TEENAGE PREGNANCIES AS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE IN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS IN GEORGE

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the causes, consequences and possible solutions of teenage pregnancy. It indicates that socio-economic factors play an important role in the occurrence of teenage pregnancies. In addition, the study suggests that a range of factors, including, cultural norms and individual needs, impact on the childbearing decisions of teenage females.

The study demonstrates that the most important negative consequences of teenage pregnancy include dropping out of school, unemployment, single parenthood and higher levels of poverty.

An important finding of the study is that policies and programmes aimed at reducing teen pregnancy rates, and eliminating the negative consequences experienced by teen mothers and their children, are unlikely to be fully effective unless they realistically address socio-economic imbalances faced by many young women in South Africa.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my younger son Matthews who needed my attention as it was his first year at University. I am proud of you as a young man who has found his own way in life and I treasure you so much, for all the patience you have shown towards me while I was going through the difficult times of my life and in my studies.

As from your high school education I was involved with my studies, yet you never complained instead you prospered in your own way and became who you are today.
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CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION

1.1 RATIONALE

Education in our schools has been changing drastically recently. It has become difficult to discipline learners because of the laws and regulations accompanied by learner’s rights from the Department and the South African Schools Act (1996). The issue of learners’ rights has caused huge disciplinary problems and high failure rates in these two schools. Learners are not aware that rights always go with responsibilities. Pregnant learners are allowed to stay in school. In the olden days, pregnant girls were so ashamed and ran away from school even before they were called for a hearing.

Kaiser (2000:18) explains that teenage pregnancy is an international phenomenon with girls falling pregnant at an early age of 14. Statistic SA (2006:5) indicates that “In South Africa teenage pregnancies have been on the increase”. Mostly teenage pregnancies have negative effects, where teenage girls drop out from school prematurely and also minimise their chances of acquiring a good career to improve their lives in the future. In some cases teenage pregnancy leads to huge family conflicts. Boult & Cunningham (1991:36) explain how “the family suffers from embarrassment and disappointment and the effects of these experiences can manifest in outrage on the part of the parents towards the pregnant teenager resulting in non-communication with her and ultimately rejection.”

In a comparison between the United States of America and South Africa, the USA, as stated in the Family First Aid Help for Trouble Teens (2006:1) “is the country with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy”. Teen Sex and Pregnancy (2006:3) also agrees that “in the USA each year almost 19 % of all women that become pregnant are teenagers. In South Africa a study conducted by Kaiser (2000:18), revealed that 14% from a sample of 2000 teenagers have been pregnant or have made someone pregnant. Pick and Cooper (1997:1), in their study on Urbanisation and Women’s Health in South Africa conducted in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, also found that “53% of 659 female participants had been pregnant as teenagers”. The magnitude of this phenomenon in South Africa is further reflected in the statistics emanating from a national survey undertaken by the Department of Social Development (2002:39), which revealed that “more that 17 000 babies born in the period between 1999 and 2000 had teenage mothers”.

According to the latest reproductive health statistics in South Africa, Statistic SA (2006:5) reveals that “the teenage pregnancy rate is still increasing”. This report correlates with the findings by two other newspaper reporters, Nofemele (2005:1) and Matyu (2005:3) who highlight an alarmingly increased rate of teenage pregnancy at schools.
The extent of the phenomenon stimulates thoughts regarding the causes and effects of the high incidence of teenage pregnancy. These days educators are expected to deliver babies at school, without any training to do so. The schools are not allowed to expel a pregnant learner from school. Although I agree that expelling a pregnant girl is an unfair procedure, because the boys usually remain and continue with their studies and, possibly making more girls pregnant. My concern is the number of these learners who are becoming pregnant every year. Some came to secondary school already being young naive mothers who have babies to take care of. The second concern is that there is an issue of HIV AIDS, which is killing young people in numbers.

1.1.1 Socio-economic

Although the school is doing its best to address the issue of teenage pregnancy, it has been clear that parents are not at all discussing the issue with their teenage girls at home. The reason might be the cultural values and norms, or socio-economic problems, which in the end exacerbate the problem.

To make sure that safe sex and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies should be a responsibility that goes with sexual activity, I decided to embark on this study.

Studies done world wide have revealed teenage pregnancies had a vast impact on the teenage girl, her family and the society at large. Early childbearing imposes a huge responsibility on a teenage girl which results in the dropping of performance at school and even dropping out of school.

1.1.2 Background

The reality is, a big percentage of grade 8 learners who are under 14 years of age are already heads of households and are also having babies of their own. Some of them are involved with older men so as to get financial support from them and most end up infected by the HIV virus. What is more frustrating is that these learners can no longer suffer in silence, they are beginning to come forward to ask for help and answers that we as educators mostly don’t have. This is the reason I have decided on this research. Strom (1986: 128) says “People who respond with simplistic answers to the pain of others undoubtedly mean well. The problem is that those nice-sounding phrases are much more comforting and encouraging to those who are saying them than they are to the people who are hurting”. This made me realize that what these learners in crisis need is help – real, concrete, specific, down – to –earth help.
1.2 PERSONAL CONTEXT

As an educator teaching learners from a disadvantaged background, it has become clear to me that the school is losing valuable and very gifted learners through pregnancy. These learners are promising students and could become good citizens who would contribute to the upgrading of the standard of living in our community.

Since 2005 I took it upon myself to identify and write down the names and numbers of pregnant learners and do a follow-up as to what happens subsequently. Most of them ended up dropping out at school, whereas others’ academic performances dropped drastically. This contributes to the school’s high failure rate. Therefore, I decided to bring the whole matter to the attention of the School Management Team, to be dealt with as a management issue.

1.3 PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

As a Grade Head and Life Orientation H.O.D., it became a serious concern to me that girls are still becoming pregnant in increasing numbers; even after all the interventions the school has introduced, such as HIV/AIDS education and the introduction of LOVE LIFE counsellors during Life Orientation periods.

The school management went as far as asking all educators to spend five minutes of their tuition time just to speak about sex education in classes. Just last year (2007) about 7 girls in grade 11 class was pregnant. Two of them did not come back to complete matric this year. Three girls gave birth during end of the year school holidays and three gave birth in January this year. It seems as if all efforts were in vain. That is why I decided to take it upon myself to do research about this important issue.

1.4 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Looking at both schools holistically, there are a huge number of very young learners compared to the past. Learners complete their grade 12 year at the age of 17 years. These learners are easily influenced by others in many ways.

The whole issue of teenage pregnancy is affecting the pass-rate of these schools drastically. As Hill & O’Brien (1999:14) say “helping is not an easy task for anyone especially when helping a minor”. As educators we are expected to play more than one role in education in the process of helping learners to reach their adulthood. One has to bear in mind the new laws of our Education System and be careful not to overstep one’s mark or to be on the wrong side of the law.
1.5 DEMOGRAPHICS

The schools that the study focused on are situated in a rural township part of the Western Cape, where poverty plays a significant role in the community. Both schools have been identified by the Department of Education as *non-school fees* schools; a number of parents are unemployed and mostly uneducated and those that are working are mostly low – income earners.

The community consists of coloureds and blacks, who are really not sure of their own identity because of the integration of different cultures. This is mostly clear when learners are struggling to read and write their own mother tongue, which is IsiXhosa. In considering this research I thought of the words of Struwig & Stead (2001: 12) that state “Human behaviour does not occur in a vacuum”. Therefore it is necessary to provide a comprehensive description and analysis of the environment or social context of the research participants. Sometimes the behaviour of individuals is inextricably related to the environment in which they are situated.

1.6 PURPOSE

When a teenager becomes pregnant, an additional economic burden is placed on the family, particularly in the lower income class. There are high risks of being infected by the HIV/ Aids virus which is dominating in the impoverished Southern Cape community. In view of the aforementioned problems, the study is an attempt to make a meaningful contribution to address the problem of teenage pregnancy.
JUSTIFICATION

1.7.1 Introduction
It is clear that teenage pregnancies have wider implications on those involved, including their performance at school. In some cases learners become suicidal when they discover that they are pregnant and infected with HIV AIDS. Some situations are too embarrassing to discuss with anyone. It’s unpleasant for me also to hear the details of an incestuous relationship, horrifying rape or an adulterous affair.

The other problem when eliciting the truth from the affected learners is the issue of being biased. I understand that sometimes the picture portrayed may not be accurate or portraying the real happenings or events. These learners will only tell their side of the story as they see it; so it’s for me to deduce reality. Being a woman, there is an inclination to take the female’s side of the story.

Hill & O’Brien (1999:16) argue that “educators are working in a society that is depressed, full of problems and are teaching `sick children´ – mentally, physically and spiritually. In trying to help these learners, educators need to explore their feelings, gain insights and make positive changes in their personal lives”. They suggest that communication is the best medium of helping, whether verbal or non-verbal such as attending, questioning, expressing, reflecting, interpreting, disclosing and guidance”. I believe educators need to develop a trust relationship with these learners in order for them to easily share their experiences.

As educators are the people who make learning possible, their own beliefs and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and in their classrooms is of crucial importance. Educators can make or break these troubled learners. It is because of these considerations that I have decided to base my study on the problem of teenage pregnancies.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As all other researchers have done, the first phase of the research process deals with selecting a researchable topic by looking for a researchable problem or question. Creswell, cited by the following authors De Vos, Delport, Fouché and Strydom (2005:178) warns “the term problem may be a misnomer, and that individuals unfamiliar with writing about research may struggle with this.” He suggests that “it might be clear if we call it the need for the study or consider the source of the problem, which in my case is a concern about the number of learners becoming pregnant and disappearing at school. Like any other researcher, I had to decide on the research methods that will answer my questions as suggested by McMillan en Schumacher (1993:373). I did this by comparing qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to finding out which method will be more applicable to my study.
Since it is clear that a number of learners are reported pregnant at school, I decided not to generalize on the issue or to make any assumptions about the nature of the problem, but rather to focus on the specific implications of these girls’ pregnancies. This study focuses on the problems facing the School Management Team (SMT) at school with regard to these pregnant learners in particular by asking the following question:

**WHAT CAN THE SMT OF THE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS DO TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RELATED TO TEENAGE PREGNANCY?**

This question will be broken up into the following sub-questions:

- What are the contributing causes of teenage pregnancies in township schools?
- What are the problems girls who fall pregnant have to deal with?
- What can the SMT do in addition to sex-education, to address both the causes and the consequences?

### 1.9 DEMARCATION OF STUDY

The reason for choosing two township schools is the fact that I am an educator in one of the schools and I am familiar with the other. Accordingly, I have access to people in both these schools, and to the various groups of respondents.

Permission to conduct this research at the relevant schools has been obtained from the Education Department of Western Cape and the principals of both schools. All participants had been informed prior to conducting the study with regard to the objectives of the study and that their participation was voluntary. No names appeared on the questionnaires, thus safeguarding anonymity. All information obtained was regarded as strictly confidential and only utilized for the purpose of the study. Respondents were allowed to withdraw at any time.

### 1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### 1.10.1 Introduction

Mc Kenna (1997:62) says “concept definition is done for the purpose of uncovering meaning”, while Chinn and Kramer (1995:92) believe that “appropriate theoretical structuring is essential, where a researcher bears in mind the knowledge of defining attributes”.

Walker & Avant (1995:36) explain that “concept analysis tends to examine the defining elements of a given concept and exclude the irrelevant attributes”. They go on to say “it’s useful in refining ambiguous concepts in a theory and clarifying overused vague concepts, creating meaning about a phenomenon so as to provide valid precise operational definitions”.
When a concept is perfectly analyzed it ensures a sound understanding of its use in practice.

1.10.2 Terminology

1.10.2.1 Helper – is an educator who gives help and helpee – is a learner who needs help.

1.10.2.2 (SMT) stands for School Management Team.

1.10.2.3 Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) – The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1990) defines STD’s as “Any disease (such as syphilis, gonorrhea, AIDS, or a genital form of herpes simplex) that is usually or often transmitted from person to person by direct sexual contact”.

1.10.2.4 Teenager – A teenager according to Collins English Dictionary (1998:557) is a person aged from 13 to 19 years of age and from this research point of view teenager is a school going person between the ages of 13 and 19.

1.10.2.5 Pregnancy - According to Sinclair (2000:12) pregnancy is diagnosed according to presumptive, probable and positive signs. This is when a female takes a pregnancy test and the results are positive, which means she is pregnant.

1.10.2.6 Teenage pregnancies as a management issue in township schools in George- School managers are struggling to find the causes of teenage pregnancy and the problem is escalating and causing anxiety and lots of drop outs and high failure rates in schools.

1.11 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

The study is divided into four chapters as follows.

Chapter 1

This chapter provides an explanation of the reason behind the research and why it’s important for the researcher to do this research. The role of the researcher in the study is also discussed, i.e. the background and experiences of the researcher as they may impact on the research process. This leads to the statement of the problem and the purposes or goals of the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter explores the literature on teenage pregnancy beginning with the causes and progressing through a number of consequences and finally to proposed solutions.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on the research methods used. This includes a discussion of the sampling strategies, data collection, analysis and interpretation of data.

Chapter 4 This is a summary of the findings and recommendations; it also includes a discussion of the limitations of the research as well as suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The focus of my study is teenage pregnancy. It is divided into three sub-questions, namely the causes of teenage pregnancies, the consequences as well the possible ways to address the problem. At the end of the chapter a short paragraph will be written with concluding remarks emanating from the literature study.

