

Assessment of the Family Income Source of Parents or Guardians as the Contributing Factor to Teenage Pregnancy on Public Secondary Schools in Kilolo District Council.

Newaho Mgallah¹, Sosthenes Ruheza², John C. Pesha³

Department of Community Development, University of Iringa (UoI), Iringa, Tanzania
mgallahnewaho333@gmail.com¹, ruheza@uoi.ac.tz², peshajohn1234@gmail.com³

Abstract: *Teenage student pregnancy is becoming more problematic nowadays in Tanzania especially in rural areas and some few cases in urban areas. This study aimed at assessing the family income source of parents or guardians to teenage pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kilolo District Council. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study had a sample size of 46 respondents who were distributed with questionnaires as well as focus group and interview as data collection tools. Quantitative as well as qualitative data were analyzed through SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The findings indicated that economic factor was the leading factor contributing to teenage pregnancy among teenage students and it was mainly pointed out that those parents were not formally employed had high probability of their daughters to get early pregnancy because low and unreliable family income (poverty) which made their daughters to miss basic needs like three meals per day, transport fare and regular changing of clothes. The study recommends that parents or guardians must work hard to make sure their daughters are not attracted to engage into sexual intercourse because they lack necessary basic needs at home like three meals per day, sanitary pads during menstrual period and lastly parents need to educate their daughters about lifestyle of their fellow friends like if their friends are changing clothes regularly they should not imitate them because of the nature of the family income.*

Keywords— Family income source, Economic factors, Teenagers, teenage pregnancy, level of education, public secondary schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy is considered a worldwide question and it touches many teenagers consequently limiting their prospect[1]. It is well-defined as any pregnancy occurring before the age of 18 years. Pregnancies amongst teenage girls have damaging impacts to the teenagers and to their newborns [2]. Teenage pregnancy disrupts most of rights (like shelter and education) with life intimidating effects in sexual reproductive health which leads to high health provision expenses to the parents/guardians and the country at large[3, 4]. Teenage pregnancy stimulates joblessness as well as poverty, and the children born by teens are customarily uncared for, consequently extending the vicious cycle of poverty [1]. Individual alterations govern how teenagers responds to the variations related with the phase of growth and how this shakes them emotionally and at this stage teenagers likes to do things practically [5]. Peer pressure is as well a problematic among teenagers and the sense of wanting to 'be part of', leads some to early introduction to sexual activities at the age below 18 [6]. So early introduction to sexual actions takes the teenagers at the risk of getting pregnant as well as contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). This leads to economic and social repercussions to the teenager as she have to be most of the time at home to take care of a newborn, while the father of the baby who may also be a teenager, may be incapable of supporting the teen mother with her baby economically that may lead to a low financial income in the future [5].

According to the different literatures, kids born to teenagers are exposed to sickness and eventually death. Teen mothers are more exposed to negative pregnancy consequences I the sense that they are susceptible to adverse outcome in comparison with young women who are not in the hurry to bear children[7]. According to [8], teenagers living in rural areas are vulnerable to teenage pregnancy in comparison with those living in urban areas as a result, 23% of teenagers in rural areas had a kid or are pregnant in comparison with 12% of teenagers in urban areas.

The Tanzania constitution, defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years, thus bans forced marriage below that age but does not stipulate a minimum marriage age [9]. In Tanzania, teenage girls who are at home and not studying are prone to marriage than those still at school. Globally, factors associated with teenage pregnancy ranges from bride price payment which is associated with poverty, low educational level of either parents or guardians, and peer pressure from fellow teens to mention few [10]. According to [11], who compared teens with history of poverty only and teens with history of both poverty and child abuse, they found out that, teens with only poverty history, 16.8% of them got pregnant below the age of 17 years, while teens both poverty and child abuse history, 28.9% of them got pregnancy at the same range of age which shows that poverty and exposure to child abuse compounded the problem of teens to engage in early sexual intercourse which leads to pregnancy. While lack of school fees for students studying in schools where contributions are needed, lack of parental care and poverty were observed to be among the factors contributing to teenage pregnancy in some areas as per [12]. A study by [13], identified that the need for

dowry by families who are poor financially contributed to some extent to early teenage pregnancy as the family who come to ask for hand in marriage usually brings let say cattle as part of the dowry which the girls' family cannot refuse to take so eventually let their daughter to get married even below age.

