



Back to School after Delivery, the Plight of Teenage Mothers in Zanzibar: Experiences from Mjini Magharibi's Urban and West Districts in Unguja

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Abstract: A litany of literature on teenage pregnancy and subsequent motherhood highlighting causes for teen pregnancies and subsequent effects on the teens academic performance and development exist, but there is a dearth of literature that reveals the challenges many teenage mothers face when they are re-admitted back to school after giving birth. Lack of nuanced understanding of how the teens undertake their triple roles as mothers, parents and student is prevalent. The article highlights the plight of teenage mothers who are re-admitted back to school in Zanzibar. Primary data were obtained using public rapid appraisal methods. Selected respondents included school heads, teachers and teenage mothers from the selected secondary schools as well as officials from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Zanzibar. Secondary information was sourced from grey literature. It was established that most teenage girls in secondary schools are more likely to become pregnant at the ages between fifteen to seventeen years when they are in secondary education level. On average, most teenage mothers returned to school in less than three months after delivery especially those who are married and had adequate support for taking care of their newborns. Those with inadequate support to care for their babies and not in conjugal relationship, take long to return back to school and in extreme cases, they fail to resume studies. All teenage mothers, regardless of their age and marital status, experience individual and institutional challenges upon returning to school. Unmarried teenage mothers suffer more compared to those who are married. In coping with individual challenges, most teenage mothers seek help from diverse sources. Mainstreaming gender in the policy frameworks that govern girl education in Zanzibar is found wanting, specifically, the Government of Zanzibar should introduce a clear implementation strategy, having the requisite law notwithstanding, to ensure that all pregnant teenage girls are supported and encouraged to return to school after delivery and further institute an effective monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that educational and other rights of teenage mothers are met.

Keywords: Teenage Mothers, Pregnancy, Delivery, School Re-Admission

1. INTRODUCTION

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood is a global problem. Each year, approximately more than sixteen million teenage girls around the world give birth. Majority of the teenage mothers are found in low and middle income countries (WHO, 2016). Among the low and middle income countries, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of teenage pregnancy and births in the world (UNICEF/Plan International, 2014), where it is estimated that more than 50% of all teenage girls in Sub-Saharan Africa give birth before reaching the age of twenty (UNFPA, 2013).

Teenage pregnancy is a development issue of concern because of its negative consequences on the teenage girls, the children born and the community. First, the pregnancy itself brings radical changes to the girls' lives and rarely for the better. In most cases, the girls' education is interrupted or may completely end as most either drop out from school or are expelled (Plan International, 2012). Furthermore, teenage girls lack qualifications for securing employment and therefore become trapped in poverty for the rest of their lives. Secondly, teenage pregnancy is associated with numerous health risks such as placental tears, obstruction during delivery, obstetric fistulae, anaemia, high blood pressure and even death. Thirdly, available evidence show that children born to teenage mothers are most likely be premature, have birth injuries or may even die during infancy (WHO, 2016).

Furthermore, in most cases, there is evidence that daughters born to teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage mothers themselves thus sustaining the cycle of poverty.

Teenage pregnancy in Tanzania has been associated with high dropout rates among teenage girls in primary and secondary schools. Each year, thousands of teenage girls in primary and secondary schools are either expelled or forced to drop out from school due to pregnancy. For instance, in 2010, more than 8000 girls (about 1760 from primary schools and more than 6300 from secondary schools) dropped out of school due to pregnancy (UNICEF, 2011). Two years later, in 2012, more than 7000 girls dropped out from school due to pregnancy (2433 were in primary schools and 4718 were in secondary schools) (PMO-RALG, 2013). The records indicate that proportionally, more girls are dropping out of school while in secondary school level than in primary school level. All the same, teenage pregnancy has been one of major obstacles to teenage girls' access to education in Tanzania.

According to the Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey (2016), 27 percent of teenage girls in the country aged between 15 and 19 years were already mothers or pregnant with first child (MoHCDGEC, 2016). This is alarming situation since in the year 2010, only about 23 percent of teenage girls aged between 15 and 19 years had begun child bearing (TDHS, 2010). The regions with high percentages of teenage pregnancy in Tanzania include Katavi (45.1%), Tabora (42.6%), Dodoma (38.6%), Morogoro (38.5%), Mara (37.4%), Shinyanga (33.5%), Mbeya (33%), Ruvuma and Kigoma (32%) and Pwani (30) and Mjini Magharibi (5%) in Zanzibar (TDHS, 2016).

Pregnant teenage girls in mainland Tanzania are normally expelled from schools (HakiElimu, 2011). Nevertheless, it has now been established that there is neither government policy nor law that explicitly call for expulsion of pregnant students from school or preventing them from returning to school after delivery. Pregnant girls were being expelled simply because most school officials believed that expelling pregnant students was required by law and that it would discourage promiscuity among other students (Assey, 2012; Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013).

