

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ADAPTATION STRATEGIES TO MOTHERHOOD CHALLENGES: A
STUDY OF TEENAGE MOTHERS IN THE ADAKLU DISTRICT OF
GHANA

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GHANA

BY

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award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Geography and Regional Planning

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name: Prisca Ama Anima

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

Teenage mothers face many challenges including those of physical, emotional and psychological nature. Despite the difficulties teenage mothers encounter, some of them are able to succeed in life when the appropriate support systems and adaptive measures are made available to them. This study assessed adaptation strategies of teenage mothers to cope with challenges associated with teenage motherhood. Qualitative data methods including narrative, focus group discussion, photo voice and in-depth interviews were used. The study sampled 30 teenage mothers and 17 stakeholders purposively. Vulnerability to Resiliency framework guided the study. The results reveal that transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangements are the major causes of teenage motherhood in the study area. Teenage mothers adapted to the challenges of motherhood by depending on support from family members, the Ghana Education Service, NGO's, Social Welfare Department, and churches in the District. Also, teenage mothers depended on both internal and external assets to adapt to challenges when the need arose. Teenage mothers engaged in agricultural and non-agricultural activities as their source of livelihoods. It is concluded that although teenage mothers' strive to adjust to their circumstances, they struggle with the challenge of creating sustainability of their livelihoods. Among others, it is recommended that, the District Assembly and NGOs in the District equip the teenage mothers with other employable skills to diversify their livelihoods and ensure sustainability.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my family members and friends for their support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Teenage motherhood is a global phenomenon affecting both developed and developing countries (Treffer, 2007). This phenomenon occurs in all races, faiths, socio-economic statuses and regions all over the world (Ayuba & Gani, 2012). Globally, about 16 million girls between the teen age give birth every year, with 95 percent (95%) of them living in developing countries (WHO, 2011). Out of the 95%, the highest rate which is 143 per 1000 girls is found in sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2012). A report on adolescent fertility points out that the number of births to teenagers in sub-Saharan Africa is projected to increase over the next few decades, exceeding a total of 4.8 million births to girls during the period from 1995 to 2020 (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). In Ghana, 14 percent of young women aged 15–19 had begun childbearing in 2014 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015).

Teenage motherhood can be defined as a teenage girl within the ages of 13-19, becoming a mother (Kost et al., 2010; UNICEF, 2008; World Health Organisation, 2006). Being a teenage mother is seen as something natural because of family patterns (Herfelt, 2007). Studies have shown that, a number of factors promote teenage motherhood throughout the world. For example, in Nigeria, Oluwafemi (2017) outlined some of the root causes of teenage motherhood as poverty, peer pressure, media influence and cultural values. Another study done in Tanzania revealed that poverty, peer pressure, low level of education, poor knowledge on contraceptives, little access to family planning methods and early marriages (cultural) contributed to teenage motherhood

(Malisa, 2015). Similarly, in Ghana, Owusu (2011) found that teenage motherhood is mainly caused by inadequate knowledge on contraceptives, peer pressure, low level of education, poverty and early marriage, while Gyesaw and Ankomah (2013), indicated that teenagers become mothers as a result of transactional sex in order to meet their basic needs, sexual violence and exploitation as well as commanding respect from people in society depending on the cultural orientation.

Becoming a mother, regardless of age, is a major developmental transition in a woman's life (Mercer, 2004). Carter (2005) describes motherhood as one of the most definitive stages of life because once there is a child, life will never be the same again. Though giving birth is a major developmental stage in a woman's life, first time motherhood is supposed to be a period of excitement to the woman no matter the woman's age (Aparicio, Percukonis & O'Neale, 2015). But I cannot say same for teenage mothers because of the challenges associated with early motherhood.