The main aim of this study was to assess whether family income source of income contributes on teenage pregnancy or not in selected public secondary schools at Kilolo District Council and to give recommendations on what measures should be taken to curb the problem.

The main contributions of this work are as follows:

- ✓ Nature of economic activities of parents or guardians contributes to teenage pregnancy.
- ✓ Inability of parents to take care or provide basic needs to their teenage students contributed them to get early pregnancy
- ✓ Inability of parents or guardians to take care of their daughters about transport fare in case they are staying far from school contributed to their daughters to get early pregnancy
- ✓ Failure of parents or guardians to provide their teenage students sufficient availability of foods like having three meals per days also contributed to early sexual involvement of their daughters.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology used in this study comprised of both secondary and primary data collection methods. Secondary information applied in the present research comprise of journals, magazines and internet sources. A well-structured and managed questionnaire, focus group and interview tools were prepared and distributed to the respondents from three wards of Kilolo District Council namely Uhambingeto, Ilole and Ilula. 46 teenage mothers from all three wards were surveyed for the determination of data collection. The data were collected based on suitability methodology. The data collected were analyzed through percentages and frequencies in which the data were presented in table formats, pie charts and bar charts which were obtained using Excel and some using SPSS 26 (Statistical Package for Social Science version 26.0).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section the results and discussion of the findings are presented, they begin with simple demographic information of respondents followed by main indicating factor which is family income source of the parents or guardians living with the respondents.

3.1 Demographic information

This section presents general information of respondents such as ward, age, education level, marital status of parents or guardians and number of households.

3.1.1 Wards distribution of Respondents

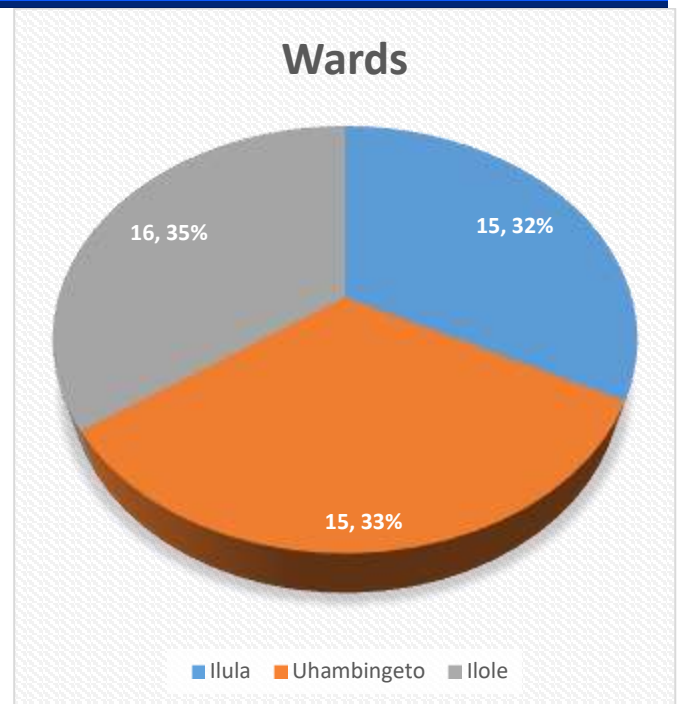


Figure 1: Ward distribution of respondents of Kilolo District Council.

Figure 1 above shows the respondents who were visited for questioning and as shown the large number of teenage pregnancy was found to be at Ilole (35%) ward followed by the other two wards of Uhambingeto (33%) and Ilula (32%).