2.1.1 The role of literature review

Mouton (2001:87), explains the literature review as “a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge, which helps the researcher to see how other scholars have investigated the research problem that he/she is interested in”. So, in following Mouton’s idea, I would like to learn from other scholars: how they have theorized and conceptualised issues related to teenage pregnancy, what they have discovered empirically, what instrumentation they have used and to what effect. I also need to familiarise myself with the current state of knowledge regarding the research problem and to learn how others have delineated similar problems.

2.1.2 The issue of teenage pregnancy

The issue of teenage pregnancy is often dealt with on a mere biological level. Life is more than just a biological concept; it also includes a psychological aspect. Nelson-Jones (1997:13) explains that the “psychological existence takes place within the biological life”. Nelson-Jones goes on to say “A reciprocal relationship exists between the biological and psychological lives of a person, influencing one another”.

So people who become psychological disturbed are in need of help, such as interventions by the skilled teacher. The main objective would be that the person be enabled to help herself/himself in future to maintain and enhance his/her psychologically life. This implies that these people become aware of various options in life and utilise skills to make a choice in order to achieve an objective. Therefore it’s important for people dealing with teenage pregnancy to approach the problem from the psychological side as well.

In March 1996 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution entitled “World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond”. I understand they meant well, but the Programme concentrated only on protecting adolescent girls from unwanted pregnancies. There was no mention of the needs and programmes of action with respect to pregnant and parenting adolescents. To me it appears that once a teenager becomes pregnant, she is dropped from the
world agenda. Spear & Lock (2003:120) agree that “for the past several decades, numerous studies have been done on the topic of adolescent pregnancy, and the majority has been quantitative in nature with relatively few studies that examine the personal perspectives and worldview of the adolescents who experience pregnancy and childbearing”

Egan (1998:24) suggests that when helping people one have to ask oneself the following 4 questions:

- What is the current scenario (problem, issue) to address?
- What is the preferred scenario (what is it that the person wants)
- What are the best strategies to get there (what shall be done to reach the goal)
- What action must be taken (how do we make this happen)

Considering the above questions one can agree or disagree about the way one sees and approaches the problem of teenage pregnancy, but the success of any intervention will depend entirely on the question whether the person concerned is willing to commit himself or herself to change from an unacceptable behaviour to improve his/her life. The whole issue of teenage pregnancy will be addressed by considering the following sub-questions, causes of teenage pregnancy; consequences of teenage pregnancy and the solutions to teenage pregnancy.

2.2 CAUSES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

2.2.1 Introduction

Rozakis (1993:36) explains that “there’s nothing new about young girls having babies. Historically, marriage and childbearing come early in many cultures, but what is new is our awareness of the problems that early childbearing brings”. There are many factors causing teenage pregnancy. Although one specific cause may be identified, research relating to these causes points to a whole array of factors leading to teenage pregnancy, e.g. peer pressure, sexual ignorance, the media, poverty, and broken homes.

2.2.2 The influence of media

It is clear from different sources that the media often plays a major role in influencing teenage pregnancy. Parents can hardly consistently monitor what programmes their teenagers are watching. Rozakis (1993:24) believes that “Television is the main source of sexual socialization in many teenagers’ lives in the USA”. A study cited by Rozakis (1993:34) indicates that “in a single year there were 20 000 sexual messages on television used to sell almost anything you can imagine: cars, travel, soft drinks, toothpaste, and clothing. Television also shows six times more extramarital sex than sex between husbands and wives”. During the absence of any elderly person children become bored and want to experiment with many things including exploring TV channels as source of
entertainment. Devenish, Funnell and Greathead (1992:113) agree that “the media also portray sex as fun and exciting”.

Bezuidenhout (2004: 31) adds that” sexually arousing material, whether it is on film, in print or set to music, is freely available to the teenager and such information is often presented out of the context of the prescribed sexual norms of that society”.

Schultz (2004: 11), in his empirical study, suggests that “sex educators, social workers, other helping professionals, and parents should work together to counteract distortions that affect adolescents’ sexual development and sexual growth, and professionals and parents need to recognize the reality and power of the media as an influence on sexual growth”.

All of the above can influence teenager’s behaviour and encourage them to experiment with sex which will lead to unwanted teenage pregnancies.

2.2.3 Home conditions

Schultz (2004:14) explains that “professionals must put pro family values up front and recognize that the family is the leading source of sexual learning and that sex education is only a supplementary source”.

Cronjé, cited by Bezuidenhout (1982: 29), notes that 10% of a group of 189 mothers of children born out of wed-lock came from homes that can be described as morally poor. In her research Oosthuizen, cited by Macleod (1999:21), concludes that positive sexual values are inculcated in homes where children especially girls, receives affection, and feels appreciated and accepted.

As is the case with all other nations, parents are expected to take the responsibility of raising and rearing their children very seriously, emphasising their own norms, values and standards.

2.2.4 The influence of divorce

The structure and organization of a family is seen as contributing firstly to sexual initiation, and secondly to teenage pregnancy. The type of structure which is mostly common problematic is the single-parent, female –headed household. Van Coeverden de Groot and Greathead cited by Macleod (1999:21), in their sample of 265 white teenagers attending teenage clinics, found that most teenagers who lived with both their parents delay their sexual encounter much longer than those who lived with single parents.

Buga, Amoko, & Ncayiyana, (1996:523) on the other hand, argue that in their representative sample of school girls, there was a difference between sexually experienced girls and sexually inexperienced girls in terms of whether they were living with both parents or not. This study looked deeply into the issue of single
parenting and teenage sexuality, and these authors did not find any similarity that proves that when teenagers are staying with their single mothers they become sexual active at an earlier age.

As far as teenage pregnancy itself is concerned, Boult and Cunningham (1992:159) in their research on black teenage girls found, in their sample of 145 black pregnant teenagers, that 35.9% lived with their single mothers 18.6% with kinfolk, 4.1% with siblings only, 3.4% with single parent fathers. They concluded that family disorganization is associated with black teenage pregnancy. In my own belief living as a single parent with your children does not necessarily mean that the family is disorganised.

According to my own experience I agree with the latter authors that there is no proven suggestion that when teenagers stay with their single parents they will be sexually active earlier than those who lived with both parents.

2.2.5 Coercive Sexual Relations

Wood, Maforah, & Jewkes (1996:186) found in their qualitative study of 24 pregnant adolescent Xhosa girls that “violence emerged as a major issue with respect to teenage pregnancy”. They go on to say that most of these teenagers indicated that they were deceived, coerced or intimidated into having sex initially, and that intercourse continued to have violent features.

Buga et al. (1996:33), in their quantitative studies indicate a somewhat less pervasive occurrence of coercion. They proved that by indicating that “28.4% of the sexually experienced respondents in the survey of rural school pupils first had sex because they were forced to by their partners. Richter (1996:56) found a similar ratio in her survey. In both these studies the word force has various connotations, from rape to verbal persuasion.

2.2.6 Cultural Factors

In the black culture teenage girls experience different kinds of sexual abuse which is imposed on them by their different cultural values.

In some of these cultures sex is a subject that is never discussed with teenagers. Teenagers encountering physiological and other changes in their bodies find it difficult to discuss such issues with their parents, so they turn to their peers for advice. This also increases the chances of teenagers experimenting with sex, the outcome of which is sometimes an unwanted pregnancy. In South Africa, Bailie (1991:104), cited by Macleod (1999:15), says “It appears that parents play a very small role in transferring information to their teenage children”. Caldas (1993:16) in the United States cited by Macleod (1999:17) also agreed “that parents play no role at all in the education of their teenagers”.
Buga et al. (1996:71) describe “cultural factors as taking a couple of forms, firstly the breakdown of traditional values and sexual control measures is seen as contributing to sexual behaviour conducive to unmarried teenage pregnancy, secondly, the cultural value placed on fertility are believed to encourage teenage pregnancy”.

Richter (1996:85), in her survey of school children, found a gendered discrepancy where girls did not regard proving their fertility as important, while 30% of the boys agreed with the statement that boys will only marry a girl if she has proved her fertility.

2.2.7 Peer pressure

Nowadays teenagers’ preferred position is to stay away from their parents, to avoid to be controlled by parents. They rather listen to their peers than to their parents. Bell cited by Bezuidenhout (1982: 30) says that “during that time norms and values taught by parents start to fade out and are replaced by liberal sexual values orientated by peers”.

Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992:226) mention that “peer pressure plays a role in teenage pregnancy”. Buga et al. (1996:528) found that “20% of girls and 10% of boys respectively indicated that they had initiated sexual activity because of peer pressure”. Wood et al. (1996:197) say “peer pressure takes a form of exclusionary practices (e.g. sending sexually inexperienced teenagers away when having discussions concerning sexual matters)”. Again Mfono cited by Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992:246) indicates that one of the dynamics operative in sexual relations is that boys and young men are under pressure to demonstrate that they are sexually capable.

Rozakis (1993:25) believes that “many teens are pushed by their friends into doing something they are not ready for, and really don’t understand that peer pressure can be a very strong and persuasive force for sexual relations during adolescence”.

2.2.8 Problem–solving behaviour

The Population Reference Bureau (2001:13) reveals “financial constraints as a contributory factor in teenage pregnancies that exist among most families”. Quoting from the report in the Herald of 19 October 2005 which identified “the poor home conditions and unemployment of parents as contributory factors that increase the rate of teenage pregnancy”, some of these teenagers become pregnant in order to access the child support grant issued by the government.

In South Africa an unknown percentage of teenagers are falling pregnant to get financial support from the government so as to be financially secure. Others want to move out of their step-parent’s houses, with the hope of being cared for by their
boyfriends. Other rebellious teenagers, as explained by Kaiser (2000:20) “by using drugs may intentionally or unintentionally fall pregnant because she seeks release from her frustrations and anger by indulging in sexual activity”.

Kelley, cited by Rozakis (1993:26), argues that “many teens say that they became pregnant because they were careless in a moment of passion, and others want to have someone to take care of and love in return also being loved unconditionally”.

A reporter of Harper’s magazine in the Bronx, New York April 1989 said “teens coming from poor families did not see any need to postpone pregnancy because they did not feel they have any control over the events of their lives”

2.2.9 Lack of information about sex and negligence

Nicholas, cited by Macleod (1999:17), says “parents play a very small role in transferring information to their teenage children”. They mention various possible reasons such as “reluctance to discuss sex with their teenage children, including shyness, parents not receiving sexuality education at school themselves, religious reasons or fear that this may encourage early sexual engagement”. Caldas in the United States cited by Macleod (1999:18) mentions that “parents’ ignorance plays a huge role, because parents believe that sex should only be taught by educators to teenagers”.

Boult and Cunningham (1992:120) report that “two-thirds of their two samples of 100 and 145 black pregnant teenagers in South Africa respectively were ignorant concerning relationship between menstruation, coitus, fertility and conception during sexual intercourse”. Buga et al (1996:78) explains that “this lack of knowledge concerning reproductive biology has been found to be a feature among the general teenage population”. Bodibe (1994:89) indicates that “in her study of 157 black rural pupils in South Africa, the rural adolescents had greater sexual knowledge than their urban counterparts, with age as a factor”.

Richter (1996:48) found in her survey that “increased pregnancy preventative practice was not associated with either exposure to formal instruction on reproductive health matters or to a constructed measure of knowledge or reproductive health risks, but rather with exposure to a supportive information environment”. This simply means that they need to be exposed to a supportive information environment.

Hanson, Myers and Ginsburg cited by Macleod (1997:18) in their study of American sophomore students, came to the same conclusion that knowledge, as measured by self-report and sexual education courses, has no effect on the chances of a teenager experiencing pregnancy. Van der Elst (1993: 105) points out that, the term sexuality education is not a stable unitary construct but is a broad rubric whose meaning changes historically and contextually.
Bam (1994:28) surveyed schools in the former Department of Education and Training in the Highveld region of the former Transvaal. He says that “of the 61 schools that responded, 34.4% indicated that sexuality education was conducted in their schools, although content analysis of the curricula offered in these schools revealed deficiencies in many areas, for example there was no discussion of amongst others, reproductive disorders, childbirth and postpartum period, pornography, various sexual behaviours and many others were not covered”. The results of the survey also show a lack of information as to what was the follow-up programmes to cover the uncovered part of work.

Sapire (1986:422) says “It is known that sexually active persons, more often than not, first indulged in sexual activity without the use of contraceptives. Similarly, a visit to the general practitioner or the family planning clinic for guidance takes place only after they have been sexually active for some time and in most cases the teenager is already pregnant”. Both these facts may be the results of ignorance that need to be addressed when dealing with teenage pregnancy.

An article of the Sunday Times 9 March 2007 says “teenage pregnancy continues to rise yet only one in five parents discusses sex with their children. It’s time to dispel some myths and start the conversation”. This confirms the issue of lack of information about sex as a contributing factor to teenage pregnancies.