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in mainland Tanzania made it clear in the year 2010 that there was no official policy that demanded expulsion of pregnant teenage girls from school or preventing them from returning to school after delivery and thus, it instructed re-admission to school of the pregnant girls after delivery (UNICEF, 2011). Despite existence of this policy statement, pregnant teenage girls both in primary and secondary schools have continued to be expelled from schools on the assumption that their presence in classrooms or school environment would set bad example to other girls by enticing more girls to engage in pre-marital sex and thus becoming pregnant. Furthermore, in the year 2015, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in mainland Tanzania launched the New Education and Training Policy (ETP), which contained a component allowing pregnant teenage girls to resume school after delivery (commonly referred to as re-entry component). However, these re-entry guidelines were not endorsed by the respective authority (Rutgers, 2016). As a result, for the past five years or so, on mainland Tanzania, there have been discourses among education key stakeholders on whether or not to allow re-entry of teenage mothers back to school after delivery.

The case is however different for Tanzania isles of Zanzibar. In the year 2005, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ) enacted a law called Spinsters and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005. The law allows girls who fall pregnant while in primary and secondary schools to continue with their studies after delivery (MoEVT- Zanzibar, 2014). The law was purposely introduced mainly for two reasons. First, to ensure that both girls and boys have equal rights as well as opportunities to education regardless of their sex, ethnicity and socio-economic status and secondly, that early pregnancy does not strip off girls' educational potentials that can be realised. Intriguingly, despite of having this supportive legal context, many teenage girls who fall pregnant while in primary and secondary schools in Zanzibar still drop out of school every year (LHRC & ZLSC, 2015). On the other hand, other sources indicate that in most cases, the return to school of the teenage mothers is not smooth as expected and many fail to progress to upper secondary and higher education due to various individual, institutional and socio-cultural reasons (MoEVT- Zanzibar, 2014). This article based on data collected in Zanzibar, where supportive legal context for teen mothers' re-admission to school has been operating for more than a decade, attempts to highlight the plight of teenage mothers upon returning to school after delivery.

1.1. Defining Teen Pregnancy and Experiences from Sub Saharan Africa

Teen pregnancy is when a girl aged between ten (10) and nineteen (19) years of age become pregnant (WHO, 2004; UNICEF, 2008) in other words, teenage pregnancy refers to a girl becoming pregnant before reaching 18 years (UNFPA, 2013). Teenage mothers can only return to school depending on the following factors: First, there must legal context that legitimizes the return of teenage mothers to school and the government should enforce and monitor the implementation of such law and policy in all primary and secondary schools. Secondly, at individual level, the teenage mothers must be willing to return to school and determined to excel in their studies. This will enable them to successfully complete their education. Thirdly, there should be a supportive and good learning environment for the teenage mothers in the sense that teachers and students should deliberately extend cooperation to the re-admitted teenage mothers as they resume and pursue their studies. This will bestow confidence and self esteem to the teenage mothers thus concentrating in their studies. Fourth, families and communities should be supportive in caring for the babies born of the teenage mothers especially when the mothers are attending school. Nevertheless, despite the favourable legal context and other factors mentioned above, teenage mothers will successfully return to school only if they are willing to do to so.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest prevalence of teenage pregnancies in the world. In the year 2013, 28 percent of all teenage mothers in the world were found in SSA (UNFPA, 2013). In most SSA countries, teenage pregnancy leads to loss of education opportunities due to widespread practice of expelling pregnant teenage girls from primary and secondary schools (Centre for Reproductive Rights, 2013). Absence of clear national policies on those falling pregnant while in primary and secondary schools coupled with absence of guidelines for school re-entry after delivery has had many pregnant teenage girls in SSA being denied pursuing their education (UIS, 2016). For example, pregnant teenage girls in primary and secondary schools in Uganda, are normally expelled from schools (Madanda, 2014), but most of these expulsions of the pregnant teenage girls was carried out by the school administrations as a way to deter other girls from falling pregnant. Furthermore, many teenage girls decide to drop out of school once they fall pregnant so as to avoid shameful expulsion.

In Sierra Leone, it was established that teenage pregnancy contributes to high drop-out rates among teenage girls in primary and secondary schools (Coinco, 2010). This was exacerbated by policies and practices that denied pregnant teenage girls their right to education. This was compounded by the fact that most of the pregnant teenage girls were rejected by their families and thus forced to live with men who impregnated them or with the impregnators' families/relatives. In a worse scenario where the impregnator refused to take responsibility of the pregnancy, the pregnant teenage girl ended up either living on the streets or with close relatives who would accept. On the contrary, some countries in SSA for example South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Cameroon and Zambia have adopted re-entry policies that allow teenage girls who fall pregnant to return to school after delivery. Nevertheless, in most of these countries, the re-entry policies are either poorly implemented or not carried out at all. Many research reveals that after delivery, most teenage mothers are unable to re-enrol due to reasons such as lack of family support, social stigma from fellow students and teachers and lack of affordable childcare forcing many teenage mothers to engage in income generating activities after delivery rather than returning to school (Tibasima, 2017).

In Kenya, for example, which introduced pregnant school girls re-entry policy in 1994, available literatures indicate that majority of pregnant teenage school girls, both in primary and secondary schools do not continue with school after delivery (Bhuyan, *et al.*, 2010; Walgwe, *et al.*, 2016). One of the major factors that contributed to limited success of the re-entry policy in Kenya is its poor implementation caused by lack of awareness of both the policy and its guidelines among heads of schools; teachers, parents and students (Centre for the Study of Adolescence, 2008). Financial constraints leading to failure to pay school fees and meeting the costs of child care were also cited. Other problems cited are social in nature for example lack of parental support for the teen mother, feeling shame and fear of being stigmatized by fellow students (Walgwe *et al.*, 2016).

