

# Economic Factors Contributing On Teenage Pregnancy among Secondary School Students. A comprehensive Review in the case of Kilolo District Council.

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**Abstract:** *Teenage pregnancy is a universal social, economic and educational challenge for the developed and developing countries in general. Studies on teenage sexuality and pregnancy are inadequate in Tanzania. Due to this, our study aimed at visiting different literatures on how other countries have carried out the studies on the role of economic factors on the contribution of teenage pregnancy among secondary school students. The methodology employed to come up with the observations and discussion was mainly conducted through the intensive literature review on the relationship between the economic factors and the early pregnancy among teenagers who are still at secondary schools in different countries and regions. It was observed that, there is close relationship between poverty and attainment of early pregnancy among teenagers in most of the visited literatures. In the future research will be carried out in Kilolo District Council to find out whether economic factors used in other countries and regions may be the same and applicable to Kilolo as well or there are other new factors which leads to teenager's pregnancy.*

**Keywords—** Economic factors, Teenage pregnancy, Poverty, Schooling distance, Sex education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teenagers are young people whose age ranges between 9–19 years [1]. In the course of this period, an individual changes from childlike to maturity and it is branded by bodily and psychological development[2]. Due to the physical and mental alterations that takes place, teenagers are attentive in discovering the world from one place to another place, from which some develops sexual characteristics [3].

Universally, approximately 16 million girls in the age between 14–19 years and 2 million girls below 15 years old give birth every year, contributing approximately 11% of all births globally [4, 5]. At least 90% of these childbirths happens in developing countries and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has highest occurrences of teenage pregnancy worldwide [6, 7]. High teenage birth rates replicate the exposures they get and the lack of chances accessible to them [8, 9].

An extensive range of reasons contribute to the high rates of unintentional pregnancy and unintended births within teenagers; Poor understanding of sexual health facilities, legal obstacles to gain access to services, provider unfairness, shame all over the place about premarital sex and poor decision making independence of married teenagers are some of the factors contributing to unplanned pregnancies [10-13]. Teenage pregnancy is allied with a number of negative health effects for the mother and child, along with social and economic shortcomings for persons and families [14].

In SSA, approximately 45% of the pregnancies among teenagers aged between 15–19 are accidental resulting in unintentional births, insecure abortions and miscarriages [15]. Approximately half of the insecure abortion cases in SSA also happen among teenage girls and. In South Africa, the largest statistics of pregnancies were recorded in Gauteng, having

more than 5 000, while, the Eastern Cape were having approximately 3 000. For example secondary schools in Mpumalanga were found to have largest number of pregnancies, approximately 77, while a secondary schools in Eastern Cape recorded only 74 teenage pregnancies [16]. East African nation has one of the highest teenage pregnancy and birth rates in the world, The prevalence of adolescent pregnancy in eastern Africa ranges from 18% to 29% and around half of these pregnancies are unintended [4].

## 2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE SURVEY

Economic factors are among major factors which contributes to a large extent the teenage pregnancy among female students in secondary school due to nature of poverty in the societies whose children are admitted to public secondary schools. At different stage, poverty is related to illiteracy, gender dissimilarity, and losing confidence in negotiating about safe sex. Several studies have been conducted in different countries showing the relationship between female pregnancy and poverty or generally economically.

A study by [17], stipulated that United States is uppermost country with female students pregnancy among the industrialized nations, and most of those pregnancies are linked with the economic imbalance of the families in the sense that lower economic families were exposed to the risk of getting pregnancy while studying and this mostly occurred in minority population. Like [18] showed that the risks of female students to get pregnancy were higher in United States and Canada from more poor economically families but the association between experiences of childhood difficulty and student pregnancy was very resilient in Canada. According to [19], UK has the highest rate of female student pregnancies in Western Europe in which within the UK higher rates are from those students whose families lives in poor economic status

or generally in poverty or unemployed or having lower salaries which cannot satisfy the need of the female students hence exposing the student to the risk of being seduced with those who can support her needs which eventually results to the unplanned early pregnancy. In contrary to poverty contributing to the risk of getting early pregnancy among female students, in Indonesia [20], concluded that the richest teenagers has 0.61 times more possibility of getting pregnancy compared to the poorest female students or teenagers and this is caused by high level of exposure of the richest teen in comparison with the poorest teen.