2.2.10 Poor Socio-economic status as a contributing factor

Macleod (1999:22) indicates that “a relatively strong association has been made in the South African literature between socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy, however, there is little systematic research into this association, and that which has been done is fraudulent with problems”

Examples of those studies in which the teenage pregnancy/poor socio-economic status were linked stressed the following:

2.2.10.1 Illiteracy and overcrowding

Petersen (1996:145) refers to a study of 122 pregnant teenagers presenting at the Paarl – East Day Hospital and says that “the majority lived in sub-economic housing and farm houses, characterized by crowding and lack of privacy”. She concludes that poverty and low educational status play a role in unmarried teenage pregnancies. However, I found this conclusion unwarranted because no comparative sample is provided as to measure alternative situations, but she substantiates her arguments by saying that the majority of people presenting at this hospital live under poor conditions.

Boult & Cunningham (1992:17) present four case studies of teenage mothers who come from low income homes, which indicate that “all these teenagers have histories of low socio-economic status and a high lack of illiteracy, which
concludes that these teenagers are perpetuators of the cycle of poverty”. While this may be true for their outcome of a small sample, the implication is that it extends to all teenage pregnancies are not necessarily valid.

It appears that the association between poor socio-economic status and teenage pregnancy is far from conclusive. Researchers in the United States are still grappling with the issue, and it is recognized that there is a racial element to the debate. Hayward, Grady & Billy cited by Macleod (1999:24) say “what is missing from the international and local literature is an analysis of the ideological effects of association, which is commonly assumed by many researchers. This position allows the poor to be blamed for their poverty and for the disaster of teenage pregnancy to be contained within the safe parameters of happening to the poor”.

2.2.11 Poverty as a contributing factor

The pervasiveness of the teenage pregnancy/poverty association is seen in Boult and Cunningham’s work (1992:85). They found that “in their sample of 145 black teen mothers homes the average number or rooms per dwelling was 3.15, with the mean number of people inside being 6.8” which forms the basis of association between teenage pregnancy and poverty.

Mkhize (1995:45) goes on to take a slightly different tact on the issue by assuming that there is an association between poverty and teenage pregnancy, by explaining some of the contributory factors that in the poorer urban areas there is a growing number of teenagers selling sex to older men, especially migrant workers living in hostels in the cities. He goes on to explain that the teenager establishes a bargaining role with the men but is in a poor bargaining position, and may thus accept risks such as falling pregnant.

Kaiser (2000:18) and the South African Survey (2002:39) indicate “16% of a sample of 2000 teenagers confessed to having sex for money and 20% of teenage boys from the same sample indicated that they had given their girlfriends money in exchange for sex”. The role that money or a lack thereof, plays in sexual exchanges which might result in teenager pregnancy, can be traced back many years.

Gillham (1997:13) shows the extreme categories of gross weekly household income by family type for Great Britain in 1993 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family type</th>
<th>Income less than £100 per week</th>
<th>Income above £350 per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married couple</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All lone mothers</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single mothers</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table mentioned above is used by Gillham (1997:13) to indicate how poverty affects single mothers in Britain in 1993 which can be even worse in the 21st century.

Hughes (1992:112) argues that “there is often a sad connection between poverty and teenage pregnancy, where a large number of teen mothers coming from a poor background are expected to raise their children in a similar environment”. The authors call this a circle of poverty. Rozakis (1992:45) explains that “the really serious problem is that most of these teenagers born in poverty are not even developing the tools they need to take advantage of the opportunities available to them. They just don’t have the drive or the role models or the motivation to break the cycle”. A study conducted by the Attica Correctional Facility in Buffalo, New York, found that 90% of the prisoners/inmates had been born to teenage mothers.

Whereas the authors disagree about the link between teenage pregnancy and poverty, on the basis of my experience I will tend to accept that the link does exist. (ETV) Special Assignment broadcast in June 2006 “that poverty and teenage sexuality go together” has also mentioned the same issue. They also stated that the causes of mainly sexual transmitted diseases like HIV and Aids spreading easily are the engagement of younger teenage girls in sexual activities because of poverty, especially in the poverty stricken areas like South Cape Karoo”.

2.2.12 Childbearing as a career choice for some young women

The literature concerned with issues relating to teenage pregnancy and prevention, often begins with the assumption that most teen births are unintended or untimely. Geronimus (1997:407) observes that “family planning advocates blur the distinction between teenagers at risk of pregnancy who avoid childbearing when given adequate information and technology, and those who would bear children even provided the same”. Statistics published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1999:236) suggest that “22% of teen pregnancies and 44% of births to 15 to 19 year – old women were intended”. The factors that affect the decisions of adolescent women to conceive are as complex as those that influence the decisions of adult women.

Merrick, cited by Bissell (2000:190), offers the definition of a career as being “selection of a role through which one implements one’s identity as an adult and which represents one’s life work”. In the light of this definition, the decision to have a child can be seen as a deliberate career choice for some teenage women, the majority of whom are from lower socio-economic, racial and ethnic minority groups.

Merrick cited by Bissell (2000:191) carries on to quote Erickson’s model which emphasizes the adolescent’s need to develop a sense of identity and self through the cultivation of independence and a separation from family. She also suggests that such models are male oriented and from such a perspective, and that a woman
who primarily values relationships instead of individual achievement are immature personalities with dependency needs.

On the other hand Testa et al. cited by Macleod (1999:2) argue that “teenage pregnancy is not as deleterious as it has been indicated”. They argue that in South Africa early child-bearing represents a conscious choice of a stratum of disadvantaged adolescents for whom there is little advantage in delaying pregnancy; indeed it’s actually functional in a variety of ways, e.g. greater access to familiar child care. Ron O’Brien, cited by Rozakis (1993:36), explains teenage pregnancies as a roadblock to all kinds of things for young people and mostly teenagers who become pregnant are often those who can least afford a child.

I totally agree with Merrick that teenagers, who do not see the need to improve their qualifications so as to enjoy better lives, instead choose to fall pregnant and depend on their boyfriends’ and parents’ mercy for the rest of their lives, are immature.

2.2.13 Socialization and stereotyping as a cause

There are socially defined behaviours that are expected by people in the society to be fulfilled by males and females. These qualities are explained by Leigh, cited by Devenish et al. (1992:110), “as nurtured in one gender and discouraged in another, e.g. boys don’t cry; ladies don’t say things like that!” She goes on to say “these roles vary from society to the next”. Some parents influence socialisation by buying the so called “correct” toys for children e.g. dolls for girls and cars for boys. In some instances children are reprimanded for behaviour considered appropriate or inappropriate to their gender, e.g. nice young ladies don’t act like that; or cowboys don’t cry.

Some children even copy what their fathers are doing to their mothers such as abuse, and start practicing that at school as a joke and later on in life real adopt it as an accepted norm to treat women badly. These adolescents are effective in enforcing gender roles amongst peers. Devenish et al. (1992:110) says it starts in communities where a girl who wishes to drive a truck is teased and ostracised, while a boy wishing to be a male nurse is also seen as weak.

All of the above lead to teenage boys demanding sexual favours from teenage girls and end up making them pregnant, and again running away from their responsibilities of looking after the child, which they see as a female responsibility.
2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

2.3.1 Introduction

Teenage pregnancy does not only affect one individual, it involves many other people directly or indirectly. When a teenager becomes pregnant, this does not only affect the physical, emotional and social well-being of the mother-to-be, but the situation has consequences for the father of the unborn child as well, and for the families of both father and mother of the unborn child. Bartell (1999:23) says that in the United States “Each year approximately one million teenage girls become pregnant of which 10% are between 15 and 19, and 19% of the rest are mostly sexually active”. She continues to say “it impacts tremendously on the entire family system, beginning with the pregnant teen and extending to everyone in the family who becomes a part of the process of the pregnancy and its outcome”. Macleod (1999:35) says most researchers see teenage pregnancy as having a sequel; disruption of schooling, poor child outcomes and health risks associated with early pregnancy, demographic concerns and marriage and/ or other relationship difficulties.

In this section the focus is on the second research question which investigates the consequences of teenage pregnancies on a wide range of people and situations.

2.3.2 Confusion between adulthood and being a teenager

The pregnant teenager finds herself in the midst of a multifaceted crisis situation which is characterized by the emotional and physical reality of a pregnancy; the interruption of normal psychological development; a possible change in educational and career pursuits, as well as in parental and kinship support; other effects include an increase in medical risks during pregnancy; and the premature assumption of the adult’s role with its associated responsibilities. Bartell (1999:40) says “For a teen who is struggling emotionally with the transition to adulthood, without the support of a parent, a baby represents a recreation of her own childhood, a chance to parent her child in the way she wishes she had been parented herself”. Olds et al. cited by Bezuidenhout (2004: 33) say “While the teenage mother-to-be has to cope with her own development needs, she must now also learn how to cope with the tasks associated with pregnancy and the needs of her unborn baby”.

The real situation and experience of teenage mothers was revealed in two qualitative studies published in 1995 by the Family Policy Studies Centre written by Speak, Cameron, Woods, and Gilroy and by Burghes and Brown all cited by Gillham (1997:62), who say that “No matter how personally happy they were with their children, the young women took no great pride or pleasure in being single parents, they had not planned to be young single mothers or, in most cases, to become pregnant so young”. These young mothers say they would have preferred setting up homes in an established relationship and not having their first child until they were in their mid-twenties.
2.3.3 Decision-making

Calderon and Johnson, cited by Devenish et al. (1992:113), explain that “the most dramatic of all developmental events in adolescence, is the increase in sexual desire, highlighted by new and mysterious feelings and thoughts associated with it”. They go on to say adults generally agree that teen sex is not advisable because of the devastating consequences it can have in a teenager’s life.

Devenish et al. (1992:116) say that “the whole issue of teenage pregnancy has caused parents and educators to use fear to discourage sexual activities amongst young people by highlighting only the negative consequences in the hope that curiosity and the natural desire to experiment will be stopped”. Unfortunately, using fear has been shown to encourage teenagers to have sex, and on the other hand, negative messages about sex can cause adverse effects for some in adulthood, resulting in sexual problems.

One important consequence of a teenage pregnancy is the fact that it immediately forces some very vital decisions on the pregnant girls. Guttmacher, cited by Bartell (1999:181), indicates that “during the first trimester of teenage pregnancy, the teenager must deal with important issues, such as whether to seek an abortion or to carry the foetus to full term”. Although backstreet abortions may be available, she runs the risk of traumatic physical injury and may even lose her life. Even the decision to have an abortion may cause further emotional trauma. Bartell (1999:182) continues that “the teenager may have feelings of ambivalence, guilt, denial, anger disappointment or sadness, and the emotional stress of having to decide to carry or terminate a pregnancy can be a tremendous burden for a teenager”.

Rozakis (1993:1) agrees that “pregnant teens face many difficult decisions about the future of their lives, with huge consequences, an example of this is the fact that having a baby usually permanently affects the educational, job, and social opportunities for teenage mothers”. If the teenager does not receive emotional support and understanding during this time of decision-making, she may undergo radical personality changes or even commit suicide.

2.3.4 Consequences for the family of the pregnant teenage girl

In many discussions of teen pregnancy, the impact on the girl’s family goes unrecognized. In fact, having a pregnant daughter can evoke a considerable variety of feelings for her parents, amongst others their experience of the mere fact that now they know that she is sexually active. Pregnancy violates a sense of security of any parent that their child is still innocent and that she has never been touched.
Many parents react with anger to this kind of uncomfortable knowledge. Branyon, cited by Bartell (1999:221), describes that anger, as “anger that is initially at the betrayal of the pretense, or reality of innocence, rather than with the actual pregnancy”. All these authors (Boult & Cunningham, Dlamini & McKenzie, Ntombela), cited by Macleod (1999:7), point out that “majority of parents react negatively and with anger or disappointment to the news of teenage pregnancy. This may be because they are embarrassed or because in poor communities the addition of another member of family stretches the family’s economic resources”.

In the black culture where lobola plays an important role, the father of an unborn child must pay lobola to the teenage girl’s parents for the damage caused by an unplanned pregnancy. This is described by Zondi, cited by Preston-Whyte (1992:45), as “a ritual such as payment of reparation and cleansing ceremonies”. If not, that pregnancy can cause a huge conflict between the two families.

Many authors deal with the topic within the context of the structural constraints imposed by poverty. Boult and Cunningham, cited by Macleod (1999:6), point out that “the greater part of the financial burden for child care of black teenage mothers fall on the young woman’s family”. Parents during focus group interviews mentioned the same issue, where two thirds of these women live with single-parent families depending on old-age-pensions, which implies that the future well being of these infants may well be in jeopardy for financial reasons, see 3.8.5.2.

2.3.5 Feeling neglected by peers

Bezuidenhout (2004:34) acknowledges that “besides the family, the peer group is arguably the most important socialization institution for teenagers”. The discussion surrounding the effects of negative attitudes towards the pregnant teenager emanates from knowledge relating to the meaning of the peer group. Negative attitudes of friends towards pregnant teenagers have been cited as a reason for their dropping out of school and not fulfilling their educational goals.

Amongst others Gouws, Kruger, and Burger (2000:109), say that the “peer group is viewed as the comfort zone for the teenager as he/she is being nurtured in search for identity and meaning in life”. Carmer (1994:5) goes as far as saying “the pregnant teenager becomes isolated from her peers due to interests that now differ”.

