

## A study on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancy in Jigjiga, Somali region, Ethiopia

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### **Abstract**

*Teenage pregnancies are a major issue in many Ethiopian areas, especially Jigjiga in the Somali Region. The study focused on evaluating the causes and implications of these adolescent pregnancies and was carried out in Jigjiga, Somali Region. The study also concentrated on gathering information directly from community people in order to ascertain the root reasons of teenage pregnancies and possible solutions. Descriptive research design was attempted to be used in the study. The descriptive research design aided in defining and illuminating the study's phenomena. As a result, our research has provided clear and pertinent information about the teenage pregnancy issue in Jigjiga. Fifty respondents made up the study's sample size, and they were chosen by simple random sampling. According to the study's findings, only 70% of community members are aware of the impacts of teenage pregnancies. Most youths in the study region also tend to become pregnant as a result of inadequate sensitization campaigns and awareness campaigns, which are the primary causes of teenage pregnancies. Thus, by developing efficient awareness programs and promoting sex education, this problem of adolescent pregnancies can be resolved with the assistance of the government and other stakeholders. In light of the aforementioned findings, the researcher suggests that adequate parental care, the abolition of street hawking, and the instillation of moral values through religious institutions be implemented by the government as means of reducing teenage pregnancy. The researcher also suggests that local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) be able to contribute to the effort to reduce teenage pregnancy by providing stable funding for comprehensive education for female teenagers or both sexes.*

**Key words:** 1.Teenage, 2.Awareness, 3.Pregnancy, 4.Community.

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### **1. Introduction**

A girl child is known to be as the glue that holds society together since time immemorial, though some regions and traditions tend to hinder girls' participation in areas that are of more important like education and in decision making. Girl child empowerment and education is very essential for economic development of a country as it lays a firm foundation in reducing the levels of teenage pregnancies. Nowadays, teenage pregnancy has become a growing concern and therefore various causes of teenage pregnancies have become crucial. According to Jackie (2012) low self-esteem is among the causes of teenage pregnancy, such that children who are not shown love and affection from parents will try to seek for with from their peer groups as many adolescent reports feeling pressured by their peers to have sex before marriage. Teenage pregnancy has been increasing at an alarming rate especially in the area of study, Jigjiga Somali Region, not only does it affect the mentioned area but the whole Africa has become a global concern because it not only affects the teenager and

her family, but the whole society in general such that this same increase in teenage pregnancy will in the end lead to increased child poverty as well as degradation of the child's well-being.

Teenage pregnancies, also known as adolescent pregnancy is the pregnancy in a female who is under the age of 20. Pregnancy can occur with having sexual intercourse after the start of ovulation, which can be before the first menstrual period but usually occurs after the onset of periods. Teenage pregnancy undermines a girl's human rights and comprises their opportunity to fully realize their socio-economic development potential (United Nations Population Fund UNFPA 2017). Adolescent girls have the right to education, health, dignity, non-discrimination and quality of life, and yet the prevalence of adolescent pregnancy stands in the way of ensuring the rights of any girl child.

In 2015 about 47 females per 1,000 had children under the age of 20 in Africa and also in lower Asia, while in the developing world about 2.5 million females under the age of 16 years old have children each year and others have abortions. These practices here in Ethiopia are more common in rural areas as compared to urban areas even though the country continues to record a lot of cases of teenage pregnancies in Jigjiga, Somali Region. (WHO.2004. P.5) States that teenage pregnancy normally involving girls between ages of 16 and 19 was far more normal in previous centuries and common in developed countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the women in Ethiopia who were born in the early 1950s became teenage mothers by the early 1970s but the rates are slowly and steadily declining throughout the country since the 20<sup>th</sup> century peak.

## **2. Problem statement**

Pregnant teenagers face many of the same pregnant related issues as other women do. However, there are additional concerns for those under the age of 15 as they are less likely to be physically developed to sustain a healthy pregnancy or give birth. For girls aged between 15-19, and the risk are associated more with socioeconomic factors than with the biological effects of age. Teenage pregnancy in developing countries is often half planned, however, in these societies; early pregnancy may combine with malnutrition and poor health care that can cause medical problems. Therefore, it is important to identify the causes and impact of teenage pregnancies as it is a major problem for most developing countries

## **3. Research objectives**

### **3.1 General objective**

- To examine the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies

### **3.2 Specific objective**

- To identify the causes of teenage pregnancies
- To identify the effects of teenage pregnancies
- To assess the effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing pregnancies
- To understand community perception towards teenage pregnancies
- To provide recommendations on how to address the challenge of teenage pregnancies

## **4.0 Factors contributing to teenage pregnancies**

At concern it is believed that unequivocally that protecting and empowering a girl child is the key to making lasting changes. Early teenage pregnancies have many causes of which some will be listed and explained, with how to address them.