In Africa most of the early pregnancies among female students are contributed by economic factors hence poverty in large party. For instance [21], came with the conclusion that in most part of eastern Africa, female students are much affected with early pregnancy due to the nature of economic in which the less privileged families with low economic status suffers more childhood pregnancy compared to those families with stable financial muscles. Also studies in South Africa highlights the economic factor to be a contributing factor in student pregnancies, so poverty plays a big part in contributing the early pregnancy among students in schools. As per [22], most teenagers who are still studying in different levels of education are exposed to early pregnancy in South Africa due to poverty, in his study he came with the criticism on government through Child Support Grants (CSG) which aims at alleviating poverty in rural areas by providing grants to less privileged families, in which most teens were keen to get early pregnant in order to have access to the grant money provided by CSG. Further study by [23] showed early pregnancy by female students were decreasing in East Africa region while it was plateauing in West Africa while it was increasing slightly in Southern Africa in the range of years between 1992 up to 2011, and the most irritating factor was still poverty among the families of those students affected with the early pregnancy. Remaining in South Africa, the lack of parental supervision and direction was also accounted as the contributing factor for early pregnancy as well as the lack of access of funds or grants were mentioned as the major two factors causing female students to get trapped into getting pregnancy in the villages as per [24]. A study by [24], concluded that the respondents with the age below 19 who are mostly secondary school students (33.2%) were found with pregnancy and most importantly economic factors were the big driver on those pregnancy accounting to 32% of the respondents which this shows that economic crisis exposes female students to sexual arousal. In Ethiopia, the same case of economic problem was seen as a main contributing factor on early pregnancy for female students as stipulated by [25] where he found out that female students and teens in general who are vulnerable in poverty were very easily attracted to wealth persons who are older than them because of money they offer to those teens who have no education on using contraceptives or general health reproduction education and hence they find themselves pregnant. A study conducted in Juba, South Sudan by [26], found that lack of school fees and hence poverty were among the main factors contributing to

early pregnancies on female students in different secondary schools where the survey was conducted.

A study by [27], revealed that, there is a great inter relation between teenage pregnancy and poverty in Zambia as the majority of those reported to have gotten pregnancy in secondary schools were most coming from poor families, compared to minority who came from well abled family economically. Another study from Rwanda by [28], related the early pregnancy by female students to financial status of the household, and further associated the size of the household to the early pregnancy for example, they concluded that, the smaller the household the high rate of getting early pregnancy to their daughters. A study by [29], associated pregnancy with two factors in the name of poverty and child abuse, where he found out that teens below 17 years of age were subjected to early pregnancy due to poverty only (16.8%), whereby teens who were subjected to both poverty and child abuse or neglect were found to be 28.9% were found to be pregnant at least once. In Namibia, of the 1857 teenage girls surveyed, it was found that, 378 (20.4%) of the teenagers experienced teenage pregnancy and most of those pregnancies were associated with household wealth status in which the house with low economic status were found to be vulnerable to early pregnancies. A research conducted in Southwest Nigeria by [30], found that social-economic factors in which poverty is among them were found to a captivating factor in early pregnancy among female students in the region. Furthermore, a study conducted in Uganda by [31], found that, a part from individual factors such as siblings who got pregnant while at home, economic factor were found to be another contributing factor to early pregnancy among female students in Naguru, Kampala. another study in Uganda by [32], showed that long travelling distance by students from school and back to school contributes to student pregnancies by associating it with raping and this is categorized in economic factors whereby those rich kids do not have problem with transport from school to home and vice versa.

Most of the visited studies worldwide shows that economic factor is one among many factors contributing to early pregnancy among female students, the same case also applies in many areas in Tanzania like a study by [33], showed that poverty and low economic status in general were the main factors for teen pregnancy among day school students in Ruvuma region whereby those students are attracted by very small things while they are on their way to school or back home from school, so this causes wealthier persons to take advantage of the poverty to have sexual intercourse with the teens hence pregnancy. So according to visited literatures there is a need to integrate the discussed economic factors from various places in the world with the factors associated with early pregnancy in Tanzania especially Kilolo District, Iringa where the timing and nature of the area differs.

The area where this research will be carried out after comprehensive review is Kilolo District, in Iringa Region, Tanzania. Kilolo District is among of the four districts of the Iringa Region, and it is one of the affected areas with early pregnancy among secondary school students in Tanzania. It is

enclosed to the North and East by Morogoro Region, to the South by Mufindi District and to the West by Iringa Rural District. The district is divided into 3 divisions (Mazombe, Mahenge and Kilolo), 27 Wards, 106 Villages, and 555 hamlets with 46,002 households [34, 35]. According to the report of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) Census done in August 2012 Kilolo district has a total population of 218,130 inhabitants of whom 105,856 are male and 112,274 are female [36]. Kilolo District is selected due to the proximity of the researcher because the researcher is still working at Kilolo District Council and have experience on the subject of study because she was a teacher in one of the secondary school in Kilolo so the researcher is aware of the cases of early pregnancy among students in this District.



Figure 1: A map of Kilolo District with red color

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology implemented by this review was ‘Internet Search’ and Library usage. The review visited different sources on the Internet through different websites to find confirmation and realities about the requested matters. Wherever possible the websites of the precise resource were consulted, for instance website of some journals which place materials only in html set-up rather than word, pdf or documents. The studied literatures are customarily accessible through Internet. Another technique used is observations in which the researcher was needed to visit different secondary school and hospitals where the researcher met with the respondents who are mainly students who got pregnant while in schools and the social welfare officers in those hospitals who provided information about the number of students who got pregnancy and visited the hospital for consultations about possible abortions or how to take care of the pregnancy. So in general secondary data source were largely used in an enormous part to come up with the conclusion.

