

**POVERTY LEVELS AND TEENAGE PREGNANCIES. A CASE STUDY OF NYAMWAMBA
DIVISION, KASESE MUNICIPALITY**

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ABSTRACT

The study was entitled poverty levels and teenage pregnancies and examined the relationship between poverty levels and teenage pregnancies, assessed the causes of teenage pregnancies and finally identify strategies to address poverty and teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division, Kasese municipality. The study used descriptive research design in which quantitative approach was used. Questionnaire as the major method of data collection was employed during data collection. The researcher used cluster, simple random and purposive sampling techniques to determine the sample size. The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS computer program and 52 respondents participated in the study. The findings of the study revealed that teenager's engagement in premarital sex due to low socio-economic status leads to teenage pregnancies whereby 85.5% (35) of the respondents agreed 7.5% (3) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not sure. It also revealed that adolescents need information for informed decision making regarding their sexual and reproductive health since 68.0% (28) of all the respondents agreed, 22.5% (9) disagreed and 7.5% (3) were not sure and finally 32.5% of the respondents agreed that there is lack of information about sexual reproductive health and rights, however 62.5% (25) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not. The researcher made the following conclusions; parental economic status has an influence on the character of children. The researcher concluded that there is high chance of young married couples divorcing due to failure to provide some basic necessities in a home and finally the researcher realized and concluded that once girl

are pregnant, they are not returned back to school by some parents and ends into getting married.

Key words: poverty levels and teenage pregnancies

Background of the study

Globally, according to (Godfrey et al., 2023), it is estimated that nearly 100,000 children are born in poverty each year in Uganda. During pregnancy, their mothers are likely to face multiple stressful events, including lone mothers and teenage pregnancies, unemployment, more polluted physical environments and far fewer resources to do with these exposures (Vincent & Peter, 2023b). The early child health consequences of poverty and pregnancy are multiple, and often set a new born child on a long-life course of disparities in health outcomes. Included are greatly increased risks for preterm birth, intra-uterine growth restriction, and neo-natal or infant death (Christopher et al., 2022).

Nationally, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2017, nearly 378,400 adolescent girls in Kenya aged between 10 and 19 years became pregnant between July 2016 and June 2017. A total of 28,932 girls aged between 10 and 14 years were impregnated, while 349,465 girls were between 15 to 19 years. Kenya's population is largely young. Persons aged 19 years and below account for more than half of population while those aged 15 years and below form 45% of the country's population (Rashid et al., 2023). Early sexual debut, unplanned pregnancy, and a higher number of births remain issues for adolescent girls and young women.

A study by Jain and Kurz (2007:14), ranked Uganda 9th among the top 30 countries for adolescent/child marriages, in 2013 Uganda rates of early marriages, with 46% of girls marrying before 18years, 12years before they are 15years (world vision2013). A recent population council and UNICEF supported study (Amin et al 2013) posits Uganda in the

middle of the range with over 20% adolescent age 15-19years categories as over married (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023).

The UNICEF (2013) report indicate prevalence of teenage pregnancy is highest in the northern Uganda estimated at (59%) followed by western region (58%), eastern region (51%), east central (52%), west Nile (50%), central (41%), south west (37%), and lowest in Kampala (20%). The rise in early child-bearing has been attributed to poverty at household and family levels that is associated with less or no family support (Christopher & Micheal, 2022).

Case study, according to the woman MP Kasese district says that, teenage pregnancies are a socially established practices that gone on from generation to generation. In the hilly terrain, early marriage remains a form of defilement prompted through social norms and hidden from legal probity and redress. Teenage girls ranging from 10-17years are married off to men of over 50 years or to young boys. As a post conflict area, the situation is even worsened by the poverty at family line. However, the community still looks at the girls as a form of wealth generation were marrying her off early provides with gifts and money for survival (Kasese report 2011).