3.1.2 Present Age of Respondents

As per figure 2, the age distribution of respondents at the time this research was carried out is shown and it simply implies that the respondents are still teenagers which implicates that they got pregnancy at very early age and as a case in figure 4.2, most respondents were quoted to be in the range of 17-18 (23) compared to other age ranges like up to the time of this research there were no reported teen mother aged below 13 rather there were 4 teen mothers whose age ranged between 13 and 16 and then above 18 who are taken as matured teen mother the reported respondents were 19 who by implication, they got their pregnancy when they were below 18.

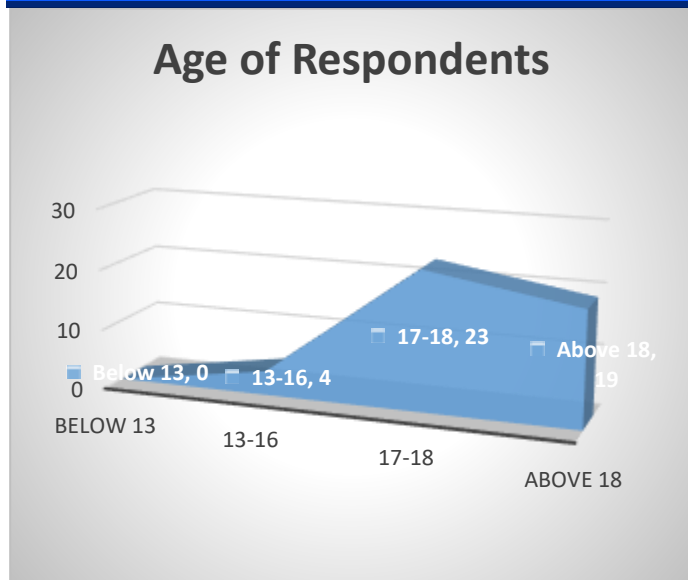


Figure 2: Age of respondents at the time of interview

3.1.3 Level of Education of respondents at the time when they got pregnancy

Figure 3 below shows the level of education of the respondents when they first got their pregnancy and as it can be evidenced most of the respondents were in form three (21) followed by form two (15) and then form one and lastly form four. The trends of data collected clearly explains about the maturity of form four students who by the time they got pregnancy the reproduction topic was already taught so it becomes easier for those form students to be aware about the impact of having unprotected sexual intercourse or it becomes easier for them to get used to calendar for their menstrual period compared to education level below form four who are not aware about the topic of reproduction so it becomes difficult for them to control sexual emotions while also having to take care of the outcome caused by those sexual emotions like one of the student responded that:

“...I got pregnancy when I was in form two first term but I was not aware that im pregnant until the pregnancy reached three months that is when I discovered that I’m pregnant and this to my side was largely contributed by the level of understanding I had about menstrual period that is when to not engage in sexual intercourse when I’m in danger zone and when to engage when I’m safe the education which I didn’t get before I got pregnancy...”

