected will also be interviewed. The study area was selected because of its proximity to the researcher.

3.5 Sampling procedure

In this research, purposive sampling will be used to collect data. According to Ncube and Mudau (2017) the primary consideration of purposive sampling is your judgement as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study. The researcher used the inclusion criteria whereby the pregnant teenagers, teenage mothers and parents with affected children as well as guidance and counselling teachers of the selected school. Amod (2019) posits

that in the inclusion criteria the ones involved provide the best information because they are the ones who know what they are going through. The researcher chooses this method because information from the affected children is going to be gathered. This will be achieved by selecting three men and three women with affected children so six parents will be interviewed, six affected teenagers and two guidance and counselling teachers; a male and a female. Thus the sample consists of fourteen participants. There are chances that information the researcher will get will be used to tackle this problem. In addition this method of sampling allows other researchers to replicate the same study.

3.6 Data collection methods

The researcher is going to use qualitative methods to collect data. The methods that shall be used includes in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These methods are going to be discussed in detail.

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

In depth interviews allows the researcher and the participants to build meaning around their experience, (Chase 2017). The purpose of in-depth interviews is to reconstruct the participants' experience and explore their meaning, (Ngabeni 2018).

In order to be reliable and valid data, in-depth interviews are going to be useful in this study to interview parents of affected teenagers and the two guidance and counselling teachers. Interviews have been selected as the most appropriate way of gathering data from parents. Being a rural area, most parents especially the majority of women are not literate such that the use of questionnaires may risk the researcher gathering wrong information since respondents may not be the one who will fill in the information. As such in-depth interviews will help the researcher to clarify for the respondents concept that may sound unclear, as such, issues can be explored to greater depth. According to (Akpoy 2017), the aim of a qualitative in depth interviews is to acquire in-depth human behaviour and to investigate the why and how of decision making not just what, when and where. The method does not limit the responses, so enough information will be gathered. The researcher has also chosen this method because in-depth interviews do not influence the respondents as it occurs naturally. The use of interviews in this study will help the researcher to ask people about their attitudes, motives and feeling and other emotions that cannot be observed directly. As a result, the researcher will get true thinking of the people involved in the problems posed by teenage pregnancies in the area.

However, interviews may have the problems of reactivity from other respondents who might be affected by the researcher's presence. This was minimized by interviewing the participants in such a way that they are able to give responses in detail, describing their experiences, feelings and views concerning teenage pregnancies without the affecting their emotions.

3.6.2 Focus group discussions [FGD]

According to Ngabeni (2018), focus group discussions enables participants to come out with their deep insights opinions. They shall also be used to stimulate respondents and give them courage to speak. The researcher used the FGD because it enables her to tap on multi-vocal and plurality of views across gender, ethnicity and class. It enables collective human interaction of people of the same age in a relaxed environment. Focus group discussions were used especially among the teenagers. Chase (2017) noted that agreement, disagreement, challenges and interjections can force respondents to clarify, justify and re-examine and sometimes retract their stated views. These methods also helped to overcome the problem of reactivity often encountered in interviews. To overcome this, the researcher assured the participants on the guarantee of their confidentiality and anonymity.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter have explained methodological issues related to this study. In depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to generate data. The following chapter is going to present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is going to present findings which the researcher obtained from the field. Findings will be presented in a thematic way. It is going to look at parental perceptions towards affected

teenagers, affected teenagers and their experiences, Economic constraints associated with teenage pregnancies

4.2 Teachers' perceptions towards teenage pregnancies

The guidance and counselling teachers of Musanhi secondary school showed a lot of concern at the rate at which majority of their pupils were dropping out of school because of pregnancies. They also pointed out that many children become pregnant and were dropping out of school mainly because of socio economic factors like poverty. Other reasons are parents are not educating their children about sexual reproductive health. One of the teacher perceived that science subjects like biology can also contribute to teenage pregnancy because children will be curious to experiment. The two teachers went on saying that the Internet is also a cause of teenage pregnancies. The also went on saying that nowadays children are growing faster sexually than the last years ,so this has also have a great impact on the contribution of teenage. Misbehaving and peer pressure were also said to cause teenage pregnancies. Another teacher also highlighted that, it the responsibility of the teachers, parents, church leaders and professional councilors to teach children on sexual reproductive health and consequences of teenage pregnancies like labour complications, sexually transmitted diseases. One of the teachers said *"teenage pregnancies should be not be shouldered to the affected children alone,the parents should accept reality and develop positive attitudes towards affected children in oder for them to assist their children because without parental guidance,care and love they will not be able to advance educationally."* This is supported by one parent who explained that after supporting his daughter, the child proceed with education now she is well employed and happily married.