Likewise, in Zambia, despite existence of the re-entry policy, many pregnant teenage girls do not resume with studies after delivery. Most parents preferred marrying off their pregnant daughters and get bride price rather than allowing them to continue with school after delivery because they believe

that educating an unmarried teenage mother would not benefit the family (Wedekind and Milingo, 2015). Social stigma and ridicule from fellow students and teachers were other issues that limit readmission of delivered teenage mothers.

1.2. The Tanzanian Case

In Tanzania, thousands of teenage girls are either expelled or forced to drop out from school each year due to pregnancy without considering factors that led to the pregnancies. For instance, in 2010, more than 8000 teenage girls (about 1760 from primary schools and more than 6300 from secondary schools) were forced to drop out from school due to pregnancy (UNICEF, 2011). Pregnant students in mainland Tanzania were expelled because of expulsion regulation instituted in 2002 amendment to the Education Act that requires expulsion of students who commit an act seen as an offence against morality (HakiElimu, 2011). Nevertheless, the regulation does not explain the crimes that are considered against morality, but school officials often interpret pregnancy as the offence.

The question of re-admitting teenage pregnant mothers back to school has been a major topic of contestation in the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania. The major shift on how teenage mothers should be handled came on 22nd June 2017. In one of his public speeches in Bagamoyo District, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Dr. John Pombe Magufuli made it crystal clear that during his tenure as President, pregnant teenage girls in primary and secondary schools in Tanzania will not be allowed to continue with normal schooling. He emphasized that after delivery, such teen mothers will have to look for alternative education advancement options or engage outright in farming and other economic activities. This is not new trend in mainland Tanzania because after delivery, most teenage mothers prefer to engage themselves in income generating activities to support themselves economically. In extreme circumstances, the pregnant teens are coerced by parents/guardians to get married to men who impregnated them or to stay with the impregnator's family and in extreme situations; they resort to prostitution to make ends meet (Sik, 2015).

Exception abound however for example, pregnant teenage girls especially those who belonged to well-to-do families in Dar es Salaam, were able to continue with their education after delivery through private schools (Assey, 2012). This was the case for like scenarios in Dodoma (Maluli and Bali, 2014). Nevertheless, the return to school of delivered teenage mothers was not devoid of challenges. The teenage mothers are often stigmatized and discriminated by their fellow students leading to low self esteem and confidence. Other challenges they encounter includes missing school often when their babies fall sick, lacking nannies to care of their babies during school sessions and poor concentration in class due to lack of sufficient sleep after suckling the babies all night long (Maluli and Bali, 2014). Despite the presence of a supportive legal context for teen mothers in Zanzibar, many teenage mothers in primary and secondary schools are still dropping out (LHRC & ZLSC, 2015). For most teenage mothers, the return to school has not been smooth as expected and many fail to progress to upper secondary and higher education due to various individual, institutional and socio-cultural reasons (MoEVT-Zanzibar, 2014).

2. METHODOLOGY

This article is based on a study that was conducted in two districts in Zanzibar. The districts are Mjini Magharibi Urban and Mjini Magharibi West. These districts were selected for two reasons. First, it is only in Zanzibar that pregnant students are legally permitted to continue with their education after delivery and nowhere else in the United Republic of Tanzania. Secondly, of recent, Mjini Magharibi region had the highest percentage of teenage pregnancy in Zanzibar (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The population sample consisted of all teenage mothers, students and teachers (including school heads) in public secondary schools located in Mjini Magharibi Urban and West Districts in Zanzibar. Government Officials in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar especially those working on matters related to teenage pregnancy were also included.

Five criteria were used to identify and select respondents. The first criterion was about teenage mother's age and their age at the time when they fell pregnant. Women below the age of 25 who fell pregnant before they had reached 18 years were selected. The second criterion included the teenage mothers who fell pregnant while in secondary school. The third criterion required the teenage mothers

who are either back in school or had attempted to return to school after delivery or returned to school after delivery and has now graduated from school. The fourth criterion required selecting respondents who were interacting frequently with the teenage mothers or those whose work involves matters related to teenage pregnancy and/or teenage motherhood in Zanzibar. The fifth criterion was that respondents other than Officers from MoEVT must either be or have been teaching or studying in a public secondary school located within Urban and/or West Districts in Mjini Magharibi region in Zanzibar.

Purposive and snow ball sampling were used to identify and select respondents for different categories that is school heads, teachers, teenage mothers and students in the selected public secondary schools as well as Government Officers from the MoEVT in Zanzibar. A total of a hundred and seven (107) respondents were involved in this study. The data used for this article were obtained through public rapid appraisal methods such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

Table1. *Distribution of Respondents Involved in the Study with Respect to Category of Respondent*

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
School heads	6	5.6
Teachers	30	28.0
Teenage mothers	54	50.5
MoEVT Officers	7	6.5
Students	10	9.3
Total	107	100.0

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Typical Age and Class at which Teenage Girls are Likely become Pregnant with First Child

According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training officials and school heads in the study areas, The typical age that teenage girls in secondary schools in Urban and West Districts are more likely to fall pregnant for the first time was between the age sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) years. This implies that most teenage girls in the two districts under study engage in sexual intercourse at very young ages. This finding corresponds with the findings by Tanzania 2016 Demographic Health Survey which revealed that most teenage girls in Tanzania begin sexual intercourse by the age of fifteen years. Table 2 presents a summary of their responses.