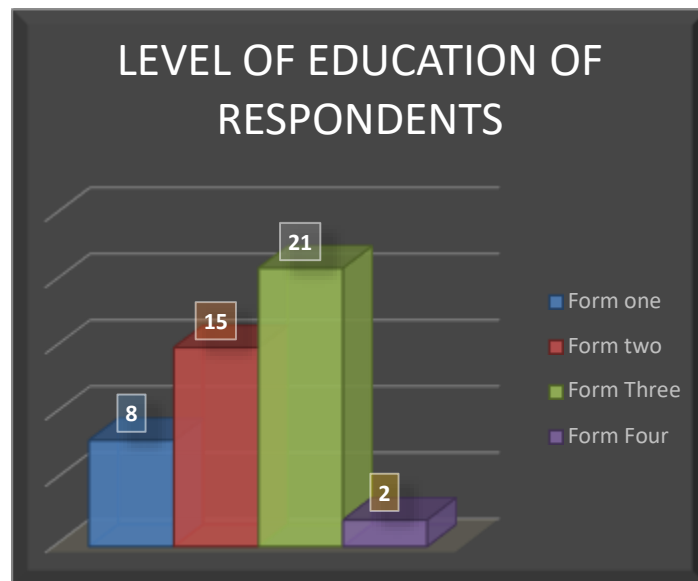


Figure 3: Level of education of the respondents when they first got pregnancy

3.1.4 Marital Status of parents/guardians living with the respondents

Under this subsection, the study was interested to find the persons who were living with the respondents and as it can be shown in figure 4, a large number of respondents (31) at the time when they got pregnancy were found to be living with their parents or guardians whose marital status indicated married followed those living with single parent or guardian (11) and finally only 4 respondents responded that their parents or guardians were separated or divorced. Separated in this context is taken as parents or guardians living very from each other in which case the respondent is living with only one of them meaning either father or mother alone but she has the access to see both parents when she needs to do so. The results interprets that, respondents who were living with both parents were very much afraid to seek any advice from any parent because they fear the one told can communicate the matter to another one so they kept secret until the parents themselves discovers the pregnancy.

This was seconded by one of the respondents who said:
“...I’m living with my both parents in the family which we believe in God and we are faithful Christians and my father is a deacon in our church, so when he hears that I have started practicing sexual intercourse he can be able to deal with me effectively so that people could not take or family as cursed family because they believe in him very much about rising fear God daughters and sons. And when I tell my mother about the same issue she must seek advice from father so in order to keep my secret I cannot tell anyone because they trust each other. So this made me to keep my secret when I first got pregnancy even though I didn’t know that I’m pregnant until three months later is when I discovered I’m pregnant and who to tell about my pregnancy between mother and father was practically difficult to me, but after one more month my

mother discovered that I'm pregnant and she told my father who was angered by my decision but it was too late..."

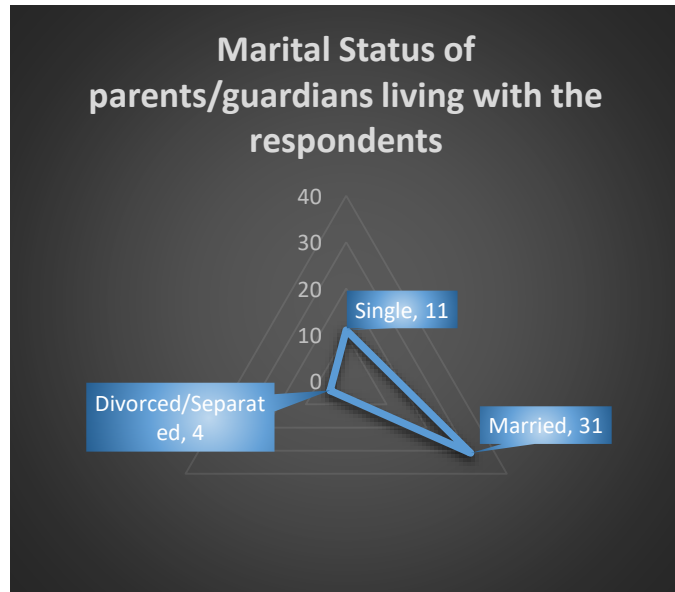


Figure 4: Shows the family status of the parents or guardians of the teen mothers.

But for the case of respondents who were living with single parents or divorced one, it was observed that they were very free to share their sexual experience with their parent especially those living with mothers only as the mother was able to give education to her children about sexual intercourse and their impact that is why there are very few cases regarding pregnancy issues for single parents. Like one of the respondents was very open to share information about sexual relationship she had while still student to her mother and the mother was supportive on every move her daughter is taking like:

"...When I started dating while studying form two, I told my mother that I got a boyfriend who is motorcycle man (bodaboda guy) and my mother just asked me whether I'm using protective gears during mating and when I said no she started educating me on how she ended getting me when she was still student so she warned me not to entertain mating without knowing my calendar or using condom. I followed my mother's instruction but I get caught one day and this ended up on being a teen mother..."