4.3 Parents attitudes to the affected teenagers

The researcher managed to interview six parents pertaining to the problem of teenage pregnancies, four out of six parents have shown a very hostile attitude towards the girl child. They shouldered the whole problem on her shoulders for being unsteady. Some of these parents interviewed testified that they have abandoned their daughters for disgracing the family. Parents especially fathers declared that they do not even want to see the girls' face again. When the researcher asked the reason why they argued that society will perceive them as failures who failed to socialize their children with the moral values of the society. In one of the cases the mother of the victim said that soon after the child was impregnated neighbours were laughing at her saying *'like mother like daughter''*. She reported that she was embarrassed. Parents said

this is the reason why they are so radical to their daughters so as to get approval from the society. Others claimed that if you are not tough to the girl child she will repeat the same mistake or her young sisters may follow the same way.

Of the six parents interviewed four maintained that pregnancy mean end of the road in terms of success to the girl child. They said that if the girl child get pregnant, no one will ever sacrifice to improve her since she has chosen to be a mother, unless if it is a boy who may live a wife home. Parents vowed that they may support him. Others also said that once a girl has done such a mistake, there is also no hope for marriage since there is no man who want to marry loose girls.

However two out of these six parents maintained that they have a positive view of teenage pregnancy even though it remains a problem .They argued that culture is changing because of hybridization of cultures ,aunties and ‘’sekurus’ ’are no longer there for children . Otherwise they were replaced by television and magazines which encourages children to experience sex . As such these parents are optimistic that given support the girl child may have a bright future. One of the respondents testified about her daughter who now had a good job and happily married.

4.4 Affected teenagers and their experiences

The researcher also managed to interview the affected teenagers. One of the girls who was loitering near the beer hall said that she had suffered from humiliation from both her parents and the society .When the researcher asked what she was doing, she clearly declared that it was her right to look for a man who can buy food for her and the child. Four girls out of six claimed to have been thrown out by parents, the other two told the researcher they chose to desert their parents because nobody cared for them in the family .They claimed that nobody in the society wanted to be associated with them. One of the respondents argued that it will be better to be a prostitute than to be seen as useless in the family .These girls told the researcher that marriage was not an option as it invites more problems for them. The girls argued that prostitution is not enough to cater for their lives .So during the day they engage in doing piece jobs in fields of some people.

One of the girls said,

*"When I got pregnant my parents reacted radically, they scolded me and I was labeled as a failure . That makes me to feel out of place ,lose my self esteem and felt rejected."*This

indicates that labeling will contribute to psychological problems to the affected teenagers. They need parental support and guidance so that they will learn from their mistakes and have hope for a better future.

One affected teenager pointed out that she got involved in sexual activities because of lack of sex information as her mother never discussed anything about sex with her. So it was through peer pressure, which leads her to teen pregnancy. Another girl said,

"I suffered health problems, I am now HIV positive and as a result I am experiencing psychological depression". From the interviews some parents said that it is not possible to talk about sex openly with their children; they do not accept that their children are immoral. Chiweshe and Chiweshe (2018) argues that adolescent stage is a confusing period for children especially if no communication is forthcoming. This means that parents should accept that their children are immoral and start to teach their children on sexual activities and the problems associated.

4.5 Discussion on sexuality as taboo

Findings have shown that parents are overwhelmingly united in their agreement that prevention of teenage pregnancies is desirable, but there are fewer consensus on the kinds of efforts that will save to accomplish this goal. Majority claimed that there should be primary sex educators of their children. The same percentage said that culturally, they cannot discuss sex with their children except aunts and uncles. Focus group discussions with the teenagers at the secondary school showed that less than twenty percent believe that parents give them satisfactory sex education.

Girl X said, *"My parents did not have time to discuss with me about sex so I rely on the Internet for sex education that leads me to engage in sex because I ended up watching pornography with friends."* The researcher found out that if sex education from an early stage and should monitor their activities and should be careful with their children's friends. This is supported by Honing (2012), who reveals that children need askable parents in their lives from an early stage.