### **4.1. Peer pressure**

Teenagers usually feel excessive pressure to fit in with their mates. Often teens come under the influence of their friends, while making decision about sexual relationship. Even when they are not fully prepared for any sexual relationship, they get involved in it to appear sophisticated and cool among their peers. According to Family Foundation, more than 29% of teenage pregnant girls have reported that they felt pressured to involve in

sexual intercourse, and 33% pregnant teens have stated that though they were not ready for a sexual relationship, they went ahead, in order to avoid rejection or ridicule

#### **4.2. Lack of family attention**

Teenagers are more likely prone to the unintended pregnancy if they lack proper guidance from their parents. In today's modern society, most of the parents have busy work-schedule, which prevent them from supporting and providing proper guidance to make sensible decision on sex-related issues. Also, poor family relationship, consideration of sex related topics and sex talks as a taboo, and conservative culture or tradition can restrict the teenagers from seeking sex education from their parents. Such teens are more likely turn to their friends for support, leading to misguidance or misconception about sexual relationship

#### **4.3. Lack of knowledge and glamorization of pregnancy**

Most of the teenagers are unaware of devastating consequences early parenthood can lead to. Teenagers, who do not have proper knowledge about safe sex, are more likely to have an unwanted pregnancy. According to the website, Daily Record, often teens receive inappropriate information from videos, movies, or friends, which reflect on their attitude and approach towards the sex. Also, unsafe sex and incorrect information can increase the risk of various sexual diseases and infections. Moreover, today's movie industry and mass media are encouraging teen pregnancy by glamorizing it. According to ABC's "Good Morning America," glamorization of teenage pregnant characters in movies promotes reckless sexual activities and pregnancy rates among the teenagers. Often teen pregnancy is viewed as an effective way to gain attention and reputation among the friends and society

#### **4.4. Culture and tradition**

Often culture and tradition play vital role in teenage pregnancy. It is customary in some customs and traditions for females to marry in early age and give birth soon after menstruation begins. Such customs are more identified in developing and poor countries. Marriage age in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Western Asia is sixteen, eighteen, and nineteen years, respectively. Also, in most of the regions, young girls are subject to gender inequality and are denied of the right to choose life partner or decide when to marry

#### **4.5. Sexual harassment**

Sexual abuse or rape is one of the basic causes of unintended pregnancy. According to the reports of the Guttmacher Institute, around 43 to 62% of pregnant teens confirmed that they were sexually abused and almost two-thirds reported that their male partners are as old as 27. Around 5% of total teen pregnancies are the consequence of a rape.

### **5.0 Research methodology**

#### **5.1 Formulation of the research problem**

Thus it is with deep concern seeing most of the girls dropping out of school and also having serious challenges when giving birth because of their age and them not being fully aware of the effects of teenage pregnancies due to lack of knowledge on the causes of teenage pregnancies, because most of the girls in my study area tend to fall pregnant before they even reach the age of 19 and 20, of which it affects the development of both the community and the country because most of them die when giving birth and the others fail to deliver due to their age. Seemingly most of the studies and reference material available in this area are dating back in the 80s to 90s and this thus leaves a gap and room for further research as to what the situation can be based on the knowledge teens have on the causes and effects of teenage pregnancies

## 5.2 Research Design

The research endeavoured to use the descriptive research design. A research design is defined as a set of advanced decisions that make up the master plan by specifying the methods and procedures for collecting data and analysing the needed information. In other words, the research design refers to the plan, structure and strategy of research. It forms a way of guiding the researcher process. The descriptive research design helped to qualify and explain the occurrences of the study. By so doing clear and suitable information about teenage pregnancy scenario in Jigjiga, Somali Region will be shared and brought to light through this research.