Problem Statement

Adolescent/teenage pregnancy has long been a worldwide social and educational concern for the developed, developing and undeveloped countries (Vincent & Peter, 2023a). Many countries continue to experience high incidence of teenage pregnancy despite the intervention strategies that have been out in place (Yudaya & Aggrey, 2023). In 1990, approximately 530,000 teenagers in the UK became pregnant, 51% of whom gave birth (Godfrey et al., 2023). The current study seeks to explore the influence of poverty on teenage pregnancy among teenage girls in Nyamwamba Division, Kasese municipality. There is still need to understand how poverty at family

and individual levels put an adolescent at greater risk of falling pregnant (Tumusabe Ezera et al., 2022).

The above has inspired the researcher to have a close review on the links between poverty and pressure to marry early which reveals that wealthier countries where teenagers have equal access to financial services, further training and employment opportunities (Omotunde et al., 2013). Teenage pregnancies are rare. Poverty is recognized as a major contributing factor to teenage pregnancies in poorer households where adolescents mostly girls are viewed as an additional burden on family resources, they tend to be married as a family survival strategy (Oromo et al., 2023).

Objectives of the study

- 1. To examine the relationship between poverty levels and teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division, Kasese municipality.*
- 2. To assess the causes of teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division, Kasese municipality.*
- 3. To identify strategies to address poverty and teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division, Kasese municipality.*

Research Questions

- 1. What is the relationship between poverty and teenage pregnancy in Nyamwamba division?*
- 2. What are the causes of teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division?*
- 3. What are the strategies that can be put in place to address the problem of poverty and teenage pregnancies in Nyamwamba division?*

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a case study research design, which employed quantitative research. Quantitative research was used to capture details of the study which can be expressed in numerical terms like percentages, ratios, population and sample sizes, among others.

Study Population

The study population constituted mainly 52 which include teenagers that are boys and girls between 14-18, LC3 executive, civil society servants and civil society organizations dealing with teenagers.

Table 1: showing the study population

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Teenagers</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Civil servants</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>LC3 executive</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>civil society organizations</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>52</i>

Sampling size

The sample size was determined using simple random sampling and purposive sampling.

The sample size was 49 respondents considering the time factor and other related constraints to give information needed.

Table 2: showing the sample size

<i>Category</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Sample size</i>
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Teenagers	43	40
Civil servants	3	3
LC3 executives	3	3
Civil society organizations	3	3
Total	52	49

Source: From R V Krejcie and D. W. Morgan (1970), as cited by Amin E. (2005).

Sampling techniques

The study employed cluster, simple random and purposive sampling methods which was used to ensure that each element in the study have equal chances to be included in the sample. Purposive sampling was applied on LC3 executives, civil servants and civil society organizations because they are few. Cluster sampling was used on teenagers where by respondents were grouped into boys and girls.

Table 3: showing the sampling techniques

Category	Population	Sample size	percentage	Sampling technique
Teenagers	43	40	82%	Cluster sampling
Civil servants	3	3	6%	Purposive sampling
Lc3 executives	3	3	6%	Purposive sampling
Civil society organizations	3	3	6%	Purposive sampling
Total	52	49	100%	

Research Instruments

The researcher was basically using one major instrument that is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents which were supplied by the research assistants for effective collection of data.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using frequency and percentages to analyze the relationship between the two variables and this was presented and interpreted by the use of tables (Amin et al, 2005) using SPSS (Nelson et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Table 1 showing how teenagers engage in premarital sex due to low socio-economic status which ends into teenage pregnancy

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	13	32.5
Agree	22	55.0
Strongly disagree	2	5.0
Disagree	1	2.5
Not sure	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The result of the study reveals that 85.5% (35) of the respondents agreed that teenagers engage in premarital sex due to low socio-economic status that results into teenage pregnancy, 7.5% (3) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not sure.

Table 2 showing how growing up with few economic prospects lead young women to choose teen parenting.

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	10	25.0
Agree	23	57.5

	Strongly disagree	5	12.5
	Disagree	2	5.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

According to the results of the study findings, 82.5% (33) agreed that most adolescents growing up with few economic prospects can lead young women to choose teen parenting however, 17.5% (7) disagreed.