3.1.5 Number of households members in the family of respondents.

The number of households members living with the respondents sometimes determines how possible teenage girl can be attracted to engage into early sexual activities, as per our study we found that most of the teen mothers we reached out responded that sometimes living in the household having at least six members were contributing factors for them to get early pregnancy as the family head can sometime not be able to afford all the expenses needed by the teenage student due to availability of large family and this automatically prompt

the lady to find other means of financing her expenses and hence get trapped to the guys who can provide to her and hence pregnancy and this was particularly seen on the households having more than 3 members like in figure 5.

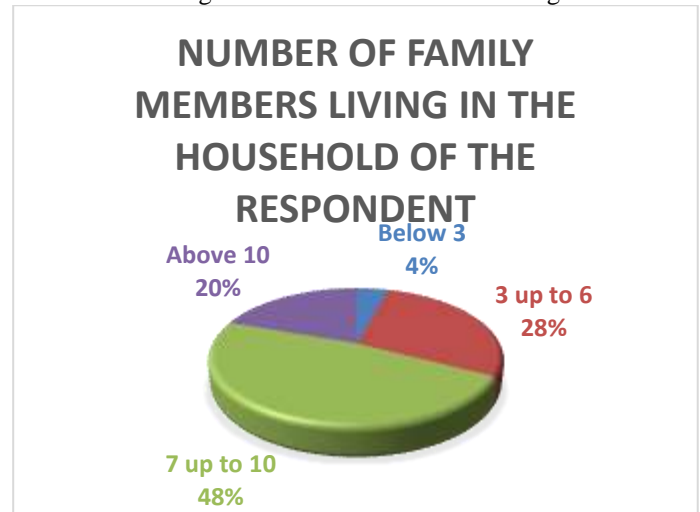


Figure 5: A pie chart showing the number of family members living in the household of the respondent.

As shown, the largest percent of the respondents who got pregnancy based on the number of households living with them were between 7 up to 10 which accounted for 48% followed by those households with members between 3 up to 6 which shows that the large the households with poor financial backing the large the extent of their daughters to get early pregnancy.

3.2 Family income source of the parents or guardians of the respondents

The nature of economic status of the parents/guardians living with the teenage girls sometimes contributes to the early pregnancy attainment depending on the family income. In this study the researcher asked the respondents about the nature of the economic activities their parents were doing and the majority were farmers (26), followed by business activities carried out by their parents or guardians (12), and the smallest number of the respondents were found to the daughters of doctors or nurses (1). This implies that the economic status of the parents contributes very much to the vulnerability of teens to engage in sexual intercourse especially if the parents are very busy

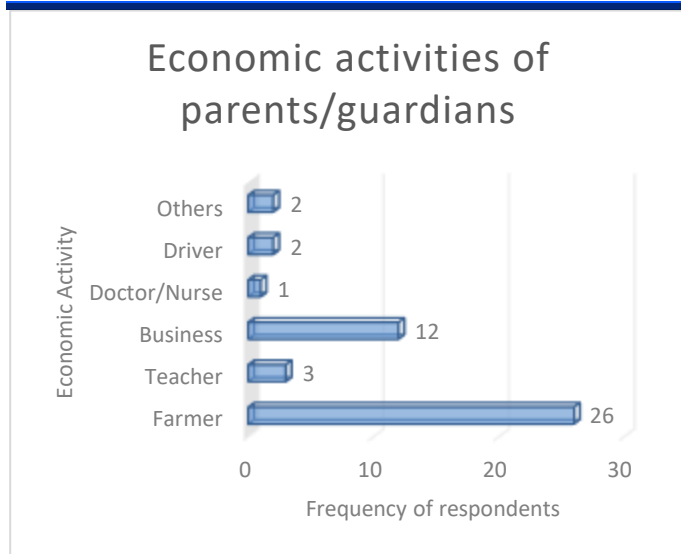


Figure 6: A chart showing the nature of economic activities of the parents or guardians of the respondents.