Most of these teenagers told the researcher that their parents try by all means to avoid discussions that end up in issues of sexuality, as such the youths said that they get most of their information about sex from the television, magazines and other modern sources. The youths said they no longer listen to their parents as they claim that what their parents used to do during

their teenage times is now old fashioned and therefore cannot be applied in the modern world. They also maintained that they were ignored and they totally declined ever being taught by their parents. About fifty percent of the parents admitted that they are too busy with other things such that they do not have time with their children but such parents maintained that their children should still behave well from the knowledge they get from school and churches.

The other fifty percent believed that sex education is good but it should be supported with the provision of contraceptive in schools to curb the problem. The group had the age range of thirty to forty years they claimed that teaching has failed since parents are not doing their part. Parents maintained that contraceptives should be used other wise the media will remain the children's source of knowledge, so abortion and suicides will increase. One of the respondents cited the issue she had read in parade magazines at the 'auntie Rhoda section' where it was said sex is part of love so girls should not deny their partners sex. However the other fifty percent which included the age group of forty to sixty one year and above strongly discouraged to the use of contraceptives in school. One of the respondents said that "contraceptives are a free passport to prostitution". Such parents maintained that they do not approve the use of contraception. They felt that this will only worsen the situation since children will be tempted to engage in more sexual activities and more pregnancies may result since these children are too young to be responsible. They also claimed that education and sex are enemies. Their stance was that emphasis of sex education at home and at school will remain the only solution. Both groups of parents mentioned their fears that HIV and AIDS may catch up with their children.

Table 2

4.6 Economic Constraints Associated With Teenage Pregnancies

The table below shows occupation of most parents in the area

Occupation	Percentage
Peasant farmers	66.6%
Informal sector	16.6%
Formal sector	16.6%

The table above shows that most families in Chimoyo C fall below the poverty datum line, this means they will have to struggle to make ends meet for their families. Of the families interviewed most of them admitted that teenage pregnancies have strained their budgets to

extremes. They said that they were struggling to educate their children with the hope that they will get better jobs and help their families. They said that teenage pregnancies to them mean addition of problems since they will be responsible for buying preparation clothes for the baby and food for more people of which food is more expensive nowadays.

Parents told the researcher that most teenagers who drop out of school are not getting married but will come to stay at home with their families. One of the respondents had a serious case of a girl child who was made pregnant whilst in grade seven by a sugar daddy who disappeared when he noticed that the girl was pregnant. The girl is now disabled since her bones had not yet matured to stand the labour process. Parents said they pumped out a lot of money trying to rehabilitate her but to no avail. In addition they are buying milk for the baby since the mother is unable to mother the child because of the illness sustained. Extra burden is shouldered to the parents since the teen mothers can not rely on their own.

4.7 Economic factors in the family being push factors for teenage pregnancies

Focus group discussions with students at the secondary school show that economic constraints in families contribute to increase in teenage pregnancies. Students told the researcher that even though the economy is harsh in Zimbabwe, there are other parents in Zimbabwe who are failing to provide the basics for their children. They said a student who comes to school with an empty stomach is likely to engage in sugar daddies in search of food.

One girl said, *"I ended up sleeping with boys and elder men so that they will give me money to buy sanitary pads and lotion because my parents did not provide them to be because they are poor."* Findings showed that poverty can also contribute to teenage pregnancies because children will be comparing themselves with their friends from richer families. They should be taught to learn to be satisfied with the available resources.

They also said parents leave the children in search of greener pastures and they leave their children in custody of their relatives who do not treat children as their own by controlling their behavior, failure to get the family love, teenagers said they would get advice from other teenagers who may lead them to engage in premarital sex for the sake of experimenting. Students also revealed that there are parents especially single mothers who become of economic hardships are forcing their daughters to fall in love with sugar daddies as a way of combating economic problems.

Girl Y said, *"I started to engage in sex when I was thirteen years old ,my intention was to find money for buying clothes as well as food because it was hard for my mother to provide enough for us."* The researcher find out that there is great need of the parents try their best in providing the basics needed by their children.

4.8 HIV and AIDS

Many parents showed their fears about pre marital sex in that today with HIV and AIDS the environment is not good for such immoral behaviours. They pointed out that, it will increase the burden on them of caring for the sick daughter and child.

4.9 Discussion on findings

The aims of the study were to examine the perceptions of parents over teenage pregnancies and dropouts in school going teenagers, their attitudes and beliefs regarding sexuality. Focus was upon teenagers themselves, their feelings and experiences. The objective is that after this study ,responsible authorities or policy makers may be influenced to make policies that will help to reduce this problem .The following is the discussion of findings.