2.3.5 Consequences for the society

The teenage mother, as a young person who is not working, might end up applying for a maintenance grant, which eventually increases the financial burden on state funds. In New York Rozakakis (1993:46) gave the following statistics of
pregnant teen mothers who make up a huge portion of the welfare population in the USA:

- More than $21.5 billion is spent every year on welfare, food stamps, and medical assistance for teen mothers and their babies.
- Each first birth to a teenager costs federal, state, and local governments an average of $18,700 every year for 20 years.
- By the time the babies born to teenagers reach the age of 20, it is estimated that the government will have spent more than $6 billion to support all these babies.

A third of this money, i.e. more than $2 billion, could have been saved if teenage mothers had waited until they reached age 20 to have their first baby. Bezuidenhout (2004:36) explains that “for those teenagers who decide to run away from their homes, state funds are also used in tracing their whereabouts. Instead of using the amount of money to subsidise one teenager at school, the government has to use the money to search for the lost teenager.

2.3.6 Health risk

In addition to educational, financial and parenting difficulties, the teenager is subject to health-associated risks. Research studies, among others, Macleod (1999:2), show that “adolescent mothers, especially those who are under the age of 15 years, have a higher incidence of birth complications such as toxemia, anemia, hypertension, low-birth-weight babies, prolonged and premature deliveries”. Boult & Cunningham (1991:54) say “these complications increase the risk of the infant dying either at birth or within the first year of life”.

Rozakis (1993:37) agrees with other researchers that “there’s a 13% greater chance that a youngster between 15 and 19 years of age will die while giving birth than a woman in her twenties. He goes on to say that teen mothers have a higher rate of giving birth to stillbirths and low-weight babies”.

2.3.7 Low self–esteem

Brits and Pond, cited by Macleod (1999:20), provide a case study of pregnant teenagers, using a variety of projective tests and personality questionnaires where they concluded that “these teenagers have a poorly defined sense of identity and low-image and self-confidence; the pregnant teens experience themselves as inadequate and inferior and are plagued by feelings of insecurity”. For me while reading their study it was not clear whether the poor self-concept is precedent or antecedent to the pregnancy. Sapire (1986:122) argues that “some teenage girls become sexually active to boost poor body image e.g. small breasts, acne, and feeling of inadequacy, or just poor self-esteem”. Research in the United States has challenged the poor self-esteem/teen
pregnancy association. Robinson and Frank, cited by Macleod (1999:21), found that there were no differences in self esteem between their sexually active versus nonactive groups or between the pregnant and non-pregnant group.

In my final remarks I can not resist using the words of one teenager cited by Rozakis (1993:39) who wrote “having a baby when you’re a teenager, takes away more than your freedom, it takes away your dreams, it’s like being grounded for eighteen years”. I could not agree more, if only all teenagers would knew what they are putting themselves through.

In conclusion I agree with most of the consequences of teenage pregnancy but differ with one particular issue of low self–esteem, by the mere fact that I could not ascertain whether these teenagers developed a low self esteem after being pregnant or before. May be they fall pregnant as a reason to have a sense of belonging.

2.4 SOLUTIONS TO THE CAUSES AND PROBLEMS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

2.4.1 Introduction

Rozakis (1993:50) argues that various sex-education programmes, school-based clinics, and new types of schools were tried in New York, but none really showed a decrease in teenage pregnancy. She says some people think that moral values are the answer.

I believe that preventing pregnancy at a young age will help break the cycle of poverty and lack of education that has created many of South Africa’s problems. Various authors highlight the possible solutions to the teenage pregnancy. In this section I will elaborate on the key solutions emerging from my literature study.

2.4.2 Counselling the pregnant teenage mother as a supportive measure

Carkhuff (2000:14) suggests that educators should focus on helping the learners who need support with their learning, emotional, behaviour problems which they encounter. One has also to differentiate between helping and counseling, because educators are not trained as counselors but as helpers or educators. I totally agree with Carkhuff (2000:15) when he says “we learn to live effectively in our own worlds by relating to our environments and the people in them”. He carries on saying and I quote “we learn to learn effectively by exploring, understanding and acting upon our worlds and we learn to work productively by performing or applying skills, knowledge and attitudes that we have acquired”.

Making use of the acquired skills and knowledge educators need to guide other learners who are not pregnant not to fall into the same trap. They should do that
by diagnosing and addressing the ineffective functioning of specific levels to get to the cause of the teenage pregnancy. This means that educators need to investigate the reasons for the implemented intervention not to work accordingly, and then strategies to make them learner friendly. A person needs to take time to communicate with your subjects to get to know how they think and act.

Going further on the issue of helping as explained by Hill & O’Brien (1999:4), “It is a broad term that includes help from a variety of individuals e.g. nurses, educators, ministers and counselors”. Here the helper needs to listen carefully to what the helpee has to say. You have to empathise with the helpee even if you do not have the first hand experience and knowledge of the problem the person is experiencing and avoid being judgmental. As counselors are trained to counsel people, their role is of utmost importance when pregnant girls decide to carry on with the pregnancy, because these pregnant teenage girls are entering another stage of life which is full of challenges which they need to overcome and face life without any doubts. After the teenagers have been counseled there must be no regrets about the decision they had chosen.

When parents are talking to their children about sexual issues they must be open, frank and honest. Teenage girls in particular, see their parents as an important source of information. Balding, cited by Gillham (1997:39), says that “of nearly 30,000 young people aged 11 to 16, a third of the boys and almost half of the girls aged 11 to 12 gave their parents as their main source of information”. The same statistics dropped drastically as the teenagers grow up and that’s exactly when they are vulnerable and at risk of sexual exploitation and unintended pregnancy.

Counselors like leaders from Love Life emphasise the issue of self realization of teens when it comes to decision making, and the fact that teenagers should be careful of negative peer pressure, which can force them to do things just to please the crowd without thinking about the consequences of their actions.

Priests during the focus group interviews referred to the importance for a young woman to reach adulthood without being pregnant and the mere fact that a person will get married and enjoy his or her life in totality. In most churches teenagers are encouraged to abstain from sexual activities until they are married.

The psychologists put it clearly that the stress that comes with having a baby is unbearable for a teenage girl who has still to focus on her studies and the future that lies ahead. They also explain the anxiety that goes with the decision making if you want to terminate your pregnancy.

2.4.3 Building up self – esteem, self-concept and advising learners on decision making to establish their own identity

Nelson-Jones (1997: 15) links teenage pregnancy to a lack of self – esteem as a priority to be taken care of. She uses the concept “skills language” to refer to the
process of determining a person’s strengths or deficits in making a choice to solve his/her problem. People experiencing problems find it easier to work on their strengths and deficits than to admit that they are to be blamed for inadequacy. They do this by using their thought processes to guide their actions; they can influence their own feelings”. She continues to say “The language of life-skills helping becomes the people-centred language of self-instructing and self-helping”. This means a teenager takes charge of his/her life after being guided by someone who knows the right direction, such as a psychologist or an educator who is as a counsellor.

Nelson-Jones (1997:17) goes on to differentiate between the Natural Self (the person’s inner nature of abilities, that drives and instinct, with characteristics such as energy, sexuality and feelings, shared by other human beings). The Learner Self (who the person becomes because of his experiences and the learning that takes place in his life, such as his identity and self-concept, strengths and deficits) and the Executive Self (the person’s ability to create his own life through the choices he/she has made).

Using the example which learners have learnt from counsellors, they should be well informed when taking decision, to be able to think deep, and be informed that those decisions might influence their lives. Devenish et al. (1992:114) argue that “presenting sexual information in a more balanced manner highlighting the positive and negative effects is not only more honest, but has a greater chance of having an effect”. This will give teenagers more chance for an open argument and to make an informed choice. Devenish et al. (1992:115) believe that “the process of self-discovery is influenced by the people and the world around us”. The only thing that remains a challenge is for educators to facilitate that process without being prescriptive. It is difficult for educators to limit their teachings to what they believe to be right and wrong and they end up prescribing to learners which hampers the teenager’s independent thinking.

When dealing with sexuality, educators need to be aware of their own values and beliefs about teenage sexual relationships. Although it is extremely difficult, young people must be given the opportunity to make an informed and responsible decision. I believe that’s the only way trusting relationships will be developed and in that way improved decision-making skills will be established. It’s important for the learners to know themselves and have a positive self-esteem about themselves. This will solve the problem of teenage girls who end up being pregnant in search of identity.

2.4.4 Support from the professionals

In South African society there are nurses and social workers who are trained to deal with issues of teenage pregnancy. Bartell (1999:17) says “these are seen as strangers and intruders in education by learners”. Educators can accommodate professionals in a way that will make learners feel comfortable around them.
Bartell (1999:20) sees “the path of a pregnant teen as rarely one that is stress-free and joyful, for most, there is little real support financial or emotional, from an immature and often resentful partner, animosity from parents and confusion, from her side, she ends up with the professionals whom she works with throughout this difficult time in her life”. Professionals might end up becoming the source of comfort, support and information for a pregnant teenager, because professionals are seen as not being judgmental.

2.4.5 Sex education as part of the curriculum

Laurie Zabin cited by Rozakis (1993:50) says “Researchers have found that providing sex education to both teens and pre-teens significantly reduces the rates of teen pregnancy in general”. In her research she spent three years studying four Baltimore, Maryland, high schools, two that had sex education and two that did not. In the one which had sex education programmes the pregnancy rates dropped 30.1% and the other without the pregnancy rates rose 57.6% over the period of three years.

Dr. Joycelyn Elders, President Clinton’s nominee for U.S. surgeon of 1995, was mostly criticised by religious leaders who vigorously attacked her policy for implementing school-based birth-control programmes in schools. Dr. Elders, cited by Rozakis (1993:51), believed that a poor teenager with a baby is “captive into a slavery the Thirteenth Amendment did not anticipate”. Dr. Elders was just trying to save the situation of the escalating teenage pregnancies in the U.S. by introducing sex education at schools.

From the study it is evident that there is a need for sex education. Massey (1992:43), says addressing problems regarding sexuality education in schools “sex education is the right of everyone at all stages of life, at the moment it is haphazard, too little and too late…” I think she was referring to lack of proper structures and procedures in the education system to address the issue of teenage pregnancy in the U.S.
2.5 CONCLUSION OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature study revealed many causes of teenage pregnancies and emphasised the wide range of consequences of this issue. That is why much needs to be done to encourage the solutions to these problems of teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy has come under scrutiny both because of its possible negative health effects for girls and because of its disruption of their schooling. In the global campaign to ensure gender parity in education, Geronimus (1997:412) argues that “early childbearing has been identified as an impediment to the educational attainment of girls”.

Studies in the United States show that girls who give birth at a young age are less likely to complete secondary schooling. However, other researchers caution against overstating the negative effects of early childbearing and point out that girls giving birth early are already compromised in academic/professional achievement because of other reasons. There are consensus that a variety of factors, including household characteristics, parental education, and income, need to be considered when assessing the role of early childbearing in educational attainment.

Statistic S.A. (2006:3-7) indicates that “South Africa’s ratios of adolescent fertility has been high and continues to be high despite that its rates of educational attainment for both girls and boys are higher than the rest of Africa. It also states that educational aspirations have risen in the post apartheid era”. This is also evident because girls after giving birth are allowed to continue their studies and in South African law it’s forbidden to expel a child because of pregnancy. The state also provides childcare grants for those who are eligible.

There are clearly many approaches to tackling the issue of teen pregnancy. Educators must make sure that teens understand the consequences of having sex. Parents, community leaders, and counsellors must keep the lines of communication open with teens. Hughes (1992:142) suggests “most importantly, society must not allow its youth to take lightly the awesome responsibility of having babies or to ignore the fact that becoming pregnant is a decision that affects a person for a lifetime”.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This part of my study focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures used as suggested by amongst others Mouton, (2001:56). It focuses on the gathering, analysing and interpreting of data. Before I explain those aspects, I first need to dwell on the research tradition in which this study is located and the research design. I will also spend some time on sharing the story of my research, explaining how it unfolded.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Like any other researcher I came into this research process with my own personal feelings and perceptions about this particular research, but as suggested by De Vos et, al. (2005: 278), “As soon as the researcher gains clarity about the problem to be investigated, he/she should formulate the problem in precise terms in order to make it a workable proposition”. That’s why I decided to refine my problem statement which is “What can the SMT of the township schools in George do to address the issues related to teenage pregnancy?” into three research questions, always being alert to subjectivity and avoiding my own interpretation of my personal situation.

What are the causes of teenage pregnancies?

What are the problems encountered by pregnant teenagers?

How can the problem of teenage pregnancy be addressed?

3.3 RESEARCH TRADITION

My approach to the study operates mainly within interpretive paradigm as explained by, among others, Burrell and Morgan cited by Mc Farlane (2000:14). Kuhn, cited by Struwig & Stead (2001:242), explains the term paradigm as “a selection of mutually accepted modes of scientific practice, which has its group of adherents and a subject discipline, which may be different in approach, when no single paradigm is dominant. An interpretive paradigm may have, e.g. theories, models, literature, research methods, and instrumentation that are meaningfully integrated with each other. It also dictates the type of questions and the research directions its adherent should follow. My study was aimed at finding out more about the nature of the problems encountered by teenage girls with respect to sexual issues in general and falling pregnant in particular. I wanted to understand and appreciate the way they experienced the situation they find themselves in with respect to sexual issues. McMillan and Schumacher (1993:372) say that “in order
to understand an individual, a person should understand their level of knowledge, their feelings and their actions”. In other words I have to empathise with them, and try to see their problems as they prevail in their own minds and be prepared to go down to their level of understanding so as to win their trust. Schurink (1998: 280) suggests that “the real world of the participants of a research project can only be understood if the words and expressions they use in specific situations are revealed, and people’s conceptions of reality are not directly accessible to outsiders and, therefore, methods are required to unravel and capture these viewpoints as accurately as possible”.