## 5.3 Sampling procedure

In this research project, the universes of the study were the adolescents in Jigjiga, Somali Region of Ethiopia. This area was chosen to be concentrated on and from the universe, the sample area and sample size was determined. From the latter, the respondents were chosen. Apart from that, the data of the project was also collected from the particular respondents in the sample size. The sampling technique that was used was that of probability sampling. In this technique or procedure every unit in the population or sample had an equal chance (greater than zero) of being selected from the sample frame. The sample size was determined by identifying the target population which was done through filled questionnaires by fifty adolescents aged between 13- 19. It was done through the random sampling and the questionnaires were sorted by the researcher and vital information was collected which was then subjected to analysis and interpretation

## 5.4 Methods of data collection and analysis

Data collection was done by using both qualitative and quantitative. Of which it was carried out through interviews, thus the study involved participants from various ethnic backgrounds on the teen's perception relative to adolescents' pregnancy based on the causes and effects. The data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were prepared after deep and considerable understanding of the research problem, discussions with experienced and knowledgeable persons, systematic literature, reflection and imaginative role taking and also the measuring and analysing of data. Thus, the tentatively formulated questions were pre tested to detect the shortcoming changes made before administration. These enabled measurement and analysis easier and few of the questions were open minded but many of them were closed minded questions so as to encourage the respondents to freely express themselves and by these questions more information was provided.

The collected was analysed using SPSS software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is a revolutionary software mainly used by research scientist which helps the process critical data in simple steps. Because working on data is quite a complex and time-consuming process, but this software can easily operate on the information with the help of some questioners.

## 5.5 Limitations of the study

These are short comings of the research and threats to the validity of this study which must be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings and making conclusions and the collection of data may also have not been sufficient because of limited specific questions to be added in the questionnaire.

- Some adolescents were not willing to open up in terms of giving the researcher the key information
- Visiting all the youths in the study area was not feasible and therefore the findings aware dependent on the information that was given by some youths who represented the other youths

## 6.0 Key findings

The key findings of the study are as follows as presented per study objective

### 6.1 The causes of teenage pregnancies

In relation to the causes of teenage pregnancies, the results show that 56% of the respondents said that it is because of peer pressure, 11 % of the respondents said it was because of drug abuse, 26% of the respondents said it was because of poverty and 7% of the respondents said it was both poverty and peer pressure. Therefore, the major cause of teenage pregnancies is peer pressure. However, according to the findings the researcher collected peer pressure was the major cause of which the teens in this community tend to follow the peers of

their friends by indulging in activities like drug abuse, experimentation and also lack of finances lead the teens into falling pregnant at a very young age thus increasing the rate of adolescent pregnancies.

**Age \* what are the causes of teenage pregnancies? Cross tabulation**

		What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?				Total
		Peer pressure	Drug abuse	Poverty	Other	
Age	11-14	1	2	2	0	5
	15-17	12	4	7	1	24
	18-19	15	2	4	0	21
Total		28	8	13	1	50

The above cross tabulation compares the causes of teenage pregnancies according to age group. Teenagers ranging from 11-14 years, 2 of the respondents said drug abuse and 2 of the respondent's said poverty is the main causes, 15-17 years of respondents, 12 said peer pressure and 7 said poverty is the cause and teens ranging from 18-19 years of age, 15 also said peer pressure and 4 said poverty. According to the information collected it is clear that the majority of the respondents said peer pressure and poverty are the main causes of teenage pregnancies. In conclusion those ranging from 15-17 indicated that peer pressure as the cause of teenage pregnancy and those ranging from 18-19 year of age also indicated that peer pressure is the as cause of teenage pregnancies.

**What is the highest level of education did u attain? \* What are the causes of teenage pregnancies? Cross tabulation**

		What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?				Total
		Peer pressure	Drug abuse	Poverty	Other	
What is the highest level of education did u attain?	Primary	11	2	6	0	19
	Secondary	17	6	7	1	31
Total		28	8	13	1	50

The above cross tabulation compares two questions on the causes of teenage pregnancy according to the highest level of education they attained. Therefore, those that reached up to primary level, 11 of the respondents said peer pressure and 6 of the respondents said poverty. Under secondary level 17 of the respondents said peer pressure and 7 said poverty. Therefore, it is clear to see that those from primary level believe that peer pressure and poverty are the causes of teenage pregnancies while those that reached secondary level stated that peer pressure and poverty is also the main cause of teenage pregnancies. In conclusion both primary and secondary indicated that they had the highest number of respondents who said peer pressure and poverty as the main cause of teenage pregnancy, thus the level of education does not contribute to teens being pregnant.