Table2. *Typical Age at which teenage girls in secondary schools are most likely to become pregnant*

Age	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
14	2	4.7
15	5	11.6
16	19	44.2
17	10	23.2
18+	7	16.3
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

The above findings were ascertained by teenage mothers who were asked as to when they fell pregnant for the first time. Many of the teen mothers indicated that they fell pregnant at the ages between fifteen and seventeen years of ages as summarized in Table 3.

Table3. *Teenage mothers' Response to Age of Pregnancy with First Child*

Age	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
14	4	7.4
15	22	40.7
16	17	31.5
17	11	20.4
Total	54	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

Overall, responses from teenage mothers were not quite different from those of the other respondents. The only salient issue that stand out is that most of the teenage mothers in the study area were below seventeen years at the time of falling pregnant for the first time. These findings are consistent with other study findings from literature where in most SSA countries, teenage girls give birth before they attained eighteen years. To be specific, between thirty and fifty one percent of teenage girls in fourteen (14) SSA countries give birth before they turn eighteen years (Tibasima, 2017).

In trying to gain further understanding on the plight of teenage mothers in secondary schools, an attempt was made to establish at which level of education that most teenage girls are likely to become pregnant, using an open-ended question. Being certain about this issue would be useful in terms of designing future intervention measures such as introducing sexuality and teenage reproductive health education. The contents of such a course would have to be tailored in such a way to match with the level of education the teen girls are in. Many of the respondents (65.1%) indicated that majority of teenage girls in secondary schools in Urban and West Districts are most likely to become pregnant when they are in their third year or fourth year of their secondary education (that is form three and form four). Very few respondents (4.7%) indicated that some teen girls become pregnant just as they start secondary education, that is when they are in first year of secondary education.(that is form one) (Table 4). Data from teen mothers themselves were not at variance with this finding.

Table4. *Class at which secondary school students become pregnant with first child*

Class	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Form I	1	2.3
Form II	5	11.6
Form III	17	39.5
Form IV	11	25.6
Form V	7	16.3
Form VI	2	4.7
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

3.2. Prevalence of pregnancy cases in secondary schools

Available records from the Office of the Registrar of Education in Zanzibar showed that between years 2012 and 2016, a total of eighteen (18) pregnancy cases were reported from secondary schools located in the Urban and West Districts (Table 5). These data included five (5) pregnancy cases from secondary schools located in the Urban District and thirteen (13) cases were from secondary schools found in the West District. Table 5 presents a summary of teenage pregnancy cases in the study sites for a period of five years, from 2012 to 2015. Overall, the statistics suggest that teenage pregnancy is more prevalent in the West District than Urban District.

Table1. *Pregnancy Cases in Secondary Schools in Urban and West Districts*

Year	Urban District	West District
2012	0	1
2013	0	3
2014	2	2
2015	2	3
2016	1	4
Total	5	13

Source: Office of the Registrar of Education in Zanzibar, April 2017

However, though the Registrar of Education emphasized that the presented statistics should not be taken for granted because of lack of accurate reporting and therefore the data could not be taken as valid although it was reliable enough to give the picture of what is happening in the two districts in Zanzibar. The Registrar of Education in Zanzibar had the opinion that most pregnancy cases are not reported to schools administrations by parents or guardians due to reasons not known to respective authorities. This view was also held by various Ministry of Education Officials. The reason for the parental apathy to report pregnancies of their daughters emanate from the shame that the parents feel to report such cases to respective school authorities. The parents end up cooking stories to cover up

for their daughters' absence from school. Eventually, in such situations, the absent teenage girls are considered as school dropouts due to truancy. In some extreme cases, some school heads connive with the parents or guardians in handling and managing teenage pregnancy cases in their respective schools so that the cases go unreported to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Responses from both male and female students reiterated that there were many students in fifth and sixth year of secondary education (forms five and six) who became pregnant but were not reported to respective authorities because most of them were married off by their parents and some managed to keep disguise their pregnancies until they finished their advanced level secondary education. Further discussions with the four school heads revealed that they were unaware of any teen pregnancy cases in their respective schools. Further probing revealed that their ineptitude was due to poor record keeping of pregnancy cases in their respective secondary schools. This observation consistent with findings from other African countries for instance, a study conducted in Sierra Leone (Coinco, 2010) reported that most secondary schools in Sierra Leone did not keep records of pregnancy cases that occurred in their schools. This would imply that most schools do not consider teenage pregnancy as one of the major issues in development. What then we can deduce from these observations is that, the cases for teen pregnancies in the said districts could be much higher than the actual figures recorded.