4.10 Discussion on sex as a taboo, contraceptive use and experiences of teenagers

Findings in in-depth interviews have shown that parents perceive modernisation as having led to the problem of teenage pregnancies ,this is consistent with Honing (2012) who explained that modernization process will lead to conflict between parents and their teenagers and that children will choose to be sophisticated and move with time. Since parents have chosen to be silent on issues of sexuality, children have also made sure that they continue to tap sex information from their friends and the media and this seems to exacerbate the problem. According to Chiweshe and Chiweshe (2017) modernity cannot be totally blamed for teenagers early indulgence in sexual activities but rather the culture of silence that the parents has maintained left the teenagers without answers to the questions they have pertaining sexuality as well as the positive bias about their children being sexually active. Chase (2017) argued that there should be communication through sex education between elders and teenagers.

However findings show that parents are debating on how this problem can be curbed. As Mafuya (2016) have noted ,more and more teenagers are becoming sexually active at young ages than before. Therefore parents are overwhelmingly in agreement that prevention of teenage pregnancies desirable. However, there is no consensus on the kinds of efforts that may

serve to accomplish this goal. Many parents claim that only sex education can serve their children. However, researchers have shown that about ninety percent of parents are reluctant to talk to their children about sex. The culture of silence has caused teenagers to secretly investigate and experiment with sex and the end result is that they indulge in sexual activities with inadequate information about the consequences. FGDs with students at Musanhi secondary school show that even though parents claim that only sex education is vital to curb this problem, it was still a taboo for parents to discuss subjects such as sexual intercourse with their children. This study has shown that there is a positive correlation between teenage pregnancy and of adequate education. This is because children are deprived of a way of speaking about sex. Most adolescents interviewed maintained that parents do not discuss sex and other reproductive issues with them or provide information to empower them to make informed decisions and protect themselves from pregnancies, STIs and HIV infection. Adolescents are at risk because no one including parents have taught them about sex. However, with modernity where grannies have given way to films and magazines, these are used by teenagers as a source of education. In the long run, this encourages experimentation of sex at early stages. However, it is quite unfortunate that traditional ways of educating young people about sex have diminished and disappeared in the wave of modernization (Mafuya, 2019). So for parents to maintain that only sex education can help to curb the problem might be problematic.

Findings also show that most of the parents suggested that as sex education might be important, contraceptives should be introduced in schools to reduce this problem. Birchal (2018) purports that girls who become pregnant are married early. He argued that this may be caused by social and economic factors on the girl and the family. In contrast, Honing (2012) purports that high teenage pregnancy is caused by lack of sexuality information, alcohol and sexual abuse. Akpor (2017) argues that teenagers' sexual behaviour is influenced by numerous and protective factors which include individual, environment, peer partners and culture. Contraceptives were seen as another way of reducing the problem together with sex education where it can be found. However, according to the Shona culture, giving teenagers contraceptives is like giving them "a passport to prostitution". Most parents think that it is like encouraging sexual activities among the adolescents which is a taboo in the Shona culture. Moreover, giving free access to contraceptives to teenagers at such a young age may cause problems since they may not be responsible enough to use them correctly all the time and as such this may result in more pregnancies due to negligence.

Since findings have shown that most parents cannot discuss sexuality issues with children, Chokomosi (2018) argued that parents should accept that we have moved from tradition to modernity and the best way is to accept the current situation. Contraceptive may help to reduce abortions, suicides and unwanted babies. However this notion have been heavily criticized by most parents. This study however asserts that contraceptives are not a solution to problems as it increase the chances of teenagers engaging in premarital sex. Zimbabweans should go back to their roots ,parents should take positions once held by ‘sekurus and ambuyas’ and start to educate their children about sex openly. This affects some parents, who desire to be modern but use short cuts in achieving the goal.