with their economic activities compared with being busy in educating their daughter about the impact of early pregnancy to teenage students as shown in figure 6, in which only one respondent came from the family whose economic activities is based on health and hence being able to provide education regarding sex to their daughters. For instance one of the respondent who were approached regarding the economic activities of her parents on her getting early pregnancy she just replied:

“...My father is a businessman and also my mother they operate two different businesses they leave home early in the morning and they return at home around 19h00 every day except Sunday, so most of the time after I come back from school I’m alone with only house girl who already had a baby before coming home, because most of the time I’m using with her she taught me many things about sexual intercourse which made me attracted to it because I got education about sexual intercourse from her I one day tried to have sexual intercourse with the neighbor’s boy who later on became my boyfriend. Because I was free after school hours I used most of the time to have sexual intercourse with my boyfriend until I got pregnancy, I hid it from my parents as they were busy but our house girl knew and she was threatening to tell my parents if I couldn’t give her the amount of money she requested, it went for three months which later my mom discovered and asked me why was I hiding it from her and how did I get it. I told her everything and from that day my mom left businesses for my father in order to get time to be with her children. So I got pregnancy because of the nature of income activities of my parents...”

The above narration is about parents who are financially stable but they are very busy with their economic activities rather than having some time with their daughters at home. Another respondent whose parents are farmers came up with different situation regarding parents being busy and she said: *“...I got pregnancy because my guardians were very much brutal to me about farm work and they were not giving me the*

needs I needed by working hard on our farm, they always wanted me to be busy with farm work rather than concentrating on school because after I come back from school the first thing they would say go irrigate the vegetables garden after which I got tired which made me to start disliking school because my performance suddenly dropped and I started getting abuse from teachers regarding the drop of my school performance which in my mind was largely contributed with the farm works. On top of that they were not giving me proper basic girl’s needs like sanitary pads in which my step mom used to say wear the torn clothes during my menstrual period which made me to be seduced by motorcycle guy who ended up impregnating me by deceiving with small presents and the surety of my monthly sanitary pads...”

So generally, economic status of parents contributes in different ways the vulnerability of teenage students to early pregnancy. For example in table 1 shows exactly how respondents got pregnancy

Table 1: Ability of parents to provide basic needs to respondents

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 1 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 87 |
| No | 45 | 97.8 | 97.8 | 100 |
| Total | 46 | 100 | 100 | |

because of the ability of their parents to provide basic needs like good shelter, good clothing including the capability of guardians or parents to not provide necessary sanitary pads during the menstrual cycle of their daughters which prompted them to find shortcuts on getting those needs including accepting the seduction from *bodaboda* guys for the sake of obtaining money and small gifts from them in which most of their parents (97.8%) were not able to meet their demands except few parents who accounts for 2.2% who were able to provide all necessary needs of their daughter.

A part from clothing and shelter another important factor which made teenage students to be prone to pregnancy is the availability of good food from their households. As it can be shown in figure 7, most of the respondents got pregnancy because of starvation obtained from their parents which accounts to 50% of those respondents who used to get only one meal per day from their household and this made them to be attracted to those guys who are able at least to provide two or more meals per day, for example only 9% of the respondents accepted that they got pregnancy because of other factors not because they were starving. But another