### 4. OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Most of the literatures visited shows that poverty has an undesirable impact on the entire family, society, nation and worldwide economy. So teenagers originating from poor family surroundings are very much affected by social factors. These social factors not only does they consist of teen pregnancy alone, but also society ferocity, gang affiliation participation, alcohol and drugs abuse and a high occurrence of illiteracy. This is because due to low economic status which eventually brings the teens to the poverty line, they find themselves useless in the community because they cannot attend classes fully with hunger on them instead they find an alternative technique to live and for teen girls, it is very easy for them to throw themselves into prostitutions for the sake of satisfying their basic needs like clothing and food because for the case of shelter, they still depend on their parents or guardians but other needs they have to fight for themselves and especially after getting matured (after starting experiencing menstrual periods) where the their body become attentive to sexual attractions and hence exposing themselves into the risk of getting early pregnancy which may eventually cause them to drop from school and hence become illiterate.

On top of that, the teenagers coming from single parents were very much exposed to teenage pregnancy because of the parenting nature of single parent. This is observed in several literatures in different places or areas being either in rural areas or urban areas and this is mainly caused by the fact that single parent who is hit hard by poverty spent most of the time finding money by doing part time jobs like in construction sites assisting the technicians or in farms by doing small farming jobs in order to get paid at the end of day, so being so busy the parent get little time to be with his/her daughter for giving an advice on how to absorb peer pressures from her fellow ladies friends who already got pregnancy while at school or peer pressure from boys who seduces her for with the promise of giving her money when she accepts to engage in sexual intercourse hence leading to pregnancy but if her parent were close to her then she should have gotten the advice on how to escape from those attractions.

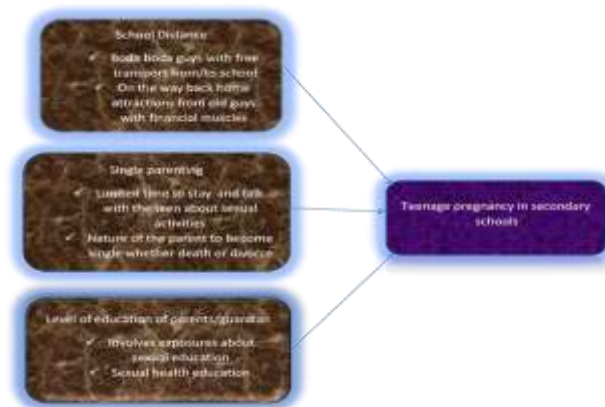


Figure 2: A diagram showing the summary of the observations from the visited literatures.

Another observations from the visited literatures is the distance from the secondary school to the place where the teenage students reside. This is one of the causative agent of early pregnancy among secondary students because on the way back home or from home to school in between there are nowadays “*BODABODA*” guys who always tries to seduce the teen students though the use of their transportation means by promising them that they will always be taking care of the teens through providing transport and a little financial assistance like buying them chips with fried eggs (*chipsi mayai isikauke*) in which most of the teens may not escape this trap if at their home they financially unstable. So this factor may also lead to early pregnancy among secondary school students. But if they are at boarding then this trap is very easily escapable but only remain with the trap of the peer pressure from their fellow students if the boarding school is a mixture one.

## 5. CONCLUSSION

Based on the observations from the visited literatures, it can easily be concluded that low economic status which in it have poverty as a main factor contributes to a large extent the teenage pregnancy among secondary school students because their guardians/parents fail to provide basic needs to their daughters hence exposing them to high risk of getting attracted to those who may be capable of providing those needs like clothes and luxurious foods. In addition, low level of education of some parents/guardians also contributes to the exposure of teen pregnancy because most parents living in rural areas lacks exposure on the sex education that they fail to convey messages to their daughters about the consequences of getting early pregnancy a part from exposure it was found that lack of financial muscles of parents makes them to be busy working on part time jobs hence they lack proper time to sit and talk with their daughters about risks of involving in sexual intercourse at tender age, which before the emergence of social media this task was formerly carried by family members like uncles and aunties or grandmothers or grandfathers but social media controls everything with also the presence of peer pressure from their fellow teens. So generally, most of teens get pregnancy because they use sex as a means of getting money to fulfil their social desires from (predatory older adults) those who are capable of providing or from well financed persons.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Based on the observations and conclusion, the study would like to recommend the economic empowerment to the families or households with low economic status so as to curb or avoid teenagers who are still attending secondary school studies from getting early pregnancy, even though sometimes is a challenging task to make follow up after empowering those families because the provided funds may be used somewhere else leaving the teens in the risk of getting the exposure to sexual attractions as before. For example

Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) funds are being misused a part from its primary objective of eradicating poverty.

In the future, more research must be conducted in Kilolo District Council find out how many teens have been affected with early pregnancy due to economic factors and whether it is possible to prevent the remaining number of teens from getting pregnancy while they are still schooling.

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