3.3. Identification of Pregnant Girls

Usually the first procedure in identifying pregnant girls would be the observation of sudden noticeable changes in the suspected teenage girl's behaviours like sleeping a lot during class sessions, frequent illnesses or absence from school without permission, and poor performance in examinations especially if that girl was doing relatively well and unexplained laziness and avoidance of classmates and teachers. If the above symptoms are confirmed the suspected teenage girl would be summoned for questioning and ultimate confirmation of her pregnancy status would be done at a nearby public dispensary or hospital. In the study area, many of the teen pregnant girls (66.7%) were exposed through teachers' being vigilant as mentioned above.

Another method used to identify pregnant girls is that of surprise inspections carried out on girls by the school authorities. In some few circumstances, both parents and fellow students would report a suspected pregnant girl to the school authorities. Furthermore, female teachers perform a mandatory pregnancy test involving all female students if they have any suspicion that some teenage girls were pregnant.

This response confirms use of force as one of the main methods for detecting teenage girls who were pregnant. For instance, one teenage mother shared the following personal story:

"I felt so sleepy at all times. Even if teachers were teaching, I would fall asleep, and sometimes I would fall asleep during discussions with fellow students. Although, I tried hard to stay as normal as possible, I could hardly stay awake. On one day, one of my class teachers noticed that I slept a lot during class sessions, so she called me to her office. She asked me rudely if I had any family or social problems at home and I said no. Thereafter, she asked if I was pregnant but I denied. However, the same teacher made a close follow-up on me for a period of one month and she called me again in her office. Without mincing words, the teacher told me she has decided to take me to the hospital for a pregnancy test. After that I was pregnant and the teacher informed other staff members and the school authorities"

The above study findings on how teenage mothers are identified correspond with a study carried out by Centre for Reproductive Rights (2013) which reveals that in most Tanzanian schools, forceful measures are taken to diagnose pregnancy among teenage girls in schools. It is intriguing to note that for some few cases of teen mothers (16%), the managed to go up to term without being discovered that they are pregnant. On the contrary, there were 9 (16.7%) teenage mothers who reported that no one at school was able to detect that they were pregnant. One of the ways that they could hide their pregnancy was through the design of their school uniform. The school uniforms were made in large sizes that covered the whole upper and middle parts of their bodies and thus it was easy to hide their bulging stomachs. The other way to mask their pregnancy condition was to ensure that they don't deviate from the norm. For instance, the pregnant teens ensured that they never missed attending school unless otherwise and they would work hard and participate actively in class and in other school activities including sports. Nevertheless, the teenage mothers confessed that they faced many

challenges in the third trimester of pregnancy because their tummies would become bigger as the pregnancy advanced and labour pains start setting in. Consequently, to avoid any suspicions from teachers, the teenage mothers would decide to reveal their health status to their parents/guardians, as they knew that it would a stage that the pregnant teen would not be able to manage the delivery processes alone. Those who manage to hide their pregnancies to term, they would normally return to school after delivery. For example those who carry to term their pregnancies and deliver their babies during holidays, return to school immediately when the school reopens as they had ample time to recuperate after delivery. Those delivering during school sessions, would miss school for say a week or so under any excuse, just to have time to nurse the baby and thereafter return to school.

In some situations where the pregnant school girl get married, the parents would confidently notify the school authorities and other family members about their daughters' pregnancy. This implies that teenage pregnancy is deemed as a problem only if the teenage girl is not married. This finding is consistent with a study carried out in Sierra Leone where teenage pregnancy is considered a problem in the community only when the pregnant teenage girl is not married (Coico, 2010). It would seem implicitly that the mainland Tanzania's Act (find out the name of the Act) that prohibit impregnating a school girl and which carries a heavy penalty of 30 years in jail for the culprit does not operate in the Isles.

3.4. Management of Pregnancy Cases in Secondary Schools in Zanzibar

First and foremost, once the pregnancy case is confirmed, the school head is supposed to report about it to the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar. The Principal Secretary will prompt the Registrar of Education to take the necessary action. Under normal circumstances, the Registrar of Education will convene a meeting with the head of the school where the pregnancy case was reported from. Generally, such meeting is normally attended by various people including the school head, the pregnant girl and her parents or guardians, students' body president, chairperson of school committee, students' councillor and the Sheha of the Shehia from which the school is located.

The main agenda of such meeting is to find out how the teenage girl became pregnant and secondly, to establish if the girl is committed to continue attending school after delivery. From the verbal report of the pregnant teenage girl, then a decision is established on how to proceed with the case. For example, if it is a rape case then it is reported to the police immediately for further actions. In case she wants to continue with studies, the pregnant teenage girl is asked whether she wants to return to the same school or move to another public school. The latter option is offered to the teenage girl to enable avoid social stigma which she may experience by returning to the same school. Normally this kind of meeting culminates in an agreement between all members that respective head of secondary school and the students' president should commit to provide full support to the pregnant teenage girl upon her return to school and ensuring that the case is kept among themselves so that the teen mother can pursue her education without prejudice from the teachers or fellow students. This order of events is often practised as confirmed by responses provided in Table 9. However, it should be noted that the Spinsters and Single Parent Children Protection Act only provides a second chance to teenage girls who become pregnant for the first time while still enrolled in school. If the same teenage girl gets a second pregnancy while still enrolled either in primary or secondary school, the law requires such girl to be permanently expelled from school.