**6.2 The effects of teenage pregnancies**

In relation to the effects of teenage pregnancies. The results show that 20% of the respondents had post-traumatic stress disorder, 2% of the respondents said they had postpartum depression, 6% of the respondents said they had eating disorder, 16% of the respondents said they had sleeping disorder. However, 56% of the respondents said they had other disorders which includes blood pressure and preeclampsia. And according **A. NASSAR 2014 he stated that** the “effects of teenage pregnancies are associated with an increased risk of maternal anaemia, infections, eclampsia and preeclampsia, emergency caesarean delivery, postpartum depression and inadequate breastfeeding initiation”. However, from the study it shows that most of the respondents indicated to say postpartum depression and preeclampsia were the major effects

**Age \* If yes, what type of disorder did you experience? Cross tabulation**

		If yes, what type of disorder did you experience?					
		Post-traumatic stress disorder	postpartum depression	Eating disorder	Sleeping disorder	Other	Total
Age	11-14	1	0	0	2	2	5
	15-17	6	0	3	4	11	24
	18-19	3	1	0	2	15	21
Total		10	1	3	8	28	50

The cross tab above shows the comparison between age and the type of disorder they experienced after giving birth. According to age group those ranging from 11-14 years of age indicated sleeping disorder, those from 15-17 indicated post-traumatic stress disorder and those ranging from 18-19 also indicated post-traumatic stress disorder as the type of disorder the experienced.

		Are there any programs aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy in this community?			
		Yes	No	Don't know	Total
11-14	4	1	0	5	
15-17	15	9	0	24	
18-19	15	5	1	21	
34		15	1	50	

The cross tabs above show the comparison between age and programs that are aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy in their community. According to age group those ranging from 15-18 indicated **yes** and those ranging from 11-14 also indicated yes meaning they are aware of the programs aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies

**6.3 The effectiveness of programs aimed at reducing pregnancies**

In relation to the programs aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies 68% of the respondents stated that they were aware of the programs which are teenage pregnancy prevention programs, sex education programs, and AIDS/STI clubs and 30% of the respondents were not aware of the programs. Thus, the results shows that 24% of the respondents said teenage pregnancy prevention programs, 22% of the respondents said sex education programs, 26% of the respondents said AIDS/STI clubs. However, 28% of the respondents said they had other programs which are youth meetings at association level, NGO and other voluntary organization that help them in discussing on how to curb teenage pregnancies. Unfortunately, 62% of the respondents have no access to the programs mentioned above and 38% have access to the programs. In conclusion 68% of the respondents which is the majority said they were aware of the programs but have no access to them which is a disadvantage to the community and its youths.

**6.4 The community perception towards teenage pregnancies**

According to the communities' perception towards teenage pregnancies the researcher found out that most of the people in the study area are against these teenage pregnancies and believe that the major causes of this is peer pressure and lack of sex education. However, it was surprising to note that a few of the people in the community believed that it is normal for a teen to fall pregnant if she wants to or the family wanted too, the respondents further on narrated that most of the teens find it normal in their area to be pregnant as they follow their peers and that it helps them to survive from the poverty life, they lived in by getting pregnant to another family that is financially stable.

## 7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion Adolescent pregnancy is a prevalent phenomenon associated with increased risks of both maternal and neonatal complications during and after pregnancy. Being aware of such adverse outcomes is imperative to improving prenatal and perinatal care. Pregnancy progression can also be influenced by the mother's culture, environment, and economic status advancement in which it may be a possible course for future improvement. Of which lack of knowledge about safe sex, teenage pregnancy, lack of family attention and drug/ alcohol addictions are among the major causes of teenage pregnancy. Also, in some cases, sexual harassment, rape and traditional customs become the reason of adolescent childbearing. The teenage pregnancy affects the teen mothers, their children, and the society in general thus teenage mothers usually have lower education and income, compared to those who delay their childbearing. Also, such teenage mothers suffer from various health and social problems. Moreover, poor standard of living and negative environment affects the physical and psychological development of a child. The cost of teenage pregnancy also cannot be ignored of which it becomes a burden to both the teenager and the parents making teenage pregnancy a detrimental effect on the education and future plans of teenagers. This is so because the teen age mothers attend school irregularly and sometimes drop out of school. Teenage pregnancy is also a social and economic issue as it means low education and employment, high rate of poverty and the psycho-social stigma it carries more when it is out of marriage. The relationship between earlier childbearing and failure to complete high basic school reduces career opportunities for many young mothers.

Based on the finding, the following are the recommendation to the government under the Department of health and child support, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

- The government should provide adequate parental care, eradication of street hawking and inculcation of moral values through religious bodies as ways of reducing teenage
- Both NGOs and state / Local government must be able to contribute in the effort to reduce teenage pregnancy by providing stable funding for comprehensive education for female teenager or both sexes.
- The ministry of health and child support should provide the community with effective programs that are easily accessible to the members of the community based on how to prevent teenage pregnancies.
- Stakeholders, NGOs and the ministry of health should provide health centres both for female and male teenagers where they can be encouraged to play a more active role in contraception
- Community leaders must formulate and enforce laws and policies to prohibit the marriage of girls before the age of 18.

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