
Teenage Pregnancy and the Role of the Media in Making the Social Issue Appealing

Since 2009, MTV has aired shows that revolve around teen pregnancy, something that most conservative parents would shame, is now just another publicity stunt to make a new reality show. The same thing parents warn their daughters about, is now being shown in a positive light. Shows that focus on this kind of behavior encourage teenagers to get pregnant, because some have hopes of being on television, the shows make it look easy, and the message to avoid it is lost.

Some people may say that the show does help discourage teen pregnancy. They might believe that MTV does a well good job of informing their audience, and how teenagers aren't getting pregnant as young anymore. However, though the network, MTV, attempted to discourage teen pregnancy, it was put it in a bold, flashy, spotlight did not present the hardships and give their audience information on how to stay safe, or to practice safe sex. Instead, it presents this as a reality show, and it gives teens the idea that getting pregnant is the way to go if they want to be on TV, or to be famous. More girls are on these shows, which seems continuous, and so that obviously tells us, the audience, that teens are still out there, getting pregnant.

The realistic life of being a teenage mother is much more difficult, and the show does not give the audience what a typical pregnant girl would go through, such as losing friends, her boyfriend leaving, or parents kicking her out of the house. Even though there were parents that were very celebratory of the impending newborn, it doesn't make teen pregnancy okay. The show only gives those girls on it their "15 minutes of fame," and from that, it makes teen pregnancy look pretty glamorous. It makes pregnancy look carefree. The actual reality of being a teen mom isn't really seen in these shows, and it puts off the audience to believe otherwise.

Second, the message to avoid teen pregnancy is lost within the never-ending spiral of domestic violence, verbal abuse, and unnecessary drama between the teen mothers and their families. A teen mother, in real life, would be overwhelmed, and she would not have time for friends, or to get out of the house. Girls on shows like this have their parents watch their child whenever they don't want the responsibility. Lost in violence, the whole show's organization is absent. I watched an episode of "Sixteen and Pregnant," and it was obvious that the girls were on there for one main purpose- for attention. The girl's boyfriend broke up with her, and was left to raise the baby alone, and the boyfriend had no consequences. With all of the dramas throughout the episodes, the message that they created the show, to avoid being pregnant as a teenager, is lost.

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In conclusion, shows like “Sixteen and Pregnant,” and “Teen Mom,” encourage teen pregnancy. These shows do not show the reality of being a teen mother, the message to avoid teen pregnancy is lost, and teen pregnancy is seen as just another way to become famous, and it shouldn't be. MTV needs to have their shows attempting to discourage teen pregnancy more effectively, rather than to entice it.

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