My approach aimed to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives as explained by Creswell cited by De Vos et al. (2005: 270). In order to accomplish this, as indicated above, I should be able to enter the subject’s “life world or life setting and place myself in the shoes of the subject. This I did by means of naturalistic methods of study, analyzing the conversations and interaction that I had with subjects. Johnson & Christensen (2004: 46) say “The key element of a phenomenological research study is that the researcher attempts to understand how people experience a phenomenon from the person’s own perspective. Your goal is to enter the inner world of each participant to understand his or her perspective and experiences”. Using the strategy of interpretive enquiry, I mainly utilised participant observation and various forms of interviews (with up to ten people) as a method of data collection.

I did my data collection having in mind that I was dealing with a qualitative research as suggested by Field & Morse (1996:11) “which seeks to explore and describe an unknown phenomenon so as to uncover more about this unknown phenomenon from the human behaviour perspective”. I took Polit and Hungler’s (1993:19) explanation into consideration that “this research approach attempts to capture the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of human experiences in their entirety and the context of those experiences”. For this purpose the pregnant teenagers in this study were given a chance to describe their experience of being a pregnant teenager, as well as the nature and extent of support required by the pregnant teenager. Parents had to describe their experiences of having a pregnant teenage daughter, as well as their views in relation to the nature of support that parents could provide to pregnant teenage daughters. As Marshall&Rossman (1995:39) suggest “all participants must be given an opportunity to express their view points”.

3.4 COMPARING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:145), “the qualitative and quantitative research strategies differ in their conceptions of reality.” The quantitative approach has its origins in positivism which sees reality as existing. In addition, “the object being researched is assumed to be independent from the investigator, i.e. the researcher can investigate a phenomenon without influencing it or being influenced by it”.
Struwig & Stead (2001: 16) say “qualitative perspectives, such as constructivism, do not view reality as external to the researcher”. They go on to say; “The researcher is part of that reality, and research cannot be completely objective and values free, it is considered that multiple realities exist that are dependent in content on individuals (i.e. a personal reality) and groups (i.e. shared reality)”. Guba & Lincoln (1994:98) believe that “knowledge is therefore based on consensus, as far as this is possible, but can vary according to contextual, political, and cultural factors.” Therefore, in this method, more emphasis is placed on the participant’s perspective and description of events, beliefs and behaviour.

Marshall and Rossman (1999:25-26) point out that “in qualitative inquiry, initial curiosity for research often comes from real-world observations, emerging from the interplay of the researcher’s direct experience, tacit theories, political commitments, interests in practice, and growing scholarly interests”. Therefore, as a person who is daily involved with learners who are pregnant at school, I see it fit to investigate the reasons for them falling pregnant.

Parasuraman cited by De Vos et al. (2005:252) believes that “the primary role of qualitative research is to generate hunches or hypotheses that may be tested through more formal research”.

Ely et al., cited by Padgett (1998:26), suggest “when contemplating doing a study, we face a critical juncture: Do we choose to study the familiar or the unfamiliar? Either choice entails risks and benefits, so the decision should be made carefully.” I decided to study the familiar taking the following into consideration: There are two main advantages to studying the familiar, according to Padgett (1998:110):

- Easier entrée and development of rapport. If you share your respondents’ lifestyle, or if you are already working in the agency or organization you seek to study, the path to acceptance and cooperation should be considerably smoother.

- A head start in knowledge about the topic. If you are studying the familiar, you already have accumulated some knowledge about the subject, either through personal or professional experience.

The high teenage pregnancy and the indulging of teenage girls in sexual activities at a very young age motivated me to conduct this study, because, as suggested by Mouton (2001: 27), “people who are more aware of what is going on around them, who are sensitive to their surroundings, are more likely to come up with interesting topics for research”.

My concern centers on the future of the learners whose academic performance might deteriorate, with the implication of them dropping out of school.
3.5 **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Data were collected from teenage girls between the ages of 14 -18 years from two local High schools in George, from their parents and also their educators, using semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and questionnaires.

The aim being to -:

- Determine the reasons that cause these learners to fall pregnant regardless of so many intervention and information given to them about abstaining or having safe protected sex.
- Ascertain the consequences of teenage pregnancy, and lastly
- Find the solution to the problem of how the SMT’s of both schools can assist these learners.

I decided on a qualitative research design, because the subjects under study (meaning, learners and educators) were primary sources in providing information in order to answer my research questions. In order to get data in words, I needed to understand the quality of pain and various kinds of experience they undergo everyday in their lives.

3.6 **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

3.6.1 **Introduction**

Mouton (2001: 238) says “The ethics of science concerns what is wrong and what is right in the conduct of research, because scientific research is a form of human conduct, it follows that such conduct has to conform to generally accepted norms and values”. Babbie (2001: 470) says that “Anyone involved in research needs to be aware of the general agreement about what is proper and improper in scientific research”. In following Mouton and Babbie’s advice, I had to write letters to the superiors of my respondents as well as the respondents themselves, clarifying that they were under no obligation to help me or answer questions which they did not understand or feel comfortable with.

Gravetter & Forzano (2003: 60) make it clear that “researchers have two basic categories of ethical responsibility: responsibility to those, both human and nonhuman, who participate in a project; and responsibility to the discipline of science, to be accurate and honest in the reporting of their research”.

Mouton (2001:239) goes on to explain the importance for ethical considerations by stating that “ethical issues arise from an interaction of a researcher with people and the environment, especially at the point where there is potential or actual conflict of interests”.
3.6.2 Letters
To guard against such conflicts, letters requesting consent to conduct the study were written to the following:

1. Director of: Education Research Western Cape Education Department, Dr. RS. Cornelissen, to request permission to conduct research at two townships schools in George. (See Appendix A)
2. The principals of both secondary schools. (See Appendix B)
3. The parents of the pregnant teenagers. (See Appendix C)
4. Educators from both schools supplied the teenager’s names and information. (See Appendix D)

3.6.3 Provision of information and avoidance of harm

All respondents were informed about the reason for the study and that they were under no obligation to participate or answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable with. De Vos et al. (2005:57) explain that “subjects can be harmed in a physical or emotional manner”. That is why my respondents were thoroughly informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation.

3.6.4 Reassurance and informed consent

All respondents were reassured that their names were not going to be used under any circumstances and that all information would be dealt with in a confidential manner. (See Annexure D). Neuman (2003:124) emphasises the importance of informing respondents in advance by saying “nobody should ever be coerced into participating in a research project, because participation must always be voluntary”. Babbie (2001:470) and Thomas and Smith (2003:21) call informed consent “voluntary participation”.

Although providing the correct information to subjects about the topic that you are researching, might cause them to act unnaturally, which in turn can influence the research results, Bryman (2000:113) argues that “whatever the results may be, when subjects are involved without their consent, their right to self-determination is impaired” which in turn causes a conflict between the researcher’s task to broaden knowledge, and his/her responsibility to protect participants.

3.6.5 Violation of privacy/anonymity and confidentiality

Singleton et al., cited by De Vos at el. (2005:61), define privacy as “that which normally is not intended for others to observe or analyse and it’s the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed”. To maintain this principle I had to safeguard the privacy and identity of my respondents and to act with the necessary sensitivity that my topic deserves.
3.7 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

These were some of the challenges that I encountered during the research process:

- Time frames which had to be met and not reached.
- The difficulty of interpreting notes written by someone else during the discussions.
- Being able to remember what was said during the debates.
- Some important points which were picked up during face to face interviews where people got a chance to open up especially pregnant teenagers, which they could not do in a group.
- The group discussion turned into a conflict e.g. the parents meeting, where male respondents put the blame of teenage pregnancies on the shoulders of women respondents.
- Again another challenge came out when parents could not read or write, so then I had to interpret and explain each and every question on the questionnaire.
- The other challenge from the parent’s side was the time of the meeting to accommodate all working respondents during the evening. Here a sample of 30 parents attended the discussions, mainly women. When parents were reluctant to speak about their personal experiences, a focus group was introduced to divide parents into smaller groups, to encourage them to speak freely in smaller groups.

3.8 DATA GATHERING

3.8.1 Introduction

In collecting data, I decided to make use of Johnson & Christensen’s (2004: 161) methods of data collection, which includes “researchers asking participants to fill out self – report instruments (questionnaires); talking to participants in person (interviews); discussing issues with multiple research participants at the same time in a small-group setting (focus groups); examine how my research participants act in natural and structured environments (observation), and also using data that came from an earlier time for different purpose than the current research question (secondary data)”.

The research sample of teenage girls was taken from both township secondary schools in George. A sample of 10 girls ranging between the ages of 14 -18 was obtained. Some methods were practical in some settings and others not e.g. observing pregnant learners from the other secondary school posed a challenge, as I could not spend time there during school hours.
3.8.2 Research Population and Sample

Respondents were selected with the help of community workers and parents that implies that I chose knowledgeable and informed members of clinics, and parents who had been involved with pregnant teenagers, either as biological parents or by being involved in programmes to assist them. In order to get additional information, I included both males and females – from the parents or community workers or both. I wrote them letters in a sensitive way, knowing how sensitive the issue that we were going to discuss is.

Miles and Huberman (1996:28) suggest that “purposive sampling is choosing respondents who reflect most of the characteristics of the general population”. In my study, a sample of pregnant teenage girls and those who have been pregnant before, were taken from both schools, taking into consideration that any possibility of suspicion about them being pregnant or not should be avoided as far as possible. I tried to select them in a way that would avoid any suspicion as far as possible, by putting letters in their class work books. I got assistance from other educators in the other school, to manage to get the letters to the other learners in their school, and then following that up by talking to them one –by – one during break, just to make sure they saw the letters. Learner’s ages were obtained from the principals of both schools, so as to determine at what age these learners became sexually involved.

Girls chosen were mostly those that were in my class and closer to me, because I knew that they trusted me. Sampling is described by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:155) as a procedure which allows the researcher to select people from a large group. Looking at the sensitivity of my topic, I observed that not all respondents were freely participating during the focus group discussions. That led to a purposeful selection of mostly the quiet ones to get to know what their thoughts were, by conducting interviews with them. This was done by firstly gaining their trust. It was also amazing how freely they responded on a face – to – face basis. I must admit that I was skeptical at first.

I did not want to use a big number of respondents, taking into consideration the sensitivity of the issue to be discussed. A total of 10 teenage girls from both schools were interviewed to avoid any suspicions by other learners, although I was quite aware that there were more pregnant learners, and others who had already given birth.

I did not encounter any problems getting information from the educators; they all participated in a discussion and brainstorming session and also voluntarily filled in the questionnaires. That gave me a sample of 45 respondents from the educators’ side, both males and females.
3.8.3 Focus Group Interviews

Johnson & Christensen, (2004: 178) explain interviews as “a data-collection method in which an interviewer (one conducting interviews) asks questions of an interviewee (participant answering questions). During these interviews I remembered that interviews are interpersonal encounters, so relationships and trust should be the priority. De Vos et al. (2005:300) also explain focus group interviews as “a type of group interviews in which a moderator [researcher in my case] leads a discussion with a small group of individuals (e.g. teachers, parents, teenagers) to examine, in detail, how the group members think and feel about a topic”. It is called a “focus” group because the researcher keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed. The researcher generates group discussions through the use of open-ended questions, and he or she acts as a facilitator of group processes. Stewart & Shamdasani cited by Johnson & Christensen (2004: 185) state the purposes of using focus group interview, as follows:

- To obtained general background information about a topic of interest.
- To generate research hypotheses that can be submitted to further research and testing using more quantitative approaches.
- To stimulate new ideas and creative concepts.
- To generate impressions of products, programs, services, institutions, or other objects of interest.
- To learn how respondents talk about the phenomenon of interest (which may in turn; facilitate the design of questionnaires, survey instruments, or other research tools that might be employed in more quantitative research).

The purpose of focus group interviews as viewed by Krueger & Casey (2000:7) “is to promote self-disclosure among participants and to know what people think and feel”.

Apart from the sample that I took before, I started by using focus group interviews consisting of other 10 learners, other 10 educators and other 10 parents in different sessions. As mentioned by Krueger & Casey (2000:18) “that deciding on the right number of participants means striking a balance between having enough people to generate a discussion, but not having too many people such that others feel crowded out”. During interviews respondents were responding to one open-ended question, which focuses on the causes, consequences and solutions, as indicated by Schurink, Schurink, and Poggenpoel (1998:314). The reason for not using structured interviews at this stage was to avoid leading participants towards a specific direction.

The intention was to see themes, topics as well as patterns emerging from the interview transcripts. The study strives to avoid simply confirming my own ideas. The focus group interviews were repeated until the information became saturated (Schurink et al, 1998:317).
3.8.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

After taking an in-depth look at the themes and topics that emerged from the focus group interviews, I also conducted semi-structured interviews which form part of in-depth face-to-face interviews (Schurink et al., 1998:319). These interviews were conducted both with learners and educators. The outcomes of the interviews with both parties reflected a variety of perspectives on factors that play a role in teenage pregnancy.