contributing factor on teenage students to

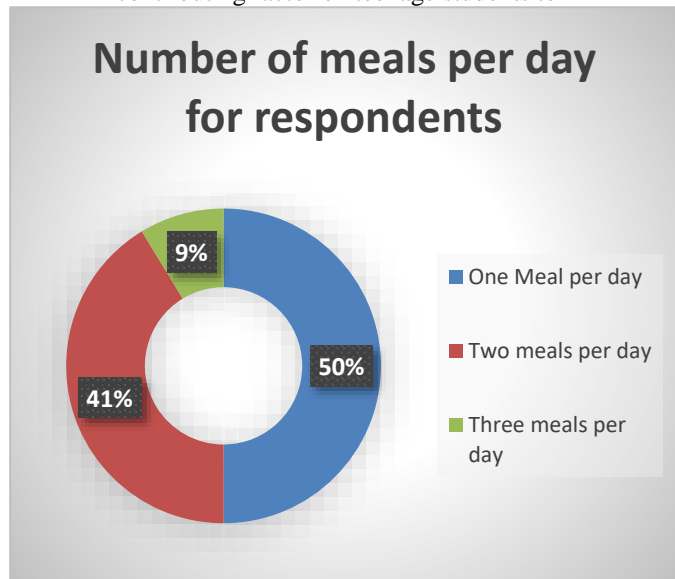


Figure 7: Chart showing distribution of meals of respondents per day.

engage themselves into love affairs, is to regularly change clothes due to pressure they get from fellow students who tend to change clothes time after time, and this is witnessed in figure 8 in which 98% of the teenage who were not able to change clothes regularly because of the poor financial status of their parents ended up getting pregnancy compared to 2% of those teenage students whose parents were capable of handling such situation. And this is evidenced by one

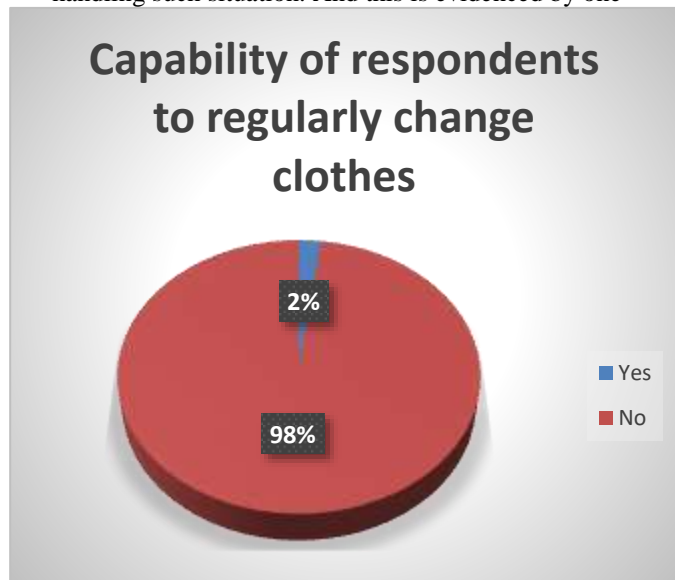


Figure 8: Ability of teenage students to change clothes regularly.

respondent who said:

"...my friends were frequently exchanging clothes and I fell jealousy about that, when I asked when of my best friend whose condition financially is like mine, she said those clothes are bought by her boyfriend and she cannot go with them to her parents because her mom will question her where did she

get those clothes instead she said she used to hide those clothes to her boyfriend and when needed she would go there and change them and this was carried out regularly which made me also to get involved into such activities and ended up with pregnancy which later on my boyfriend refused it..." Sleeping conditions and environment of some respondents were also found to be contributing factor on getting teenage pregnancy for students in secondary school especially those coming from poor family background in financial issues like one respondent responded that:

"...my family is very poor in the sense that we sleep on the mattresses without beds but to my boyfriend I sleep on the very good bed with full furnished room which made me to be eager to very often to him and when I reach there what we do is always having sex which finally made me to get pregnancy, but it was mainly caused by the pleasure I was getting sleeping on his room..."

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings, it was found that the nature of economic status of parents or guardians living with the respondents contributed very much to teenage pregnancy as some families were not able to afford three meals per day due to poverty and also the study found that the inability of guardians or parents to make sure their daughters were supplied with necessary needs like regularly changing clothes or supplying sanitary pads during menstruation contributed very much on teenage pregnancy, without forgetting the inability of parents to provide transport fare for those living far from school where students are needed to walk long distance which makes men to tempt the teenagers through transportation fare or means like bodaboda. In very rare cases, it was found that the parents or guardians who were wealthy but very busy with their activities made them to forget about taking care of their daughters because of business, then their daughters learnt sexual activities through relatives or house helper who always remain with her at home.