4.11 Economic factors as push factors

Findings have shown that teenage pregnancies should not be blamed on girls alone. The researcher noticed that fathers in particular are very hostile when their daughters becomes pregnant. However teenage girls argued that parents are not doing their duty on providing them with basic things like food. Even though they acknowledge the economic hardships that parents face, they argue that sending a child at an empty stomach impedes her education. As a result of hunger ,a child is forced to look at alternative ways to get the food. Mafuya (2016) argued that economic factors also contribute to teenage pregnancy, research have found that this is one of the reasons of teenage pregnancies. However parents cannot be totally blamed for this since research have shown that the majority of the parents are not professionally employed .They are struggling to provide for their families. However efforts should be made by parents to buy basics to avoid the problem of teenage pregnancies .Economic hardships have also caused many parents to go abroad in search of greener pastures. However parents should make sure that their children are left in good custody where they get guidance as children .Research have shown that many teenagers especially girls are going astray because of lack of guidance from the guardians their parents left them with. There are reports that many of these children fall pregnant as a result of immoral behavior and some are abused by such relatives so it is the parents' duty to cultivate a good environment for their children and provide them with necessary guidelines. There are also parents who use their children as a shield against hunger by forcing them to fall in love with sugar daddies. The concept of mordenity also affects some parents, who desire to be morden but use shortcuts in achieving the goal. This shows that parents can be greedy enough to forget about the future of their children .However parents should learn to work hard to educate their children rather than being perpetrators of abuse and teenage pregnancies. Economic constraints like poverty and extra burden to parents also leads

to teenage pregnancies (Birchall 2018). Because of modernisation cultural values and norms are now taken for granted as parents value their greediness in the name of 'modernity' at the expense of customs which have ordained them as stewards of children. The evil seed of capitalism have blinded parents to forget their children's healthy.

4.12 Teenage pregnancies as a hindrance to girls advancement in their lives.

In Zimbabwe women constitute school dropout rate particularly among female students still remain high. Findings at the secondary school show that when enrolling to form one girls will be more than boys but as they approach form three and four the reverse becomes true. However Mafuya (2016) says that when parenthood occurs early in adolescents it often creates dilemma for the young mother and her baby, threatening both their immediate and long range interests. For mothers the most powerful consequences of teenage parenthood is interference with their educational and vocational achievement and a narrowing of social and personal growth. Early parenthood and school dropouts is the root cause of female poverty because teenage period is the key period of transition in life yet many women terminate education to engage into conjugal life. This increases the gap between men and women. Education is the power to key posts in organizations yet women fail to attain higher education certificates. Rudoe (2014) purports that young women should reengage in education, they should be empowered so that they will become less dependant on man. Consequently women are over –represented in the informal sector where they struggle to make ends meet. Pregnant students should be supported in order to benefit from education (Mutalala 2017).

Chase (2017) posits that having a baby early reduces the chances of the mother 's eventual academic achievement .Whenever a girl falls pregnant ,her chances of improvement becomes very slim. However in families where parents are supportive ,there are chances for her to excel in her life through going to school .Findings have shown that such women can get good jobs and marriages as well. However Birchall (2018) says that early parenthood reduces the likelihood that the mother will ever marry and if she marries because she is having a baby, it increases her chances of being abused, abandoned or eventually divorced. The problem thus has a social dimension. So this paper condemns teenage pregnancies if we are to have a better future for women. Girls should learn to abstain from premarital sex and advance with their education and also teenage pregnancies and school attendance do not go well together (Chokomosi 2016). Parents who are willing to help their daughters to go back to school are hindered by the education policy which says that young mothers who have dropped out of

school because of pregnancy cannot be accepted in formal schools. This becomes a hindrance to parents who cannot afford private colleges. In turn the impact goes back to the girl child who will remain in poverty because she cannot access resources economically and socially the remains a failure of social norms. There should be a policy that allow pregnant students to be expelled from school as argued by Matalala (2017) in South Africa the government encourages pregnant students to remain in school to complete their education.

4.13 Current gap between childhood and adulthood

Findings have shown that parents laments that the modernization process have done away with traditional ways like passage rites which used to bridge the gap between adolescents and childhood.

Implications of rejection on school dropouts. In-depth interviews with parents, generally they perceive the girl as being responsible for the pregnancy and therefore needs to be punished. Punishment is in form of rejection of the victim. This explained by the labeling theory which states that the possible effects upon the individual being publicly labeled as a deviant. Parents should however note that a label is not neutral but rather, it contains an evaluation to a person to whom it is applied. That is to say if a teenage girl is labeled as a failure in life because of falling pregnant, such labels largely overrides her status as a human being who is still capable of advancing herself in life Birchall (2018) noted unequal treatment between boys and girls who are both involved in teenage pregnancies. He argues that it is the girl child who is always faced with social hostility against unmarried mothers yet pregnancy involves two people and such people should be treated equally. This goes against the goal of national and international community to combat gender inequalities with affected teenagers shows that they suffer stigma from both family and society.