A semi-structured interview, as described by De Vos et al. (2005: 297), “is a combination of the structured and unstructured interviews, which can last for a considerable amount of time and can become intense and involved, depending on the particular topic at hand”. They go on to suggest that “during these interviews participants should be made to feel comfortable and at ease”. Berg, cited by Struwig & Stead (2001: 98), says in this type of interview “predetermined questions are posed to each participant in a systematic and consistent manner but participants are also given an opportunity to discuss issues beyond the questions”.

Taking into consideration the suggestions from the above authors, I allowed respondents to dwell a bit on their own experiences in respect to the topic at hand.

3.8.5 Meetings with different interest groups

3.8.5.1 Introduction

I arranged meetings with parents, educators and learners to get their own opinions about teenage pregnancy. These groups consisted of the whole staff members of about 40 educators, 20 parents of pregnant learners and those whose children have already given birth and also 15 pregnant girls of whom some I had already interviewed and those who had already given birth. Letters were written to different groups, which stated the date, time and venue of the meeting.

3.8.5.2 Parents as a source of information

I started collecting data on the 20 March 2007 with the parents of pregnant girls in one of the township schools in George. I conducted the meeting with the help of a colleague taking down minutes.

The parents’ brainstorming session started in a very good spirit but ended up on a sad note because mothers of pregnant girls opened up their feelings and ended up literally crying, because of the situation they found themselves in at their homes, where they shared some experiences of their husbands blaming them for their teenage girls’ pregnancies. The discussions became tense, because male respondents started accusing the females of spoiling teenage girls and accusing them of being the reasons for them to be pregnant because of their negligence.
Female respondents also retaliated against the accusations. To me the meeting now became a blame triangle.

Some female respondents started crying when giving the scenarios of the incident that led to their separation with their husband because of the blame shift triangle that took place in their families because of teenage pregnancy. The husbands blamed them as women, when their teenage girls were pregnant for not taking the responsibility of talking to the girls as they grew up about sex and pregnancy.

In this instance Thomas & Smith (2003: 414) argue “that when the participants introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of, the participants can be perceived as an expert on the subject and should be given a maximum opportunity to tell his/her story”. This challenge caused a bit of a stir because I never anticipated such moments. Luckily amongst the respondents there was a priest who tried his best to calm the situation down. The priest emphasized the issue that both parents should encourage their children to abstain from sex until they are legally married.

At this stage of the interview I remembered what was suggested by Holstein & Gulbrium cited by De Vos et al. (2005: 298) who say “that a permission to use tape recorder should be obtained in advance from the participants, to give the researcher amply time to listen and direct the discussions”. I then asked for their permission to use the tape recorder and explained my reasons for using it. This kind of data collection gave me enough time to concentrate on what the participants were saying and also occasionally monitored the coverage of the scheduled topic as suggested by Smit et al. (1995: 17).

Parents mentioned the issue of grandparents who must share their pension funds with these learners and their infants, which makes life very difficult because of poverty, and the little money these older people earn.

Parents also raised the issue that school was the main source of information, where learners should be thoroughly taught about sex. This reminded me of a reading from Gillham (1997:39) which says “any discussion of sex education has to recognize that formal education in schools can only be one source of information”. That implies that parents should also take their own initiatives to teach their children about sex before they learn it from somebody else.

Again another challenge was that, initially I intended using some questionnaires for parents, but it posed a challenge when I realised that most parents could not read or write. I ended up interpreting and explaining each and every question, which to me at the end seemed as if they were giving me answers I wanted to get, not really their own opinions.
3.8.5.3 Educators as a source of information

The meeting with educators was held on the 26 March 2007. Initially it was intended to accommodate SMT members only, but after the principal of one secondary school announced the meeting, all educators were interested. It was a very successful meeting. It came out clearly that all educators were concerned about the high rate of pregnancy at school. It was also evident that in each and every class there are a number of pregnant girls, starting from grade 8 to grade 12. In more ways that one it was clear that learners who fall pregnant were mostly dropping out of school and their performance standards dropped. Educators explained that in each class there were more that five learners pregnant, so everybody saw the need for the meeting.

A lengthy discussion took place and many causes were mentioned by educators. Educators now wanted to take over the meeting and to suggest ideas that should be implemented at school, forgetting that, this was just a mere research discussion. I had to intervene and explain to educators that the discussion should follow a certain sequence in trying to find answers to my questions, namely: Causes, Consequences and lastly they should suggest some solutions to the problem facing the school.

3.8.5.4 Learners as a source of information

This meeting took place on 27 March 2007. As I expected, initially the learners were reluctant to speak out about their experiences.

I then decided to use group interviews instead, when realising that individual interview did not give me sufficient information from the learner’s side. Taking into consideration the advice given by Lewis cited by Graham Hitchcock and David Hughes (1995:161) which says, “group interviews may be more practicable than individual interviews for a teacher-researcher to carry out. However, the teacher-researcher needs to consider carefully whether or not the children’s interrelationships as well as his or her relationship with the children will distort responses and so render data invalid”. So that’s why I decided to minimise the number of learners to be invited for interviews. This happened after the meeting with the learners. It was easy to deal with my own school’s class of learners who usually call me mom. As the relationship had been established, barriers were broken down and that made it easier for them to open up to me. Even the sitting arrangement was so learner-friendly that they did not have any fear as to what will happen to the information discussed. We sat in a semi-circle where everybody could see each other and hear what the other person was saying, everybody was given a chance to speak and everyone’s points were taken very seriously. The whole situation made it possible for me to record the major themes as they emerged.
As the meeting continued learners started opening up and the discussion went smoothly thereafter. Learners jointly mentioned the lack of knowledge, negligence and carelessness as causes of teenage pregnancy. Teenage girls highlighted the following as causes of teenage pregnancy:

- To please the boys and wanting to be fashionable.
- Unable to say “no” when under pressure and afraid of losing the boyfriend.
- A sense of being obligated, a pay back for the cost of maintenance from older men.
- To prove love because sex means a lot to the boys.
- Sometimes they lead the boys on and thereafter feel guilty.
- Being part of the group which values sexual activity.
- Succumbing to persistent demands and fear of conflict.
- Curiosity to find out what it’s like to have sex.
- The competition for womanhood.

During the joint discussions boys mentioned the following as causes of teenage pregnancy:

- Their fear of hurting the girl’s feelings so they end up thinking he doesn’t like her.
- To prove manhood because it is expected of man to do it.
- To belong in a group where everyone else is doing it.
- To compete for manhood by proving that you are also having sexual encounters with your girlfriend.
- To experience sex so as to take part when such discussion come up.
- Being “high” on drugs or alcohol.
- The feeling that the girl wants to have sex.
- Running out of ideas on a date.
- To experiment with their partners what they normally see on the movies.

Both teenage girls and boys also mentioned that their parents never discussed sex with them. Others mentioned the issue of competition amongst them to be the first to experience these things.

Pregnant learners and those who have given birth mentioned the following as challenges facing them:

- Their friends are neglecting them and some do not want to be seen in their company, because pregnancy has been stigmatised, and all of this result in loneliness.
- The issue of being a parent during the evening and a learner during the day posed a huge responsibility for them and they find it difficult to concentrate during tuition time under these circumstances.
- Neighbours gossiping and laughing because of what they have done to become pregnant and embarrassment which goes with disappointment in themselves.
Anger from their parents, especially their fathers, refusing to speak to them after they discovered that they had fallen pregnant.

Their boyfriends who are refusing to take responsibility for their actions and cutting them out of their lives when they are pregnant. That results in a feeling of emptiness.

The difficulty was finding the solutions or recommendations from the learners. The other meeting that was scheduled was a meeting with community workers such as nurses, but that did not materialise.

### 3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

In this section I briefly explain the data analysis as pointed out by Patton (2002:434) that “analysts have an obligation to monitor and report their procedures” meaning that as I observed my processes, I should also report on the analytical process. I did data analysis as I went along collecting data, because what is important in a qualitative research is transforming data into information, insights and knowledge.

Patton (2002:432) states, “qualitative analysis transforms data into findings, which involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals”. As I mentioned earlier, I did this as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:483), identifying the topics and the patterns that came up during and after the process of data collection. I did this by scanning all the gathered data in order to gain a holistic picture of the topics embedded in the data and then search for issues that might become major themes.

De Vos et al. (2005:333) explains data analysis is “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass collected data”. McBurney (2001:80) suggests “that the relationship between the research question and the data collected should clearly emerge”.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999: 154) “generating categories, themes and patterns represents the heart of data analysis which is the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, creative and enjoyable phase”. I realized that as I was doing data analysis, I was getting lost between analysing meeting discussions and interviews, because the data generated by qualitative methods became voluminous in files notes and recorded meetings. This experience made me think of what Patton (2002:440) once said, “organising and analysing a mountain of narrative can seem like an impossible task”.
In writing a report on data analysis I encountered a problem because I did not know which information was important and which I did not need to write about. At this stage I used Patton’s suggestion (2002:442) that “each and every data the researcher has collected is unique and precious, even field notes and interviews should be protected and be treated as the valuable material because they are”.

During data collection phases of this study any information related to the experiences of all participants in the study, regarding teenage pregnancy, as well as the support of the pregnant teenager were identified through the process of exploration and description. They were then clarified and defined before an analysis was done based on the objectives and context of this study.

I went back to Patton’s helpful guidelines which say getting organised for analysis begins with an inventory of what one has. I checked whether my field notes were complete. Were there any parts that I put off to write later and never got to write which needed to be finished, even at this late date, before starting with my analysis? Were there any glaring holes in the data that can still be filled by collecting additional data before the analysis begins? Are all the data properly labelled with a notation system that will make retrieval manageable (dates, places, interviewee identifying information, minutes of meetings and discussions, etc.)? Are interview transcriptions complete? The answer to all the above questions made my analysis even more manageable.

I totally agree with De Vos at el. (2005:338) when they say “Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together are the most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavour”. This is how I managed to compile meanings held by participants in their different settings and wrote them down as the original research questions which refer to causes, consequences and lastly solutions with respect to teenage pregnancy.

3.10 DATA INTERPRETATION

3.10.1 Introduction

After the completion of the data analysis, the data interpretation process followed. This was also done according to the three research questions.

3.10.2 Causes for teenage pregnancy as identified by parents, educators and learners

3.10.2.1 Introduction

As the meetings went on, the parents, educators and learners identified many causes for teenage pregnancy, but I managed to summarise them as follows;

3.10.2.2 Government grants (Which give these learners a sense of control )
Parents and educators blamed the government’s grant as a motivation for teenagers to fall pregnant so as to get that grant and be able to administer it themselves. They say it gives them a sense of adulthood, because to them it looks like a sort of income that they can control.

3.10.2.3 Lack of information about sex and negligence.

Under this topic educators went into a lengthy discussion. Some accepted guilt while others ran around in circles and ended up shifting the blame to female educators who have to educate girls about their behaviours.

Educators also mentioned teenage girls becoming pregnant because of negligence and a belief that such things will never happen to them. Learners said that they did not know that if they had unsafe sex once, they will fall pregnant. This was to me an indication of how little knowledge these teenagers had.

When the issue of lack of information came up, it reminded me of the words of Schultz (2005: 599) “some youth who lack a sense of direction don’t believe that they can or will have a career, so a baby makes them feel as though they have accomplished something of their own”. Educators’ final comments here were just that, the more education learners receive about sexual activities the more they became sexual active. Learners themselves blamed negligence and being too stubborn to adhere to the knowledge they have been taught at school as the cause of teenage pregnancy.

Parents accepted their failure as far as discussing sexual issues with their children. Most parents that I interviewed on teenage pregnancy agreed that in most cultures it is difficult for parents to discuss sexual activities with their children. Some parents believe that by discussing sex with their children they are encouraging them to indulge in sexual activities, although Richter (1996:104) in her survey, found that “increased pregnancy preventative practice was not associated with either exposure to formal instruction on reproductive health matters or to a constructed measure of knowledge or reproductive health risks, but rather with exposure to a supportive information environment”.

From a number of pregnant learners that I interviewed separately, most of them mentioned that it was their first encounter with sexual activity and that they had never thought that a person can get pregnant during her first experience.

3.10.2.4 Standards of living and peer pressure

Parents and learners mentioned the competition amongst teenage girls (those who have working boyfriends and those who have student boyfriends) as a factor that causes the escalation of teenage pregnancy. Girls with working boyfriends carry
expensive cell-phones and wear expensive perfumes and jewellery which their school-going boyfriends could not afford, so they end up with older men who demand sex and make them pregnant.

3.10.2.5 Poverty as a cause of teenage pregnancy

As I have mentioned before, the Southern Cape is a poverty stricken area. Educators also mentioned that learners get themselves pregnant by older men so as to get financial support from these men.

It also came out from the learners that they compete amongst themselves as to who will carry the child of a well known and rich man in the area. Parents also admitted that because of low income and low qualifications, they cannot afford to live the luxury life expected by their children. Some parents mentioned the issue of status that goes with fame. If their children are involved with an older rich man, they see that as a source of income and belonging in another class.

