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## Teenage Pregnancy and the Challenges of Teen Motherhood

In 2013, Venka Child aged 16 from Bristol worked with Fixers to create a short video about challenges teen mothers go through. In some part of the video, a teen mother is shown opening a fridge which is almost empty. The teen takes the container to pilfer what may be remaining to give her child but notices the drink has already gone bad. Then words are displayed saying that “children born to teenage mums have a higher chance of living in poverty.” Since most of the teenage parents live below the poverty level, often they depend on public assistance. In a 2004 Census Bureau analysis, findings indicated that 63% of teen mothers worldwide received public benefits in the first three years of their child’s life (Holgate, Evans and Yuen). Additionally, about 90% of teen mothers are single, and only 25% receive any support from the child’s father (Holgate, Evans and Yuen). Thus, there is an economic effect of motherhood on young people.

Author Hanna mentions that apart from other challenges, teenage mothers are disadvantaged financially in both short and long-term. Hanna says that “many teenager mothers find strength and fulfillment in their motherhood role but this does not come without cost to themselves or their children” (Hanna). The author explains that many teenage mothers are unsuitable to be parents and lack adequate support including finance (Hanna). She concludes that teen mothers are young, not prepared for motherhood and heavily rely on welfare supports (Hanna).

The economic impact of motherhood on teenagers is also echoed in other sources. In the source Teen Mothers and Their Financial Problems, Ogunjimi explains the financial problems teen mothers experience. For instance, teen mothers are unable to afford the daily expenses of having a child (Ogunjimi). Most of the teenage mothers are not able to complete their studies, and this limits their lifetime earnings potential (Ogunjimi). Additionally, because of various factors, children of teen mothers in most cases perform poor in academics and may grow up suffering financially (Ogunjimi). Other than major troubles, teen mothers do not have jobs making it difficult to buy necessities needed to care for their infants and young children (Ogunjimi).

However, being a teenage mother is not the end of life, and they can be helped to overcome their financial challenges. A 2013 report by the Public Counsel indicated that pregnant teens or teen parents don't have enough cash to pay for their babies' needs or medical care although they can apply for assistance (Public Counsel). The Public Counsel mentions that pregnant teens or parents can be assisted to pay for housing and living standards by applying to CalFresh (Public Counsel). With CalFresh, parent teens can be assisted to finish school, get health care for themselves and their babies and other financial support (Public Counsel). Therefore, due to their economic instability, pregnant teens or parents may end up living poor unless they are helped.

Teenage pregnancy and parenthood have become high both in the U.S and UK, and there are various issues revolving around teenage parents and social policy in the two countries. Often, a teen mother is left alone and does not get financial assistance from the child’s father (Holgate, Evans and Yuen). Welfare reforms need to be done in the UK and U.S to help the teen mothers raise their children.

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