The labeling theory explains that majority of people who are negatively labeled as failures normally end up accepting the label since they are made to believe that they are failures. Most teenagers end up engaging in prostitution because society consider any girl who fall pregnant before marriage as a prostitute. Moreover they also do it because rejection mean that they have to provide themselves with all that is needed for survival. However the labeling theory explains that if parents rejects their daughters this may lead to further deviance. This can be prevented if parents choose to accept that mordernity' have eroded all the good morals that used to keep the society intact in terms of cultural norms.

The issue of labeling which is faced by teenagers is the root cause of feminization of poverty in Zimbabwe and other African nations. This is because once the girl is labeled as a failure by the society, it then becomes the master status in her life and it colours all other statuses possessed by an individual. Many girls for instance had potential to advance their education but they end up accepting being true failures because the society keep on reminding them that they are failures. Yet Becker and his labeling theory argues that individuals' self concept is largely derived from the responses of others. Consequently rejection of pregnant teenagers is not a solution but rather it increases the problem.

4.14 The health dimension of the problem

Teenage pregnancy also have a health dimension. Many parents have shown concern over the future of their children with epidemic claiming many lives. Ngabeni (2018) noted that sexually active adolescents are also exposed to HIV and AIDS. The researcher noted that girls are more susceptible to HIV and AIDS for reasons ranging from economical to biological. Mafuya (2016) reveals that lack of adequate information and parental supervision contributes to teenage pregnancies as well as HIV and AIDS. Teenagers who fall pregnant too early in life most of the times encounter health problems in the birth process. Findings have shown that these problems range from damaging of babies as well as the mothers. Consequently this result in life time problems to the teenager and the family. Honing (2012) states that babies of teenagers are at higher risk of prenatal and birth complications including low birth weight and brain damage than infants whose mothers are older. This paper suggests that babies of teenage mothers be treated as a problem which needs immediate attention as failure to acknowledge this may result in loss of lives especially in pregnant teenagers.

4.15 Gender dimension of the problem

Research has shown that fathers portrayed very hostile attitudes to the girl child for falling pregnant. However, it have been noted that such behavior is portrayed in order to gain approval from the society. Findings have shown that while fathers declare total abandonment of the girls, mothers argue that the child should be only be displied and then be given another chance. Fathers believe that if one is not tough on the girl who have misbehaved then she may repeat the same mistake Amod (2019) argues that programs to help adolescent mothers usually succeed in improving their parenting skills, furthering education but less successful in reducing repeat pregnancies. That is the reason why fathers tighten grip on girls since it is evident that there is a chance of repeating such mistakes but they do not use the same grip on

boys who are the perpetrators of the problem. This shows inequality in dealing with children in the families.

According to Bichal (2018) any girl who fall pregnant is radically perceived as a loose girl and all the blame is shouldered on her. The researcher noted that if a boy child impregnate a girl, the society have no problem with him. His education is not disturbed. This shows that society only constitutes to apply to girls. Deviance is not a quality of act of the person commits but rather a consequence of the application by others, of rules and sanctions by the offender. The patriarchal society have made rules which necessarily constrain the girl child at the expense of the boy who impregnated her. This is the reason why Becker in his labeling theory argue that there is nothing as for the deviant act that has been done by two people (Ngabeni 2018). Parents especially fathers should change their attitudes towards the girl child. Children should be treated equally. The society should make rules which constitute justice between sexes so that both children may abstain from premarital sex. The way fathers treat girls assumes that only girls should abstain from sexual activities, yet in essence both children should be taught to abstain and face similar consequences of teenage pregnancies.

4.16 Data analysis

All data collected was studied and analysed to under lock hidden information from raw data into user friendly information. Data was presented in a thematic way. The methods used in the study included purposive sampling. The data was continuously verified from the recorded transcripts so that it will be grouped according to the responses, that is into manageable units and then analysed manually. The aim was to create a dimensional categories which form a framework of analysis.

4.17 Ethical consideration

Before starting the study, the researcher seek permission to conduct the research from the school head and local authority. Before each interview, the participants' rights were explained.

4.18 Conclusion

This chapter concluded that teenage pregnancy is a problem which is caused by multiple factors which includes economic and social factors .Findings have shown that teenage pregnancies is still a controversial issue which needs the attention of the parents and other service providers like traditional leaders and professional sex educators.