Table9. *Management of Pregnancy Cases in Secondary Schools*

Responses	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
The Head of School calls for a meeting with the parents/guardians of the pregnant students to discuss the case	23	63.9
The pregnancy case is reported to the MoEVT	11	30.6
The pregnant student is immediately expelled from school	2	5.5
Total	36	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017).

Overall, 63.9% of respondents reported that in most cases, respective school head call for a meeting with parents/guardians of the pregnant girl and other responsible parties as required by law to discuss the case. The remaining 36.1% mentioned two other actions as follows: 11 respondents reported that

all pregnancy cases are reported to the MoEVT-Zanzibar where official procedures to address such a case are initiated. On the contrary, very few respondents reported that pregnant students are rusticated from school in order to discourage other students from getting pregnant. When the 54 teenage mothers involved in this study were asked to explain how their pregnancy cases were handled by respective school authorities, slightly more than a half (57.4%) of the respondents reported that they were allowed to continue with school after delivery (Table 10). They authenticated that prior to the decision of allowing them to continue with schooling, the meetings were held where many questions were asked in order to ascertain who was responsible for the pregnancy, reasons for engaging in sexual intercourse at such a young age and whether the respective teenage girl wanted to continue with school. In most cases, the parents/guardians were urged to allow their pregnant daughters to continue with their studies after delivery but normally with a strong warning that if the culprit becomes pregnant for the second time, the offender will be summarily dismissed from school.

Table 210. *Actions Taken by School Authority for the pregnant teen*

Responses	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Allowed to continue with school	31	57.4
No action taken since no one found in school out about the pregnancy	9	16.7
Dropped out from school before any action was taken	4	7.4
The case was reported to the Registrar of Education	9	16.7
Expulsion from school	1	1.8
Total	54	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

Reading from the findings in Table 10, one finds that there are some heads of secondary schools in the Urban and West districts who do not comply with directives as provided by the MoEVT in Zanzibar on how to handle pregnancy cases. It appears that some heads would take matters in their own hands. Furthermore, it would imply therefore that some pregnant girls are expelled from school despite the existence of a law that permits such girls to continue with their education after delivery. This is not an isolated case as it is done elsewhere for instance in the Republic of South Africa, teenage girls were expelled from school despite the existence of the South Africa Schools Act 1996: 2A – 10 that deemed expulsion of pregnant girls from schools null and void. Another very important observation is that many school girls including teenage girls and some parents or guardians of the teenage girls are not fully aware of Zanzibar's Spinster and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005. This is evidenced by occurrences of pregnant teenage girls who drop out school due to fear of being expelled from school once they become pregnant even before the requisite meetings are convened to discuss the cases and determine their fate.

3.5. Number of Teenage Mothers Resuming Studies after Delivery

An inquiry from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Zanzibar did not reveal an actual number of teenage pregnancies in Urban and West districts since the enactment of the Spinster and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005 to the time of the study. There was no such database because no follow-up was done by the MoEVT-Zanzibar. The Students' Administrative Officer in the said Ministry had this to say:

“Yes, pregnancy cases are being reported to the Ministry but there is no follow-up. So it is quite difficult to say how many pregnant girls returned to school, for instance, in 2015. We hardly know the number of teenage mothers specifically in public secondary schools because there is no follow-up of reported pregnancy cases”

This state of things is very difficult to fathom because the issue of teen pregnancy seem to be taken casually. If there are no statistics of the teens returning to school, how then can the different issues that the pregnant teens face addressed so as curb future incidences? How can the trend of girls falling pregnant be established over time? Nevertheless, some school heads admitted that there were several pregnant girls who returned to school after delivery. In addition, most girls managed to complete secondary school successfully. However, it was difficult to provide exact numbers of such girls because such information was never recorded. This finding conforms to UNICEF (2011) findings that reveals the absence of explicit data showing the number of teenage girls who returned to school after

delivery and went on to complete their education. In view of this, it is difficult to ascertain effectiveness of the Spinsters and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005 in Zanzibar.

3.6. Duration Taken between Delivery and Returning to School

Most of the respondents (72.2%) indicated that the teenage mothers returned to school in less than three months after delivery (Table 11). The respondents said this was made possible when the families of the teenage mothers provides support in taking care of the babies during school hours. As indicated in the literature, where there is positive social support, it is possible for teenage mothers to return to school within a very short time unless there are health complications.

Table11. Average period taken by most teenage mothers to return to school after delivery

Time Duration (Months)	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Less than 3 months	26	72.2
4 – 6 months	5	13.9
7 – 12 months	2	5.6
1 – 2 years	3	8.3
Total	36	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

For those teenage mothers who take a longer time after delivery to resume school either feel ashamed and thus it takes time for them to accept their fate and thus return to school or they lack support from their families in taking care of their babies during the first few months after delivery. Another reason for the delay in resuming studies after delivery is due to maternal instinct that many of the young mothers felt comfortable to continue with their studies when their babies were introduced to supplementary feeding especially when the young start feeding on food and this is possible from six months onwards after birth.