Early motherhood experience may be both positive and negative in a teenager's life. But most of the time, negative experiences overshadow the positive ones (Mokwena, Govender & Setwaba, 2016) because when a teenager becomes a mother, the reaction is the complete opposite of an older woman. A lot of research which have concentrated on challenges of being a teenage mother reveal that teenage motherhood causes chaos and stress in the life of the young woman and her family. It also places demands on one's life which were non-existent before (WHO, 2007). Some of the demands of being a teenage mother is the social stigma attached to the teenager in many cultures and communities because teenage motherhood is often outside marriage (UNICEF, 2008). Also,

when a girl in school becomes pregnant, her entire life can be completely altered as her hopes and aspirations can be shattered (WHO, 2007). Another study concluded that, teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, and lack of educational credentials will deprive the teenage mother from the labour market as well as finding well remunerated jobs that will enable them to maintain themselves and their children (Chauke, 2013). No or low education will make them experience great struggle with no job or low remuneration coupled with everyday expenses of caring for a child (Lee, 2007). With this, teenage mothers will bring up their children alone and in poverty (Chauke, 2013).

Other studies (Beyond, 2010; Chauke, 2013) add that women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to become teenage mothers. This makes teenage mothers fall into the vicious cycle of poverty, leading to intergenerational transmission of poverty, thus children of the teenage mothers are generally at an increased risk of poverty, low educational attainment, poor health and have lower rates of economic activity in adult life and a likelihood of the children becoming teenage mothers themselves (Beyond, 2010). For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, the picture of an adolescent mother is that of an unhealthy looking girl with an unhealthy child, poorly educated, suffering from poverty, unemployed with a shattered future, lack of access to reproductive health services, a poor network of support and stigmatization (UNFPA, 2010). Compounding of these challenges make the teenage mothers very vulnerable because they are easily prone to physical or emotional injury, or subject to unnecessary criticism, or in a less advantageous position in any society (Sastry & Gade, 2012).

Most of the time, it is not only the teenage mother who bears the cost of being a teenage mother but the whole society. Public funds are used to pay welfare benefits to the teenage mothers especially those in the developed world (Sawhill, Thomas & Monea, 2010). For example, in the United States of America, teen child bearing costs taxpayers about \$ 9.4 billion in 2010, according to an analysis by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (2013). The report also confirmed that most of the costs of teen childbearing were associated with negative consequences for the children of teen mothers, including increased costs for health care, child welfare, incarceration, and lost tax revenue.

While the challenges may be cumbersome for most teenage mothers, some of them go on to live a productive life or are able to adapt no matter the challenges they were confronted with (Lewis, Scarborough, Rose & Quirin, 2007). For example, Gontijo (2009) indicated that teenage motherhood takes on a central role, offering new possibilities for social recognition and action. Again, for teenage mothers, a number of studies have described parenthood as a life-changing event that turned them towards a more positive and settled lifestyle. They were motivated to leave behind risky behaviours such as substance misuse, casual and unsafe sex and involvement in crime. Similarly, parenthood gave them a new sense of stability, maturity and purpose, and a feeling of an adult status and identity that they previously lacked. Many expressed pride in being able to provide the competent care that their parents failed to provide. Becoming a mother also seems to fill an emotional void in their life as they receive the love and affection that they were denied by their own parents or

family from their children (Barn & Mantovani 2007; Chase & Knight 2006; Dominelli et al., 2009).

Most of the time, positive outcomes are not the norm for being a teenage mother. In such instances, social support played a key factor when teenage mothers and their children succeeded in spite of major challenges (Cashmore & Paxman 2007). Thus, the few teenage mothers who portray positive outcomes are beneficiaries of the support systems available to them. For example, in Uganda, support systems contributed to the well-being of the teen mothers by contributing to their position and future opportunities, increased agency, improved coping with motherhood and stigma, continued education and increased income generation (Leerlooijer et al, 2013).

Meanwhile, it has been argued that the most important factor for a life out of these challenges is dwelling much on how culturally these teenage mothers are doing to survive or adapt (Sewell, 2011). In this regard, efforts meant to break the deadlock of challenges among the extremely poor, vulnerable and minority group like teenage mothers in general will depend on access to livelihood assets including cultural (what the people have), livelihood strategies (what people do with what they have), outcomes (adaptation strategies), risk (threats that reduce what one has) and rules (supporting systems) (FAO, 2008). Thus, adaptation strategies of the teenage mothers will help them experience positive outcome despite the challenges they face (Adjei, 2015; Asenso-Okyere et al., 1997; Barrientos, 2013; Boateng et al., 2001; Oduro, 2001; UNDP, 2005).