CHAPTER 5 Summary, conclusion and recommendations

5.0 Summary

The study has examined the problem of teenage pregnancies, how it affects families, the teenagers involved and parents' perceptions towards teenage pregnancies. To achieve this the researcher used the purposive sampling in selecting the sample which consists of fourteen respondents. The sample included six parents, six affected teenagers and two guidance and counseling teachers of the Secondary school selected. Purposive sampling was used because the researcher because she wanted to gather the best information to achieve the objective of the study. This is supported by Ncube and Mudau (2017) who postulated that the primary consideration of purposive sampling is your judgement as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study. Qualitative methodology was preferred to present data as it is reach in giving in depth understanding of the phenomena. The researcher also used the labeling theory to explain the stigma associated with teenage pregnancies as well as the modernisation concept to explain the changes brought by modernity and its effects on moral values of societies. The study noted that teenage pregnancy has become an international problem of which parents are faced by complex of problems associated with teenage pregnancies ranging from economic and social constraints. The researcher also noted that parents are eager to combat the problem but they do not agree especially to the idea of provision of contraceptives in schools. Parents also lament that modernity has destroyed traditional ways of avoiding the problem while teenagers claim that parents are reluctant to educate them about sex in the family set up and as a result they turn to the media for help. The researcher noted that parents are rejecting their daughters for becoming pregnant whilst boys are excluded in this due to deep rooted partrichial tradition. However it was noted that parents are contributing to the increase of the problem as they are failing to provide the basics that are needed by the family which leads to teenage prostitution. Other parents are engaging their daughters to older men because of economical gains thereby increasing the rate o teenage pregnancies. The researcher noted that even though teenage pregnancy is increasing in Mutoko district, it remains a problem as modes of communication are providing information which makes teenagers are eager to experiment.

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that even though teenage pregnancy involves both boys and girls at times only the girl child is blamed for falling pregnant and as a result it is the girl who suffers

embarrassment as well as social hostility towards unmarried mothers or illegal abortions. Only in cases of forced marriages does the fathers share some of the consequences of unwanted pregnancy. As such the parents should deal with the problem equally. Both boys and girls should be treated equally. Parents should also know that the girl child is a human being like others whom when they sin they should be forgiven and should be given a second chance rather than face stigma and rejection. Moreover if parents think that teenage pregnancy is a problem ,they should accept that as much as traditional ways might be useful in reducing this problem, it has been eroded by the modernisation concept. The uncles and aunties are no longer there, so the only way out is to accept modern ways of overcoming the problem. This means contraceptives should be used to protect teenage pregnancies as well as STIs and HIVs and AIDs.The use of contraceptives will help those who will have failed to abstain.

5.2 Recommendations

The researcher suggests the acceptance of adolescent pregnancy as a reality is important not to condone it, but remove the stigma attached to it. This emanates from the fact that many parents associate teenage pregnancy with deviant behaviour as a punishable offence especially to the girl child. Parents attitudes therefore need to be reviewed as research has shown that the majority of parents have a negative attitude towards teenage pregnancies. Failure to accept reality has resulted in many parents abandoning their children as a form of punishment.

Parents especially fathers should strive to break the deep rooted culture internalized in them about the girl child and start to support their daughters who are already affected by the problem by returning them to school as much they do to the boy child.This might help to remove the stigma associated with teenage pregnancy as well as to break the chain of female poverty.

The researcher also realized that there is need for the government to revisit the education policy on teenage mothers to go back to school and ensure that it is implemented because it still stands as a back lock on girls' education. The policy which allows girls who fall pregnant to go back to school in Zimbabwe is not well addressed in schools as a result some girls who fall pregnant are disadvantaged educationally some to the extend of failing to sit for the exams. As such a positive educational policy which provide opportunities for girls who become pregnant to be able to continue with their their education before or after giving birth should be enacted to promote gender equality.This will help to empower the girl child and women of Zimbabwe though their works are made invisible in patrival society. If this is done then, it helps to reduce the gap between men and women economically and socially. In the event that the

education policy is not amended then there would be gender imbalance in education. Men will always constitute a big number in tertiary education and the end result will be that all vital positions which demand higher skills will be occupied by men and women will be overrepresented in the service sectors as well as the informal sector. Thus the gap between men and women will remain wide.

Reproductive health problems also need to be addressed in a specific manner. This can be done by introducing sex education into late primary schools, so that boys and girls will be informed of the dangers of premature sexuality and other things that interrupt girls' education. This will help us to return to our most desirable tradition of reducing the problem. This will help in that when children grow they will be fully informed and equipped to conquer the problem. This recommendation is geared towards covering the gap which parents are failing to close since research has shown that it remains a taboo for parents in African societies to discuss about sexuality with their children. These days where education is the key to power there is need for some mechanisms to rehabilitate new ways of tackling the problem.