3.10.2.6 Cultural factors as causes for teenage pregnancy

Besides the issue of competition, learners and parents also mentioned the issue of culture and tradition that encourage girls to become pregnant. This was quoted by Buga et al. (1996:71) where cultural factors as taking a couple of forms, “firstly the breakdown of traditional values and sexual control measures is seen as contributing to sexual behaviour conducive to unmarried teenage pregnancy. Secondly, the cultural values placed on fertility are believed to encourage teenage pregnancy”. Richter (1996:85) in her survey of school children, found a gendered discrepancy where girls did not regard proving their fertility as important, while 30% of the boys agreed with the statement that boys will only marry a girl if she has proved her fertility.

Girls were reported by their parents as suffering from inferiority complexes, by the mere fact that they felt it was necessary to become pregnant as to prove something to their boyfriends.

3.10.3 Consequences of teenage pregnancy as mentioned by parents, educators and learners.

3.10.3.1 Introduction

The data interpretation revealed the following results as consequences of teenage pregnancy: Pregnant teenagers experienced emotional turmoil because they are striving to cope with their pregnancy and a load of school work. A huge change as far as their relationships, with teenagers, parents and even their boyfriends is also a concern. The pregnancy also creates a state of confusion between being an adult and being a teenager.
Parents of pregnant teenagers experienced overwhelming emotions due to the unexpected pregnancy of their children. They felt the loss of control over their children as the pregnancy could not be reversed or hidden. During this instance parents, especially mothers, were literally in tears when they mentioned the consequences of teenage pregnancy. Although I knew from the beginning that I was dealing with a sensitive topic, some of the reactions from parents came as a shock to me. Educators expressed anger as they seemed to have failed in their guidance of these learners, but at the same time they had to play a huge role in bringing back trust and trying to heal and diffuse the conflict between parents and pregnant teenagers. The following were the main consequences mentioned by all three groups.

3.10.3.2 Gossip and stigmatization

The family of pregnant girls is subjected to ridicule, gossip and other forms of stigmatisation. This phenomenon is more prevalent in the family of the teenage mother and especially in small communities. The reaction of the families, especially that of the parents of the teenage mother, may range from understanding to ostracism of the teenager. If the father of the child is not financially secure, the baby adds a financial burden to the family.

Educators, as well as parents, mentioned the burden that comes with an unplanned child in a family that is already struggling to make ends meet.

Educators also mentioned that, when these learners fall pregnant, they find it difficult to cope with schooling, so they end up dropping out and that plays a negative role on the society at large because they have to support their own children from little income. They are also not able to complete their education when they leave school.

3.10.3.3 Conflict between families

All members indicated the tension between parents and pregnant teenagers as a challenge, especially during the initial stages of pregnancy.

Mothers of pregnant teenagers mentioned the blame that fathers imposed on them when these teenagers fall pregnant, in some instances the conflict can lead to a separation between married couples. Educators reported community conflict issues that are dragged into school when two families are at loggerheads because of teenage pregnancy. Educators are sometimes expected to do a witch-hunt for the father of the unborn baby as they are told by the pregnant girl, they do not have any proof, and are expected to expel him also from school while the teenage girl has to go and give birth.
3.10.3.4 Disruption of schooling and socio-economic disadvantages.

The parents made it clear that although they were not educated as such, their dreams were to educate their children so as to enjoy better lives than theirs, but teenage pregnancy shattered their dreams. As Catrion (1999:3) said “the disruption of schooling that potentially accompanies teenage pregnancy, is seen as detrimental to the teenage mother as it limits her future career prospects, and therefore contributes to a lower socio-economic status for her and her child”.

Preston-Whyte and Allen (1992:3) argue in their qualitative study in the coloured community in Durban, that “most women interviewed had in fact already left school after grade 7 or 8, before conceiving, their reasons for leaving included alcoholism in the family, poverty, expulsion and the pointlessness of schooling given the poor job prospects.

Educators complained about continuous absenteeism of these learners even after giving birth because they have to take their babies to the clinic themselves. They raised as a concern the issue of young girls leaving school because of pregnancy and the mere fact that there are no statistics showing how many of them do come back to school or complete their matric. Educators explained the changes these learners undergo during pregnancy and the manner in which they sleep in class.

Educators also complained that teenage pregnancy is bringing down the moral values of education at school. All schools are categorised and respected because of upholding norms and values of the society. So if a school is seen to have a large number of pregnant teenage girls, the society tends to label and blame educators in that particular school. That in return can cause parents to take their children to other schools and the teacher/pupil ratio will drop affecting educators and causing them to lose their jobs. Even the high failure rate was seen by educators as caused by teenage pregnancy. Educators also raised their concern about pregnant learners’ injuries at school during changing of periods in corridors. Educators accepted the responsibility of looking after learners at school, but pointed to the difficulty of following them from period to period and to know exactly what is taking place during the rush to the next class.

Although educators understood the reason for the Department to allow teenage girls to continue with their studies while pregnant, they were not well informed as to what is expected of them.

3.10.3.5 Inadequate mothering.

Most mothers explained this as a huge problem for them to have to take care of their grandchildren at night and wake up early the next morning and be ready for work, because the teenage mother is too young to know what to do with the infants. Educators suggested that even after pregnancy these learners are still not
themselves. They are mostly drowsy and do not pay attention in class. Learners themselves agreed with the problems they encounter e.g. to maintain being a parent and a scholar at the same time was posing a huge responsibility.

Mothering is a topic that has been thoroughly researched within psychology, sociology, social work etc. Rubenstein, cited by Catrion (1999:5), provides a case study of four white teenage mothers. She notes that they scarcely mentioned their children during the interviews; she further revealed ambivalence in these teenagers towards their children, involving both the romantic desire for something to love and a covert rejection of the child. Furthermore Mkhize (1995) states that “48% of his sample of teenage mothers found mothering to be difficult”. He concludes that the teenagers lack parenting skills.

3.10.4 Solutions suggested by educators, parents and learners.

3.10.4.1 Introduction

It became clear that parents still think that educators and learners should discuss the issue of teenage pregnancy at school because educators are seen as problem solvers in their communities. Very little came from parents’ side as to what they needed to do to address the issue. My own observation from the educators’ point of view was that it was difficult for educators, as well as for parents to come up with solutions because as far as educators were concerned, they have played a major role in convincing these learners to abstain or to use protection when it comes to sexual activities. Out of the little both groups could say I managed to jot the following down:

3.10.4.2 More information sessions for parents

Parents were shocked to hear some of the new legislations of the Education Department pertaining to the safety of learners, e.g. the issue that no educator is allowed to take a learner to hospital in his/her car. The fact that even if a learner is sick, an educator is not allowed to give that learner any medication, etc. Parents then requested that the school should arrange more information sessions for the parents to be informed about the new developments with respect to teenage pregnancy and the safety of learners at school.

Parents also agreed that they need to open lines of communication between them and their children very often.
3.10.4.3 Learners to be given a chance to experience what kind of responsibility go hand in hand with having babies.

Educators suggested that the school should work with the crèches in the community, where they can get babies for both boys and girls to take care of for the whole day, including feeding and everything else that goes with taking care of a child, to experiment how it will be in real life. The manner in which that was going to be monitored will need a meeting on its own.

3.10.4.4 Educators to have an open dialogue with parents in meetings concerning teenage pregnancy.

Educators felt that in many instances parents are aware of their children who are pregnant and how far they are with pregnancy, but they failed to inform educators, especially the males, so as to take precautions. In view of the fact that parents were not aware of the departmental regulations regarding pregnant girls or any other sick learner, an open meeting was suggested where all these regulations would be addressed thoroughly.

3.10.4.5 Educator’s to be trained to deal with pregnant teenagers.

Educators saw a need for the Department to arrange workshops in educating teachers to deal with the issue under discussion, especially with the new policies that have been imposed on them. From the learners that I interviewed individually, it was clear that they did not have any solutions except to complain about the ill – treatment they receive from their educators during their pregnancy and after.

The department should encourage joint sessions between educators, community workers, counsellors and nurses, so as to share skills and knowledge as to how these issues of teenage pregnancies should be handled.

Since each community or school has a different incidence of teenage pregnancy, educators should approach the local clinics or Department of Health office to find out the recorded number of pregnancies in their area so as to show the statistics to their teenagers. This will help them to realise that the problem is very serious.

3.10.4.6 The inclusion of sex education in all school curriculum

Learners felt that the inclusion of sex education as a compulsory subject in all schools, from a primary level will open many learners’ eyes as to what happens when you are engaged in sexual activities.

A concern came up on the issue that although such information is provided during life orientation periods, very few educators are prepared to discuss the matter frankly or allow any fruitful debates to take place in their classes.
Parents also came up with the suggestion of care givers, to look after the pregnant teenage girls at school during the change of periods, where educators are not available. Parents suggested that female adults who are not working should first volunteer their services to help educators, or parents of pregnant teenagers should pay a certain fee to subsidise these parents, for looking after their teenage girls.

3.11 CONCLUSION OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.11.1 Introduction

In conclusion, in this chapter I described the processes of qualitative data analysis and interpretation. In analysing and interpreting my data I realised that a qualitative report is in essence more complicated than the quantitative report because it is:

- **Less structured.** As explained by Esterberg (2002:207) “qualitative research reports traditionally have been more flexible than reports of quantitative research”.
- **More intertwined with the total research process.** As mentioned by Marshall & Rossman (1999: 157) “writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analytical process”, and Babbie (2004:309) confirms this element by saying, “In field research, observation, data processing, and analysis are interwoven, cyclical processes.”
- **Often longer and more descriptive.** Neuman (2000:473) argues that “Qualitative research may use more varied and literary writing styles, which increase length.”

Various authors identify the length and narrative or descriptive nature of the qualitative report as its most distinctive characteristic. Authors such as Neuman and Kreuger (2003:487-488), Neuman (2000:473), Creswell (1998) and others provides us with certain factors that contribute to the length of the qualitative report, but that in essence, also comprise its uniqueness.

Although the research was limited to two secondary schools in George it reflected the challenges faced with most school when comparing it with the report given by the Eastern Cape Education Department’s spokesperson. Teenage pregnancy is a nationwide problem.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I briefly discuss the findings which emerged from my study. The chapter presents the total findings of the study with respect to causes, consequences and solutions to the problem of teenage pregnancy.

Bless & Higson-Smith (2000:53) and Mitchell & Jolley (2001: 535) argue that “the review of literature and findings of the empirical methods are compared with each other”. This is exactly what I do in this chapter. I concluded the chapter by giving an account of what the study revealed about the three original questions. This is followed by recommendations and concluding comments.

4.2 THE MAJOR CAUSES REVEALED BY THE STUDY OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY

4.2.1 Introduction

This study shows that there are multiple and complex factors contributing to the problem of teenage pregnancy. I found the following to be the most relevant to the situation in the township schools which the study focused on.

4.2.2 Cultural factors as a cause for teenage pregnancy.

From the literature (e.g. Buga et al. 1996:85) it is clear that cultural factors play an important role with respect to the causes of teenage pregnancy. One of these is the fact that teenage girls have to prove their fertility before getting married. My empirical study also showed that cultural factors do play a very important role in teenagers being sexual active. In 3.10.2.6, the issue of competing for womanhood where girls have to prove their fertility is being referred to. This implies that if you don’t have sex you are seen as a coward.

4.2.3 Poverty as a cause of teenage pregnancy

The literature study reveals that there is a link between poverty and teenage pregnancy, e.g. the issue which Mkhize (1995:45) refers to the fact that teenage girls sell sex for a living and Kaiser (2000:18) provides statistics which confirms that. Hughes (1992:112) mentions the fact that poor teenage girls become pregnant at an early stage and raise their children in the same poverty stricken situation, which in the end becomes a circle of poverty.

Empirical studies also proved that a vast majority of teenage girls are falling pregnant because they are selling sex for money to older men. Parents
emphasized the fact that this type of behaviour has been evident in the Southern Cape situation where poverty rates are on the rise. I also agree that there is a link between poverty and teenage pregnancy, especially looking into our situation in the Southern Cape schools where a number of teenage girls who fall pregnant to benefit from the Government grant.

4.2.4 The issue of single parent families.

An interesting observation that emerged from the study is that the findings of the empirical study about the influence of single-parent families on the problem of teenage pregnancies were not conclusive. While the literature study revealed a link between the occurrence of single parent families and teenage pregnancies, the empirical did not. This may be because of the linked numbers of respondents involved in the empirical study, but it still came as a surprise to me that respondents did not feel that single parent families contribute to teenage pregnancies.

From my own experience as a single parent, I tend to agree with the empirical study. For me, this is encouraging, which leads me to think that one should, as an effort to provide solutions, encourage single parents by emphasizing the fact that the suggested link between the two is not necessarily a fact.

4.3 The major consequences revealed by the study of teenage pregnancy

4.3.1 Introduction

The study demonstrates the fact that there are definite negative consequences associated with teen pregnancy. When compared to women who delay childbearing beyond teen years, teen mothers are less likely to complete high school, more likely to work in low-income jobs and experience longer periods of unemployment, and more likely to experience single parenthood and higher levels of poverty.

4.3.2 Socio-economic disadvantages

The study indicates that women who become teen mothers, as compared to women who delay childbearing past teen years, are more likely to be socio-economically disadvantaged. However, research increasingly suggests that, depending on the circumstances of the women in question, socio-economic disadvantage is correlated with, but not necessarily a consequence of early childbearing.