3.7. Challenges Facing Teenage Mothers upon Returning to School

The major challenges facing teenage mothers upon returning to school are harassment and stigmatization by fellow students and some teachers (Table 12). This is because the fellow students and some teachers perceive that becoming pregnant before being married is immoral and hence those who become pregnant are deemed of bad manners. The implication here is that teenage pregnancy is seen as a problem only if the girl is not married. This finding is similar to Coinco (2010), who found that only unmarried pregnant teenage girls and unmarried teenage mothers in Sierra Leone faced stigmatization as well as harassment from their communities.

Table12. Challenges Encountered by Most Teenage Mothers upon Returning to School

Challenge	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Harassment and stigmatization	21	48.8
Insufficient time to revise	12	27.9
Poor concentration in class	8	18.6
Milk stains on uniforms	2	4.7
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

Likewise, during FGDs with both female and male students it was mentioned that harassment and stigmatization were major challenges that most unmarried teenage mothers encountered upon returning to school after delivery. During a focus group discussion, one respondent, a female student remarked as follow;

“If it is a rape case, then people would feel pity for her. But under normal circumstances, for a Zanzibari girl to become pregnant out of wedlock is considered a very shameful act. Such a girl is perceived to lack requisite good manners. It is also very shameful for her family. So in most cases unmarried teenage mothers are often harassed and stigmatized by students at school”

Other challenges that the returnee teen mothers face include the lack of sufficient time to revise due especially if the teen mother lacks support in caring for the baby after school hours; and furthermore, most teenage mothers had poor concentration in class because of tiredness resulting from lack of sufficient sleep at night when they takes care of their young ones (Table 12). One respondent reiterated that:

“Most teenage mothers come to school looking tired and sleepy. Many cannot concentrate with studies in class for a long time and thus many fall asleep in the middle of a lesson. When we ask them what the problem is, we find that they had not slept well at night nursing their baby.”

For those lacking permanent caretakers for their babies, they end up missing school sessions especially on those when the baby is sick or has to attend clinic appointments. Although the plight of the teen mothers is known to the school authorities, there are no specific arrangements that schools take to accommodate them after readmission. For example, teenage mothers were not given breastfeeding breaks even for those that come from nearby homes, or those with caretakers who may bring the babies for nursing. As such, since they stay for long hours without breastfeeding, the milk often leak from their breasts staining their uniforms and thus psychologically affecting their self esteem.

Some teachers also add to the woes affecting the school returnee teen mothers. Teachers often refer to cases of teenage mothers as examples to chaste other students to abstain from illegitimate sexual relations. In one of the focus group discussions, one of the students remarked as follow:

“Sometimes teachers would scold a naughty student in class by telling her that if she does not change her unbecoming behaviour then she would end up being like so-so who got pregnant out of wedlock because of her bad manners. The teenage mother who is being referred to would be in the same class or school.”

The teenage mothers are also stigmatized and isolated by fellow students because students some believed that the teen mothers would lead them into their wayward life. The general feeling and gathering from this study, the unmarried pregnant students and teenage mothers are less respected by their fellow students, teachers and people in the community. Most of these teen mothers are perceived as promiscuous, lacking in proper upbringing and that they are rebellious. These study findings collaborate what was found in Zambia (Wedekind and Milingo, 2015) that most teenage mothers who returned to school after delivery faced harassments from teachers, stigma from fellow students and most struggled to concentrate in class due to tiredness resulting from lack of sufficient sleep at night.

3.8. Academic Performance of Teenage Mothers

Almost half of the respondents (55.6%) confirmed that the academic performance of most teenage mothers was good because most strived to excel in their studies in order to cover up for the mistakes they committed. Very few respondents had the opinion that the teen mothers performed poorly for various reasons such as lack of time to do private reading and revisions due to the double roles they have of being a student and a mother at the same time (Table 13). Further probing especially from the teachers revealed that the performance of most teenage mothers improved when they were readmitted to school but this depended upon the kind of support the teen mothers received both at home and at school. In most cases, teenage mothers with good family support tended to perform better than those with no family support.

This is due to the fact that such teenage mothers got enough time to read at home and also attended school regularly unlike those with no family support who often miss school in days they could not find someone to care for the baby while they are at school and also they got less time to revise and do school chores. But on the other hand, most teenage mothers performed better than they previously did before pregnancy because they wanted to make up for their mistakes.

Table13. School Heads and Teachers' Response on Academic Performance of Most Teenage mothers

Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Poor performance	16	44.4
Good performance	20	55.6
Total	36	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

3.9. Overcoming Challenges faced by Teenage Mothers returning to School

Majority of the teen mothers (38.9%) reported that they sought advice and counselling from students' counsellor, teachers and close relatives from whom they found some sort of relief and solutions to their problems (Table 14). During interviews, one teenage mother said that:

“Sometimes I go to the Students’ Councillor and tell her about my problems. The councillor advised me on what to do or where to go to seek for further help. Like there is one time I was so frustrated with harassments from my fellow students that I decided to go and consult with her. She advised me to stay calm, try to focus on my studies and ignore them because eventually they will get tired of harassing me. Also she came to my class and talked to the entire class about treating each other nicely. It somehow helped because after that I started noticing that students who used to call me bad names or talk badly about me would just stay quiet whenever I was around. Although they still continued to discriminate me, but they stopped harassing and embarrassing me at school. I was so relieved and glad that I shared my problem with the Students’ Councillor”

Other tactics that the teen mothers used to overcome challenges at school were ignoring harassments from fellow students and staying positive in whatever they do (24.1%) and studying hard and managing their time properly by constantly doing constructive things for their lives (22.2%). Some few teenage mothers reported that they studied hard and also tried to manage their time properly by constantly doing constructive things for their lives. Few teen mothers (14.8%) sought solace in few friends they managed to make (Table 14).