Table 3 showing how poverty appears to play a major role in adolescent pregnancies.

Many of the factors believed to lead to early sexual experience and pregnancy are characteristic of poverty: low-quality education, a negative perception of the future, limited employment opportunities, fatherless families

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	35.0
	Agree	20	50.0
	Strongly disagree	4	10.0
	Disagree	1	2.5
	Not sure	1	2.5
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The table above shows that poverty appears to play a major role in adolescent pregnancies. Many of the factors believed to lead to early sexual experience and pregnancy are characteristic of poverty: low-quality education, a negative perception of the future, limited employment opportunities, fatherless families. Much as 12.5% (5) disagreed and 2.5% (1) was not sure, following the majority rule 85.5% (34) of the respondents agreed that poverty appears to be a major role in teenage pregnancies.

Table 4 showing how low family-economic status leads to teenage pregnancies.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	15	37.5
Agree	18	45.0
Valid Strongly disagree	5	12.5
not sure	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

Basing on the findings of the study on how low family-economic status leads to teenage pregnancies, the results were 82.5% (33) of the respondents agreed, 12.5% (5) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not sure.

Table 5 showing how conflicts and emergencies leads to teenage pregnancies among girls.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	8	20.0
	Agree	15	37.5
	Strongly disagree	12	30.0
	Disagree	3	7.5
	Not sure	2	5.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

According to the findings of the study in table 11, majority 57.5% (23) respondents agreed that conflicts and emergencies lead to teenage pregnancies however, 37.5% (15) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not sure

Table 6 showing how lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights leads to teenage pregnancies

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	9	22.5
	Agree	4	10.0
	Strongly disagree	14	35.0
	Disagree	11	27.5
	Not sure	2	5.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The result of the field study in table 12 show that 62.5% (25) of the respondents disagreed that lack of information about sexual reproductive health and rights lead to teenage pregnancies, however 32.5% (13) agree and 5.0% (2) were not sure.

Table 7 showing how adolescents need information for informed decision making regarding their sexual and reproductive health.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	15	37.5
Agree	13	32.5
Strongly disagree	8	20.0
Disagree	1	2.5
Not sure	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

Basing on the study findings 68.0% (28) of all the respondents agreed that adolescents need information for informed decision making regarding their sexual and reproductive health. However, 22.5% (9) disagreed and 7.5% (3) were not sure.

Table 8 showing how educating children combat teenage pregnancies

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	9	22.5
Agree	14	35.0
Strongly disagree	13	32.5
Disagree	1	2.5
Not sure	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

Looking at table fourteen, majority 54.5% (23) of the respondents agreed that educating children combat teenage pregnancies, 35.0% (14) disagreed and 7.5% (3) were not sure. This implied that most couples who married at an early age most have low attitudes towards work and have low incomes.

Table 9 showing how media assistance by conducting media campaigns to use print and electronic media to teach large numbers of young people with messages designed to change their behavior.

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	14	35.0
	Agree	21	52.5
	Strongly disagree	2	5.0
	Disagree	1	2.5
	Not sure	2	5.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2020

The table above shows that media assistance by conducting media campaigns to use print and electronic media to teach large numbers of young people with messages designed to change their behavior evidenced by 87.5% (35) of the respondents who agreed with the question under investigation, however, 7.5% (3) disagreed and 5.0% (2) were not sure.

Conclusions of the Study Findings

The researcher concluded that some teenagers engage in premarital sex due to low socio-economic status which ends into teenage pregnancy. They see what their fellow youth do and imitate. Respondents revealed that they are forced to practice premarital sex in order to get their basic necessities.

Also, it was concluded that low socio-economic status of families influences teenagers into poor decision making. Respondents revealed to the researcher that some young girls are convinced to try sex in exchange of money, as a result they are impregnated.

Recommendations

The researcher recommended that parents should provide basic necessities to their children like school fees and ensure that once they are impregnated, they should be taken back and complete school. Parents should provide guidance to their children right from childhood, control and give the necessary care as a way of motivating them.

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