The effort to reduce poverty and other challenges among the poor and vulnerable like teenage mothers has resulted in a global consensus on the need

for comprehensive studies geared towards assessing adaptation strategies for the extremely poor to reduce their poverty and vulnerability (Peprah, 2017). Moreover, teen mothers with their strong desires to be role models and provide for their children possess the momentum to pursue some adaptation strategies (Clarke, 2015). There is therefore the need for comprehensive understanding of such survival or adaptation strategies, within the context of the numerous disadvantages facing teenage mothers, particularly in a developing country like Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

A systematic review of the literature has revealed that teenage mothers experience a lot of challenges. These challenges can be physical, emotional, and psychological (O'Connor, 2007). For example, teenage mothers have to cope with increased responsibilities following the birth of a baby, managing demands at school, and taking care of a baby and work (Watts, Liamputtong & Mcmicheal, 2015). Teenage mothers tend to be poor and care for their children in impoverished circumstances that are hard to either escape from or improve (Breheny & Stephens, 2007; Hanna, 2001; Oliver, 2009). Furthermore, because teenage mothers live in poverty, they receive no or low education and end up in either unemployed or in low paid jobs (Mcleod, 2013). They often live on welfare in very poor housing conditions. The child born to a teen mother is therefore more likely to live in poverty, grow up without a father and become a victim of neglect or abuse (UNICEF, 2008).

However, Seamark and Lings (2004) argue their concerns about early motherhood limiting future life chances that often fail to take into account the fact that teenage mothers can overcome potential obstacles, and in some cases

may even derive psychological benefits from being a mother. For instance, some teenage mothers challenge the assumptions of hardship, poverty, and limited parental capacities that are often associated with this situation. They use various protective mechanisms as well as coping and adaptive strategies that are thought to contribute to resilience (Levesque & ChamberLand, 2016).

Meanwhile, (Duncan, Miller, Wampold & Hubble, 2010; Seamark & Lings, 2004) identified variety of adaptation strategies that enabled teenage mothers to come out successfully. Adaptation strategies may include right support; having jobs that they enjoyed and being provided with opportunities to improve their lives.

But researchers and policy makers focus much on reducing teenage motherhood, the use of contraceptives among teenage mothers, unsafe abortions, causes of teenage pregnancy, challenges associated with being a teenage mother (Malisa, 2015; Oluwafemi, 2017; Owusu, 2011; WHO, 2012) instead of focusing much on adaptation strategies that are undertaken to come out successfully from all the negative concerns about being a teenage mother. The question is, what happens to those who come out successful? What strategies do they employ to be better than other teenage mothers? What are teenage mothers doing to survive? If some teenage mothers were able to come out successful, then there is the need to focus on some of their adaptive strategies employed.

Although some studies have already been carried out on adaptation strategies of teenage mothers, for example, some teenage mothers grew to accept the fact that they had given birth at an early age, most of them did not plan being mothers. Consequently, they accepted being mothers and this was

instrumental in enabling them to achieve positive outcomes for themselves and their children (Seamark & Lings, 2004; Wiggins, 2005). To the best of my knowledge, there is little literature about livelihood activities teenage mothers undertake to adapt to the situation, assets that dictate livelihood activities for the teenage mothers and what they aspire for in the near future which is making them strategize and what they are doing to attain that aspirations in question.

Moreover, with some of the sustainable development goals aiming at building on the resiliency of those who are vulnerable (goals like ending poverty in all forms, Zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality and reduced inequality) and with teenage mothers being part of the vulnerable groups (sosulski & Sellers, 2006), it is important to understand their adaptation strategies and the necessary support systems available for teenage mothers and their children in order to help reduce their vulnerability. This is particularly relevant due to a growing consensus that despite the consequences of teenage motherhood, it can lead to positive outcomes for both mother and child when the right protective measures and adaptation strategies are put in place (Clarke, 2015).