As for their baby caretakers, many of the teen mothers had close family members to look after their babies while they were at school. Such family members include their mothers, grandmothers, mothers-in-law, aunts and sisters. Only few teen mothers had no permanent caretakers of their babies. For such teen mothers, there are times they had to leave their babies with neighbours and but sometimes they had to stay at home especially on those days that they couldn’t find anyone to look after their babies for them to go to school.

Table14. *Strategies Teenage Mothers’ Adopt to Overcome Challenges Encountered at School (N=54)*

Strategies	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Seek advice and counselling	21	38.9
Study hard and manage time properly	12	22.2
Ignore the harassments	13	24.1
Make new friends	8	14.8
Total	54	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

As for the presence of supportive environment in schools for the teen mothers to learn effectively, many respondents (51.2%) said that there is a special students’ counsellor in the secondary schools who is mandated to provide advice and counselling services to students in need including the teenage mothers in school. However, others had the view that there is nothing being done because most teenage pregnancy cases reported to the authorities are just being archived with no follow up (23.2%). Few respondents (18.6%) had a view that the teachers would normally encourage group works and appoint one student to help the teenage mother catch up with lessons she missed when she was away. Others had the understanding that the school head is obliged by the government to inform teachers and students’ leadership to accord cooperation to the teenage mothers (Table 15).

Table15. *Measures Taken to Ensure Good Learning Environment for Teenage Mothers*

Measures	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Counselling by a special Students’ Counsellor	22	51.2
None	10	23.2
Group works in class	8	18.6
Head of school instruct teachers and students to cooperate with the teenage mother	2	4.7
The government provide child support to the teenage mothers	1	2.3
Total	43	100

Source: Field data (April, 2017)

3.10. Effectiveness of the Spinsters and Single Parent Protection Act Number 4 of 2005

Officials of Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar (92.3%) had the general opinion that the Spinsters and Single Parent Protection Act Number 4 of 2005 has some flaws, however, the law has extended a second chance to several teenage mothers to continue with their education after delivery, and some of them successfully finish their secondary education and continue

with higher education. There are some deficits in the said law, because some teenage mothers do not return to school after delivery because their parents do not allow their daughters to continue with school after delivery as they prefer to marry them off to the men who impregnated them. If the law was strict such that any teenage who fell pregnant must return and finish her education, such practices of parents marrying off their daughters before they finish schooling won't be condoned. On the other extreme, the law is misused in such a way that some students who for some reasons known to themselves, decide to stay at home by pretending to be pregnant so that they could be re-enrolled to another school upon their fake 'delivery'.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on findings presented in this article, it is evident that that teenage mothers experience diverse challenges upon returning to school. The challenges are many especially for those who are not married. The challenges that the teen mothers face upon returning to school are at individual, family and school levels. Individual challenges include the teen mothers experiencing feelings of despair, low self esteem and low confidence. This is essentially a psychological problem since the teen mothers were not prepared to be in the stage of motherhood while still young and supposed to be pursuing their studies. On the other hand, family based challenges include but not limited to lack of family support in taking care and providing supplements for the newborns whereas school based challenges include harassments and stigmatization from fellow students and teachers, especially for the unmarried teenage mothers. It is further revealed that successful and effective schooling by the teenage mothers after delivery largely depends on the nature and amount of support from the family and school management. Although there is a law in Zanzibar that allows teenage mothers to return to school after delivery, its implementation has not been so effective due to various reasons such as limited awareness among various stakeholders including students, parents and even teachers on how to effectively to make the law operational. In many circumstances, the procedural re-admission of the teen mothers is not done according to the requirements of the said law and this could be one of the reasons as to why there is no well established data base of the teen mothers who had been re-admitted to school after delivery. Furthermore, the law is not gender sensitive as it treats all teenage mothers as a homogeneous entity which is not the case. Therefore, more efforts are needed to mainstream gender in this law in order to address the diverse needs and challenges that teenage mothers face before and after returning to school.

It is also important for the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Zanzibar and the school managements should establish a data base for teenage mothers who return to school after delivery in order to provide the statistics of teenage mothers returning to schools after delivering their babies and thus ascertain effectiveness of the Spinsters and Single Parent Children Protection Act Number 4 of 2005 which was set to ensure that education is accessible to all even those who fall pregnant before matriculation. Furthermore, if the law allows the teenage mothers to return to school, then all parties involved should provide a helping hand to the returning to school teen mothers. In the wake of this, school managements, teachers and fellow students should stop demonising the teen mothers when they decide to go back to school.

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