5. RECOMMENDATION AND FUTURE WORK

From the research findings and the conclusion above, the following are the recommendations:

- ✓ Parents or guardians must work hard to make sure their daughters are not attracted to engage into sexual intercourse because they lack necessary basic needs at home like three meals per day, sanitary pads during menstrual period and lastly parents need to educate their daughters about lifestyle of their fellow friends like if their friends are changing clothes regularly they should not imitate them because of the nature of the family income.
- ✓ Government should introduce strong and powerful rules for those caught being in sexual relationship with teenage students before waiting until teenagers get pregnancy then the government start finding who gave the pregnant and imprison the person while the

teenager is already pregnant. So it is better to avoid it by if possible imprisoning the person while the teenager has not got the pregnancy.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to extend our appreciations to University of Iringa management and staff for encouragement they gave us during data collection, analysis and interpretation. Also we would like to thanks our friend Nelvin Lusekelo, Nelson Lusekelo and Nelvis Lusekelo for being there all the time when we needed them.

REFERENCES

- [1] W. H. Organization, "Annual technical report 2015: department of reproductive health and research, including UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP)," World Health Organization 2016.
- [2] J. M. Kapileh, "Contributing factors to early pregnancy among girls in public secondary schools in Arusha city," The Open University of Tanzania, 2019.
- [3] J. A. Romley, A. K. Shah, P. J. Chung, M. N. Elliott, K. D. Vestal, and M. A. Schuster, "Family-provided health care for children with special health care needs," *Pediatrics*, vol. 139, 2017.
- [4] K. G. Santhya and S. J. Jejeebhoy, "Sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescent girls: Evidence from low-and middle-income countries," *Global public health*, vol. 10, pp. 189-221, 2015.
- [5] I. G. Francis, "The effect of household characteristics on adolescent childbearing in Lesotho," University of the Witwatersrand, 2008.
- [6] T. Motsima and J.-C. Malela-Majika, "The effects of early first sexual intercourse amongst Lesotho women: evidence from the 2009 Lesotho demographic and health survey," *African journal of reproductive health*, vol. 20, pp. 34-42, 2016.
- [7] S. NDoH and I. SAMRC, "South Africa demographic and health survey 2016: key indicator report. Pretoria, South Africa and Rockville, Maryland, USA: National Department of Health (NDoH)," Statistics South Africa (SSA), South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and ICF, 2017.
- [8] F. Yego, C. D'este, J. Byles, J. S. Williams, and P. Nyongesa, "Risk factors for maternal mortality in a Tertiary Hospital in Kenya: a case control study," *BMC pregnancy and childbirth*, vol. 14, pp. 1-9, 2014.
- [9] E. Nahamya, "Child, early, and forced marriages (CEFM) in the Commonwealth: the role of the judiciary," *Commonwealth Law Bulletin*, vol. 43, pp. 111-144, 2017.
- [10] Unicef, "The State of the World's Children 2011: Adolescence: an age of opportunity. 2011," New York: Unicef, 2020.
- [11] S. K. Garwood, L. Gerassi, M. Jonson-Reid, K. Plax, and B. Drake, "More than poverty: The effect of child abuse and neglect on teen pregnancy risk," *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 57, pp. 164-168, 2015.
- [12] G. Vincent and F. M. Alemu, "Factors contributing to, and effects of, teenage pregnancy in Juba," *South Sudan Medical Journal*, vol. 9, pp. 28-31, 2016.
- [13] M. N. Lambani, "Poverty the cause of teenage pregnancy in Thulamela municipality," *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, vol. 6, pp. 171-176, 2015.