It is against this background that this study seeks to assess adaptation strategies of teenage mothers to the challenges associated with teenage motherhood. Again, to examine the role of key stakeholders in ensuring that teenage mothers become resilient. The study was conducted in Adaklu District (Volta Region) of Ghana. Adaklu was chosen because the district falls within the Volta region which had the highest rate of teenage motherhood (22.1%) in Ghana (GSS, 2015). Adaklu District recorded the highest percentage of teenage motherhood (which was 23.2%) in the Volta region (Duodu, 2016). That is, one

out of every four pregnant women who patronized health facilities in the Adaklu district was a teenager (Duodu, 2016). This makes Adaklu District very suitable for this study.

The study moves beyond just the negative connotations often associated with teenage motherhood. In addition, it drew much on what teenage mothers in the district were doing to come out positively from the situation they found themselves. Hence, this study looked at teenage motherhood through the resiliency lens, that is, the ability of an individual to bounce back from an adversity they find themselves (Manyena, Mavhura, O'keefe & Rose 2011 & 2018).

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to assess adaptation strategies of teenage mothers to the challenges associated with teenage motherhood in the Adaklu district of Ghana. The specific objectives were to:

1. Investigate causes of teenage motherhood in the district
2. Explore how teenage mothers assessed their motherhood status
3. Investigate assets available to teenage mothers in the district
4. Explore livelihood activities of the teenage mothers
5. Appraise the support systems available to the teenage mothers
6. Explore future aspirations of the teenage mothers

Research Questions

The research seeks to ask the following questions:

1. What are the causes of teenage motherhood in the district?
2. How do teenage mothers assess their motherhood status?
3. What assets do teenage mothers depend on in the district?

4. What livelihood activities are the teenage mothers undertaking in the district?
5. What support systems are available to the teenage mothers?
6. What do the teenage mothers aspire for in the near future?

Significance of the study

Teenage motherhood may undermine achievement of some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Examples: eliminating poverty, zero hunger, decent work and economic growth; good health and well-being; quality education, gender equality and reduced inequalities. Much needs to be done if these sustainable goals are to be achieved. Part of the agenda to achieve these goals is to generate empirical evidence that will help policy makers pay attention to vulnerable populations like teenage mothers. This research will help provide data on how resilient some teenage mothers are. Such data can help build on the resilience of other teenage mothers elsewhere. In doing that, it will help achieve some aspects of the sustainable development goal which look at building on the resiliency of the poor.

In addition, the study would provide useful information to policy makers, planners and other stakeholders such as the District Assembly and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the livelihood activities of the teen mothers in the District. This will help to put in place strategies to ensure livelihood security for the teen mothers.

Lastly, findings from the study would add to existing knowledge on teenage mothers' adaptation strategies. This will serve as a platform for further research into issues related to teen mothers' livelihood strategies. It is expected that the research findings will provoke discussions among researchers on how

teenage mothers respond to the challenges as they seek to be good role models to their children.

Delimitations

This study just concentrated on teenage mothers in the Adaklu district of Ghana. Any teenage mother who does not stay within the district catchment was not included in the study. Moreover, opinion leaders who in any way have helped teenage mothers to be resilient or have much knowledge on the activities of the teenage mothers in the district were also captured.

The study is phenomenological in nature and focused on adaptation strategies of teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The target population were teenage mothers, health providers, queen mothers, assembly members, NGO's, educationists and religious leaders residing in the Adaklu District. The research sample was composed of thirty (30) individual teenage mothers, 1 focus group discussion and 17 stakeholders who were selected through purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Primary data gathering methods used were narratives, focus group discussion, photo voice (soliciting data from the teenage mothers) and in-depth interviews.

The data was transcribed, sorted, coded and put under themes. Qualitative data miner software was used to analyse the data. Verbatim quotes from the respondents and pictures created during the photo voices were used for the write up.

Limitations

The potential limitation of the study was the study area. Only the Adaklu district in Volta region was considered while a study of this nature could have looked at the whole region. But Adaklu was chosen because it was the district

in Volta region with the highest number of teenage mothers. Again, the data collection targeted teenage mothers who used health facilities within the district and through them other teenage mothers were also contacted. This was possible because of the snowballing sampling method, implying that not all the teenage mothers in the district would be captured during the interview. This is a limitation of this study. The replication of the study at different health facilities or the whole Volta region would enable better generalizability of the findings of the study.