However, when racial and economic variables are factored into the data analysis, the negative consequences of teen pregnancy are shown to be largely dependent on race, ethnic backgrounds, culture, the religion of individuals and income level rather than on maternal age at birth. The fact that a large percentage of teen
mothers come from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds means that they suffer many of the negative consequences of teen pregnancy by virtue of their family status and pre-pregnancy life situation. The research also indicates that for women from disadvantaged background, the avoidance of a teen birth does not always improve future education or employment opportunities and thus there is little perceived economic incentive to delay childbearing.

4.3.3 Consequences for families

Teenage pregnancy brings lot of division amongst family members. Different authors in the literature review gave an overview of the anger, frustration, stress, mistrust and feelings of betrayal that come with the mere fact that parents’ sense of control has been violated. The respondents in the empirical study also voiced their anger and frustration during the focus group discussions. They even pointed out the financial burden that goes with teenage pregnancy, fathers that blame the mothers for spoiling the girls when they fall pregnant.

Looking at the background of the community that the two schools are serving and the poverty situation under which these learners are living, it is understandable, that any additional member in any family will have a severe financial constrain on the family.

4.3.4 Confusion between adulthood and being a teenager

What I discovered from the literature study is that in some countries teenagers really do experiment with sex voluntarily, and thereafter manage to survive in life, but looking at our situation in George teenage mothers who have fallen pregnant mostly come back to school but find the issue of being mothers and learners at the same time too demanding and they end up dropping out of school and joining the low paid working class.

4.4 SOLUTIONS

4.4.1 Introduction

When I started with this study, my intentions were to find out what are the causes of teenage pregnancy, then find out what consequences these teenagers are faced with when they fall pregnant, and finally to come up with possible solutions to the main problem of teenage pregnancy.

In comparing the study and the empirical study, I tried to determine and investigate the factors which influence teenage girls to indulge in sexual behaviours without any precautions; and to identify ways in which these could be discouraged.
4.4.2 Sexuality Education

As the English phrase clearly says “charity begins at home”, so parents should take the issue of discussing sexuality with their children very seriously, although they are aware of the fact that their children will openly discuss sex with strangers rather than with their own immediate families.

Schools should allocate time in class to openly discuss sexual behaviours of learners and even make it an issue of debates, where different schools can compete. Teenagers should be warned against drugs and alcohol abuse that lead to rape and unwanted teenage pregnancies. Although sex education takes place in L.O. programmes in schools, considering the rising number of teenage pregnancies one wonders how effective these programmes are.

Social workers and nurses should be involved in schools to guide teenagers with health and social issues, because educators may not have the necessary information. Teenagers should be guided as to when and how to make informed decision about sexuality. The nurses could obtain the statistics from the local clinic of teenagers with sexually transmitted diseases, so as to highlight the importance of taking precautions. The social workers could inform the learners about the financial crisis, of falling pregnant and other implications.

4.4.3 Youth Health Centers

Coming from both the literature and empirical study, it became clear that there is a need for the establishment of youth health centres that are learner friendly and available at all times. If there is a shortage of human resources, call centres should be available where teenagers can feel free to call or contact someone when they have a problem. The empirical study revealed that the learners have sensitive questions, which they cannot ask openly and to anyone, and therefore refrain from obtaining help.

The health centres should be equipped with reading material and visual aids that are written in the languages that the learners understand, and teenagers should be encouraged to read and listen to audio visual tapes so as to minimise misconceptions.
4.5 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.5.1 Introduction

The following recommendations emerged from the study:

4.5.2 The Department should investigate the effectiveness of sex education in school, with respect to improving the knowledge about teenage pregnancies and its consequence.

4.5.3 Schools and churches should encourage parents to be open and honest in discussing sexuality with their children. This is suggested by amongst others Pill, cited by Gillham (1997:68) who says “the teenager should feel comfortable in discussing sexuality with parents in a warm, mutually supporting atmosphere”.

4.5.4 Educators should do their best to guide learners at an early age to guard against peer pressure and motivate them towards a positive self-image. As Covey (1997:79) says “if we do our best God will do the rest”

4.5.5 My study also confirms that research should be done with respect to supporting the pregnant teenager. Further recommendation is that more research be done about the boyfriends of the pregnant teenage girls, the experiences their families undergo and be compared to the experiences of the families of the pregnant girls.

4.5.6 Furthermore I recommend that the professional counsellors pay more attention to girls who had fallen pregnant and have already given birth, so as to determine what happens to them in life and what moral support they need from the society. The fact is that the society judges them and some are mostly forgotten by the society. The experience of teen mothers needs to be researched to establish how they cope with the responsibility of the new roles of motherhood, how they cope with the anger and resentment they developed about themselves after falling pregnant, and lastly how it affects their relationship with their infants.

4.6 **CONCLUSIONS**

At the end of this study I realise that the study is of utmost importance in improving academic results at both these schools and in curbing the escalating number of dropouts. The study also reveals how tremendous the issue of teenage pregnancy is and how much still needs to be done to address this problem.

It is concluded that policies and programmes aimed at reducing teen pregnancy rates and eliminating the negative consequences experienced by teen mothers and their children are unlikely to be fully effective unless they realistically address socio-economic imbalances faced by many young women in South Africa.
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The Director
Education Research Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X119
Cape Town
8000

Dr. RS. Cornelissen

**Re: Research study (on Teenage Pregnancy)**

I hereby request to be granted permission to conduct a Research Study in two township schools in George i.e. Imizamo Yethu Secondary School and Thembalethu High School also in George, based on Teenage pregnancy as a challenge that is facing the education fraternity.

The Research study involves conducting interviews and meetings with Parents, Educators and Learners.

This process will be conducted over a period of five to six months. The research study will not in any way interfere with the school programmes.

The proposed dates are as follows

**IMIZAMO YETHU SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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**THEMBALETHU HIGH SCHOOL**

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Thanking you in advance

Yours truly,
G.S. Sethosa
THE PRINCIPAL

Imizamo Yethu Secondary School
P.O. Box 2092
George
6530

Sir/Madam

Re: Research study (on Teenage Pregnancy)

It will be highly appreciated if you can grant me permission to conduct a Research Study in your school based on Teenage pregnancy as a challenge that is facing the education fraternal.

The Research study involves conducting interviews and meetings with Parents, Educators and Learners.

This process will be conducted over a period of five to six months. The research study will not in any way interfere with the school programmes.

The proposed dates are as follows

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Thanking you in advance

Yours truly,
G.S. Sethosa
APPENDIX: C

NOTICE OF A MEETING TO BE HELD AT IMIZAMO YETHU SECONDARY SCHOOL

DATE: 28 MARCH 2007

TIME: 18H00

AGENDA: TEENAGEPREGNANCY

1. CAUSES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY
2. CONSEQUENCES OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY
3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

You are cordially invited to attend this very important meeting, so as to air your views on this matter. Your presents and contributions will be highly appreciated.

Yours in Education

Ms. G.S. Sethosa
Imizamo Yethu Secondary School
P.O. Box 2092
George
6530

Sir/Madam

Re: Research study (on Teenage Pregnancy)

You are kindly invited to a discussion /brainstorming meeting that will take place at Imizamo Yethu Secondary School at Room B6 on 27 March 2007 at 14h30.

Your presence and contributions towards the issue of high teenage pregnancy at school will be highly appreciated.

The Research study involves conducting interviews and discussing the following points:

1. The current school situation concerning teenage pregnancy.
2. Causes of teenage pregnancy.
3. The consequences of teenage pregnancy
4. The possible solutions to the both causes and consequences.

Thanking you in advance

Yours truly,

Ms G.S.Sethosa
APPENDIX: E

QUESTIONNAIRE
This questionnaire is to find out what you think about pregnancy at school. There is no right or wrong answers and only Ms Sethosa will see what you think, you don’t have to put your name on this paper.

Read each sentence carefully.
If you DEFINITELY AGREE with the sentence tick column 1
If you MOSTLY AGREE with the sentence tick column 2
If you DON’T REALLY AGREE with the sentence tick column 3
If you CERTAINLY DON’T AGREE with the sentence tick column 4

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<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>1 STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>2 MOSTLY AGREE</th>
<th>3 DISAGREE</th>
<th>4 STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Peer pressure is the main cause of teen pregnancy</td>
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<td>2. Alcohol and drugs play a role in teen pregnancy</td>
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<td>3. Most teenage girls are forced to have sex</td>
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<td>4. Lack of knowledge causes teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>5. Government grant encourages teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>6. Parents don’t discuss sexuality with teenagers</td>
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<td>7. The media encourages teens to experiment sex.</td>
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<td>8. Pregnant girls do not complete their schooling</td>
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<td>9. Most girls commit suicide.</td>
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<td>10. Pregnant girls develop low-self-esteem</td>
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<td>11. These girls mostly opt for abortion.</td>
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<td>12. The family of the pregnant girl suffers the most.</td>
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<td>13. Teenage pregnancy results to health risks</td>
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<td>14. Teenage pregnancy causes tension amongst families</td>
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<td>15. Pregnant girls should be expelled from school</td>
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<td>16. Parents should openly discuss sex with teens</td>
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<td>17. Schools should provide professional help for pregnant girls</td>
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<td>18. Society should do away with stereotyping</td>
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<td>19. Schools should introduce sex education</td>
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<td>20. Schools should provide care givers for pregnant learners.</td>
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What in your own opinion causes teenage pregnancy?
APPENDIX: F

QUESTIONNAIRE

READ THESE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY.

This questionnaire is to find out what you think about pregnancy at school. There is no right or wrong answers and only Ms Sethosa will see what you think, you don’t have to put your name on this paper.

Answer them as honestly as you can by putting a tick in the column you agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>SOMETIMES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex education encourages teenage pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Learners get pregnant to get grants</td>
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<td>3. Teenage girls from single household get sexually active earlier.</td>
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<td>4. Moral degeneration in the society plays a bigger role</td>
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<td>5. Drugs and alcohol abuse causes teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>6. Negligence and the whole issue of curiosity plays a role</td>
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<td>7. Fashion and peer pressure also plays a role in teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>8. The drop-out levels escalate at school because of pregnancy</td>
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<td>9. Pregnant teenagers’ performances drop drastically</td>
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<td>10. Pregnant teenagers are mostly absent from school.</td>
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<td>11. They sleep in class which causes the others to be drowsy</td>
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<td>12. They are at risk during the change of periods (in corridors)</td>
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<td>13. They cause conflict between families which extend to school</td>
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<td>14. Its difficult to monitor their work when they are at home</td>
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<td>15. The Department provides clear guide on teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>16. The society emphasises on values and morals.</td>
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<td>17. Parents work hand in hand with schools in curbing pregnancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Moral degeneration has played a bigger role in the issue.</td>
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<td>19. Educators are well equipped to deal with the situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. The Department provides professional help for these learners</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What must the SMT do to minimize teenage pregnancy?
APPENDIX: G

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to find out what you think about pregnancy at school. There is no right or wrong answers and only Ms Sethosa will see what you think, you don’t have to put your name on this paper.

Read each sentence carefully.
If you DEFINITELY AGREE with the sentence tick column 1
If you MOSTLY AGREE with the sentence tick column 2
If you DON’T REALLY AGREE with the sentence tick column 3
If you CERTAINLY DON’T AGREE with the sentence tick column 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENT</th>
<th>1 STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>2 MOSTLY AGREE</th>
<th>3 DISAGREE</th>
<th>4 STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Peer pressure is the main cause of teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>2. Being “high” on alcohol and drugs play a role in teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>3. Curiosity and to be part of a group who does it.</td>
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<td>4. Lack of knowledge and negligence causes teenage pregnancy</td>
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<td>5. To please boyfriends because they take them out.</td>
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<td>6. To prove both manhood and womanhood.</td>
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<td>7. The media encourages teens to experiment sex.</td>
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<td>8. Pregnant girls are mostly neglected by their friends</td>
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<td>9. Most girls opt for abortion which is a health risk</td>
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<td>10. Pregnant girls develop low-self-esteem</td>
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<td>11. These girls can not cope with the demanding task of parenthood</td>
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<td>12. Facing anger from parents</td>
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<td>13. Boyfriends not prepared to take responsibility</td>
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<td>14. Gossip and stimatisation by Neighbours</td>
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<td>15. Boys who made girls pregnant should be expelled from school</td>
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<td>16. Parents should openly discuss sex with teens</td>
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<td>17. Schools should provide professional help for pregnant girls</td>
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<td>18. Society should do away with stereotyping</td>
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<td>19. Schools should introduce sex education</td>
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<td>20. Educators should be taught how to deal with pregnant girls</td>
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What can the parents do to educate their children about sex and its dangers?
Ms Grace Sethosa  
P.O. Box 377  
PACALSDORP  
6534

Dear Ms G. Sethosa

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: HOW CAN THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT) ADDRESS TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN A TOWNSHIP SCHOOL IN GEORGE.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from 18th April 2007 to 21st September 2007.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2007).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the following schools: Imizamo Yethu Secondary and Thembalethu Secondary.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

   The Director: Education Research  
   Western Cape Education Department  
   Private Bag X9114  
   CAPE TOWN  
   8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

for: HEAD: EDUCATION  
DATE: 18th April 2007