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# Assessment of the Effect of Adolescent Pregnancy to Formal Training in America

Research has shown that teenage pregnancy has been on the rise in the United States for the past two decades owing to a number of factors. In the year 2012 alone, statistics indicate that 305,388 babies were born to women aged between 15-19 years. However, there is need to note that this was a 6% drop from what had been recorded the previous year (Craig, 2008). The reasons for this particular drop were not clear but the number still remains high because of the age of those who were involved. The impact of these numbers can be felt in other sectors of the economy and education is one of those areas that are affected. Lack of birth control mechanisms among those who are sexually active is to blame for the rising number of teenage pregnancy in the United States. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the impact of teenage pregnancy on education and levels of school drop out levels in the United States. Teenage pregnancy is a major factor that hinders successful completion of high school education among adolescents in the United States.

## Teenage pregnancy statistics

Teen birth rates for all races in the United States have been on a steady decline but this has been slow. Among 15–19 year olds, from 2011–2012 teen birth rates decreased 6% for non-Hispanic whites, 7% for non-Hispanic blacks, 3% for American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), 5% for Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 7% for Hispanics. Despite this decrease, there is still persistence in terms of the way in which this issue is being handled. Education is one of those areas that are largely affected by this increase (Hadley, 2014). Research has shown that over 60% of those who give birth at teenage hood are likely not to complete their high school education. This is something that continues to affect the completion rates nationally.

## Education and teenage pregnancy

The economic and social cost of teenage pregnancy cannot be ignored because of the manner in which it affects them, their parents and the society at large especially when they are forced to drop out of school as a result of this. Educational outcomes of teenage parents are largely affected and this is because of inability to continue with their education when they are pregnant. Research has shown that at age 22, only 50% of teenage mothers have received high school diploma and this is because of the nature of activities that they engage themselves in before they get to this level. In addition to that, 30% have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate, whereas 90% of women who did not give birth during adolescence receive a

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high school diploma. Furthermore, research has shown that only 10% of teenage mothers are likely to complete their 2 or 4 years college program. The map below shows the level of unintended pregnancy by state for the year 2008

The earlier notion has always been that boys are not affected but in real sense, teenage fathers have 25% to 30% probability of graduating from high school compared to their classmates who are not fathers. These statistics therefore indicate that there is need to ensure that the problem of teenage pregnancy has been tackled using the best means possible. The Education system in the United States is largely affected by the manner in which teenagers have to drop out of school because of the rate at which they continue getting pregnant at a very early age. These long term effects continue to teenage parents and their children because they are unable to gain access to basic education that can help them look after their families and at the same time engage in productive activities (Turner, 2011). The map below acts as a summary of the impact that teenage pregnancy has on the education and high school completion rates in the United States and the manner in which all this is being felt in other sectors.

## Causes of teenage pregnancy

There are several factors that contribute to the increase in the rate of teenage pregnancy in the United States. Poverty, peer pressure and uncontrolled sexual activeness among the adolescence is to blame for this particular increase.

### Poverty

Poverty is a major factor when it comes to understanding teenage pregnancy among adolescence in the United States. Children of unmarried teen mothers are likely to become pregnant at teenage hood as revealed by past studies and this is because of the manner in which they adopt lifestyles that are likely to lead to this (Craig, 2008). There are so many factors that shape the manner in which teenagers respond to the level of poverty that they find themselves trapped in. These rates have continued to show us that there is more that needs to be done especially in terms of the way in which poverty and teenage pregnancy is handled. Below is a graph that sums up the interrelation between teenage pregnancy and levels of poverty as reported in a past research in the United States. It can be noted that there was a very strong relationship between the poverty levels and teenage pregnancy in that state. The state with the highest percentage of people below the poverty line had the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the study that involved very few states.

Poverty therefore remains a major factor in determining strategies that can be utilized in dealing with the increasing rates of teenage parenthood and how this affects the rates of high school completions (Kara, 2008). These are statistics that can be used by planners when it comes to

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dealing with the issue of teenage pregnancy in the United States and the manner in which it continues to negatively impact the education system.

## **Peer Pressure**

Apart from poverty, peer groups also said to have largely contributed to the increasing rates of teenage pregnancy among adolescents in the United States and this is because of the manner in which it continues to be a source of their inspiration (Hadley, 2014). There are so many factors that shape whether teenagers are going to bow to the pressure that comes from their peers and this is because of the manner in which the influence is always too much. Teenagers are likely to copy what others are doing and whenever they see their peers who have conceived and feel that it is the best thing, then they are likely to be encouraged to also seek for babies at an early age.

## **Uncontrolled sexual activeness**

The rate at which teenagers are engaging in uncontrolled sexual activities in the United States is alarming and this is to blame for the rise in cases of teenage pregnancy. This calls for urgent measures that will encourage teenagers to abstain or use birth control methods if possible. Lack of an initiative is likely to result into a situation whereby the education completion rates is negatively impacted.

## **Effects of teenage pregnancy on education**

The relationship between teenage pregnancy and education has been said to go in both directions and this is because of the manner in which one affects the other. Teenagers who become pregnant are likely not to complete school because of the nature of responsibilities that accompany this (Turner, 2011). In addition to that, children of teen mothers are less likely to complete high school because of the kind of lifestyle they have been brought up in. Educational goals are likely to reduce the likelihood of teenage pregnancy but where there are none, the education system is affected and at the same time parents who can't support their children because they are underage become so many. Research has also shown that 2/3 of children of teen mothers' graduate high school, compared to 81% of the children of parents who were older at the time of childbearing. Teenagers who drop out of school are more likely to get pregnant than their peers who stay in school and this sums up the impact of teenage pregnancy on high school completion rates.

## **Conclusion**

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In conclusion, teenage pregnancy is a major problem that is affecting high school completion rates in the United States. This paper sought to demonstrate that teenage pregnancy greatly hinders education completion rates among teenagers as shown by statistics from recent research. However, there is need to understand that more needs to be done especially when it comes to sensitizing the adolescents on the impact of teenage pregnancy on their education and socio-economic status in general. Results from past research act as an eye-opener to planners and stakeholders within the education sector with the aim of making sure that they engage positively with parties involved in solving this problem. The rate of completion is likely to go up if there is a way in which teenage pregnancy is lowered.

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