The sample for the study comprised 30 teenage mothers which was only a very small proportion of the entire population of teenage mothers in the district. The research captured 30 respondents because at that point, there were no new ideas and themes coming out from the data. But research studies with much larger sample size would be required to ensure appropriate generalization of the findings of the study. Also, because it is a qualitative study, the study cannot make any generalisations among the teenage mothers.

The study relied largely on qualitative methodology of data collection and is therefore restrictive. The research relied on only qualitative because the researcher wanted to understand the whole phenomenon of being teenage mothers and their adaptation strategies from how they tell their stories. But a study that combines both qualitative and quantitative methodology of data collection should be undertaken in future to provide wider perspective to the study.

The data collection time was within two months which is very short for a phenomenological study. Two months was not enough to capture and observe a lot of things by the researcher. I spent two months because I was working

within my academic schedules. A longer time of data collection would therefore be more appropriate for research of this kind.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into eleven chapters. Chapter One presents the background of the study, statement of the problem and the significance of the study. The related empirical and theoretical literature for this study is reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Four covers the methodology of the study. It explains the population, sample size, sampling methods, as well as data collection and analysis procedures. The results and discussion of the study are captured in Chapters, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten.

Chapter Five captures socio-demographic characteristics and causes of teenage motherhood in the district. Themes captured as the causes of teenage mothers were transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangement. After the causes, teenage mothers demonstrated how they envisage being a teenage mother. This was captured in Chapter Six. Chapter Six covers how teenage mothers in the study area envisage their situation of being teenage mothers. The major themes were: mothers experiencing teenage motherhood as a stepping stone for greater things in life and those who saw teenage motherhood as challenging.

Chapter Seven looks at assets the teenage mothers depend on. These assets were both internal and external assets. Internal assets comprised being hard workers, self-determined and having great confidence level. External assets included, physical, cultural, human, social, financial and natural assets. Chapter Eight covers livelihood activities of the teenage mothers in the district. Livelihood activities identified were: Agricultural Activities (farming activities

such as planting or harvesting for others), Non Agricultural activities (trading activities, fetching water for construction works and many more).

Chapter Nine looks at the various support systems available for the teenage mothers. Some of the supports systems identified included support from religious groups, Social Welfare department of the district, Government, School, Ghana Education Service, District Health directorate, Health facilities and Non-governmental organisations. Chapter Ten covers aspirations of teenage mothers in the district. Aspirations identified were both positive and negative aspirations. Aspiring for positive things in life was also a strategy some of the teenage mothers used to adapt to the situation while chapter eleven gives the summary, conclusions, recommendations, as well as suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature related to the research problem. For the purpose of the review, the chapter is divided into the following sub-headings: characteristics of teenage mothers, factors that determine teenage motherhood, assets of teenage mothers, teenage mothers' assessment of motherhood, livelihoods activities, supporting systems available for teenage mothers and aspirations of teenage mothers.

Characteristics of Teenage Mothers

Teenage mothers from rich or poor countries share some similarities in their socio-economic backgrounds. They are more likely to come from economically poor families, have a history of low education and be the daughters of teenage mothers (Kiernan, 1997). In addition, studies have found that teenage motherhood rates are higher among families with socio-economic problems (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Garrett & Tidwell, 1999), a non-nuclear, single parent or reconstructed structure (Miller et al., 2005), low educational levels (Miller, Benson, & Galbraith, 2001; Pereira, Canavarro, Cardoso, & Mendonça, 2005), and a history of alcohol abuse (Haldre et al., 2009) or teenage motherhood (East, Jackson & O'Brien, 2006; Seamark & Gray, 1997).

Evidences of such issues can be found in similar studies. For example, a study done in Central India concluded that most of teenage mothers had low education, rural background and belonged to low socioeconomic status with history of both pre and post marital sex discrimination (Dubey & Dexit, 2014).

Similarly, data of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) revealed that 16% of women between the ages of 15-19 years who had already started childbearing at the urban areas were 8.7% and rural areas were 19.1% (Chandra et.al, 2014).