Having witnessed girls who have been rejected by their parents for falling pregnant, this research also recommends that girls should be organised to talk about their experiences that includes the social hostility against them, the mental and physical torture that they went through in public. This will help discouraging parents especially fathers who threw out their daughters for falling pregnant at school. It also help potential perpetrators to condemn themselves before they act. Testimonies of hardships from victims will also help to discourage other teenagers from involving themselves in premarital sex as they may fear the consequences.

Awareness campaigns should be done as often as possible in both primary and secondary schools. This means to inform teenagers about the dangers of premarital sex as well as the existence of HIV and AIDS. Special emphasis should be on discouraging girls from falling in love with older people for economic gains. Such campaigns may in a way enlighten girls how precious is their life and how powerful is education, they will have the ability to say no to gifts from sugar daddies with attached strings. The same campaigns should also aim to inform the boy child about the dangers of falling in love with sugar mummies who use money to seduce young boys. This may reduce the risk of contracting HIV and AIDS in boys and girls. As a result parents will be saved from economic constraints associated with teenage pregnancies as well as HIV and AIDS.

The researcher also recommended that, poverty alleviation programmes should resume especially in poverty stricken areas where people are living on meager incomes. These may be in form of projects which will help parents to generate money on their own without necessarily risking their children's lives to gain the basics to live on. Research have shown that parents are offering the children to sugar daddies to fight their poverty and gain wealth and food for the family. Projects also help parents to provide enough basic needs for their families, for instance, if children go school on full stomach chances that they will be able to resist temptations of joining prostitution for food.

Innovative initiatives like income generating activities and non- formal education should be encouraged for females dropouts in order to empower them economically and make them less dependent to men. If girls who drop out from school are engaged in income generating activities they would not think of joining prostitution. The researcher have shown that girls who engage in prostitution have done so because they had to turn to expect selling sex for money. This stance will empower these girls to be able to make decisions and even to advance themselves educationally.

In areas where there are programmes that assist adolescent girls to attain skills in rural areas parents should encourage their children to go so that they will have something to do in life.

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Research Instruments

Questions for guidance and counselling teachers

A. What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?

1. Which are the socio economic factors that leads to teenage pregnancies?
2. How can cultural beliefs contribute to teenage pregnancies?
- 3.. Which content do children learn at school that leads them to end up engaging in sex?

B. What are parents' perceptions towards teenage pregnancies?

1. Who do you think is responsible for educating teenagers on solving problems associated with teenage pregnancies?
2. What do you think are reasons for students to engage in sexual activities and ending up being pregnant?

C. What are the consequences of teenage pregnancies?

1. Which health issues are likely to be faced by teenagers who became pregnant?
2. What is the society's perception towards teenage pregnancies?

D. How can the parents of affected teenagers be assisted to develop positive attitudes towards their children to develop positive attitudes towards their children?

1. What can be done by parents to assist their children so that they will not feel rejected?
2. How can parents of affected teenagers be educated to understand that falling pregnant must not affect the advancement of their children educationally?

Questions for parents with affected children

A. What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?

1.What do you think are the main causes of teenage pregnancies?

2. What can be done to avoid teenage pregnancies?

B.What are parents' perceptions towards teenage pregnancies?

1.Which are the cultural activities practiced in the area that promotes teenage pregnancies?

2.Who should be blamed for teenage pregnancies?

C.What are the consequences of teenage pregnancies?

1.How are the children being affected by being pregnant whilst going to school?

2. What are the parents doing to solve problems encountered by pregnant teenagers?

D.How can parents of affected teenagers be assisted to develop positive attitudes towards their children?

1.Who do you think should assist the affected teenagers?

2.Why is it that the affected teenagers needs parental support?

3.What are the parents doing to assist their children?

Questions for affected teenagers

A What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?

1.Which age group is impregnating teenagers?

2.Which content do the teenagers learn at school that contributed to teenage pregnancy?

B.What are the parents'perceptions towards teenage pregnancies?

1.How do

parents react when their children get pregnant?

2.What does the parents'reaction contribute in solving problems associated with teenage pregnancies?

C.What are the consequences of teenage pregnancies?

1.Which are the problems likely to be faced by teenage mothers?

2.What can be done by parents and the society to solve the problems faced by pregnant teenagers and teen mothers?

D.How can the parents of affected teenagers be educated to develop positive attitudes towards their children?

1.Who can give advice to parents of affected teenagers?

2.Why are the parents of affected teenagers supposed to develop a positive attitude towards their children?