Subsequently, a study of all teenage pregnancies admitted to Sultania Zanana Hospital, Bhopal (Brazil) and following up the patients from admission till delivery and using a preform devised for the study indicated that approximately 98% of the teenage mothers were in the age group of 18-19. Eighty - one percent teenage mothers were uneducated, 97% were unemployed and 88.69% were staying in joint families. The antenatal care taken by the teenage mothers was inadequate (Yasmin, Kumar & Parihar, 2014).

Also, some studies found that most teenage mothers had a disruptive childhood and an unhappy family life (Hanna, 2001; Jeon et al., 2011; Lee, 2007; Williams & Vines, 1999). For example, in Australia, a quantitative study of 56 teenage mothers at the Royal Women's Hospital, Victoria reported history of parental separation or divorce in early childhood, exposure of violence in early childhood, illicit drug use, idealization of pregnancy, low family income, low level of education, higher level of psychiatric contact and psychological symptomatology were key factors that had a significant independent association with younger age of motherhood (Quinlivan, Tan, Steele, & Black, 2004).

Another study in Thailand confirmed this unhappy life of teenage mothers. That is, a study at Siriraj hospital, Bangkok found that the majority of 134 respondents between the ages of 12 to 18 had only Junior High School education. In addition, their parents had unstable jobs, lower education and lower income, and many had parents who were divorced or separated. The mothers and relatives of these teen mothers had also been teenage mothers. The

peer groups of these teenage mothers engaged in high risk behaviours such as alcohol and drug using, active sexual behaviours, and violence (Kamphaengphan, 2009). In sum, most of the individualities of these teen mothers are tuned to negative features.

Factors that Determine Teenage Motherhood

There are a number of factors promoting teenage motherhood. It encompasses socio-economic (poverty), cultural and social roles, inter-generational cycles, attitudes towards sex education, early marriages and environmental factors (Amorim, Lima & Silva, 2009; WHO, 2012). A study indicates that teen motherhood occurs predominantly in the lower socio-economic classes which may be an antecedent of teenage motherhood (Osofsky & Osofsky, 1978). Poverty is one socio-economic factor that is associated with increased rates of teenage motherhood (Hilton, 1986). UNFPA (2003) has emphasized that economically poor countries have far more teenage mothers compared with economically rich countries. Dattani (2007) has also noted that in the UK, about half of all pregnancies or motherhood of girls under 18 years are concentrated among the thirty percent (30%) of most deprived population, with fourteen percent (14%) occurring among the least deprived population.

Another research by Kearney and Levine (2012) which presented a detailed survey of teenage childbearing in the US also confirmed poverty as a cause of teenage motherhood. The main conclusion is that both actual and perceived lack of economic opportunities influence early motherhood. The author discusses his main hypothesis that the combination of being poor and living in an unequal and less mobile society contributes to a low expectation of success, thus leading to choices that favour short-term satisfaction such as the

decision to have a baby when young. He concluded that teenagers in very unequal states are 5 percentage points more likely to give birth than teenagers in the least unequal states.

Researchers go on to argue for poverty as a factor promoting teenage mothers. For example, a study which describes the antecedents and consequences of teenage motherhood with 10 teenage mothers aged 14 to 19 that were selected purposively shared their lived experiences. Phenomenological type of qualitative research was utilized in the study. The findings revealed that socio-economic phenomenon caused the participants to experience teenage motherhood. Again, Hobcraft and Kiernan (1999) cited that childhood poverty strengthens early age at first birth. Again, a study done in the Hho-Hho region of Swaziland documented that the root cause of teenage motherhood in the area was their poor financial status. (Dlamini, Der Merwe & Ehlers, 2003).

Furthermore, most authors have linked poverty to teenage motherhood. They see poverty as a cause at the same time an effect of teenage motherhood. For example, Keller, Hilton and Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) opined that, family financial exigencies induce girls to stay out of school and enter into early sexual relationships which lead them into getting pregnant at early stages of their lives thereby making them continue to be in the cycle of poverty. This presupposes that tackling teenage mothers would have a trickling down effect on poverty and vice-versa (Gyan, 2013).

In addition, studies from the USA regarded teenage parenting as interceding the intergenerational transmission of poverty especially when focused on Black and minority ethnic populations (Bonell, 2004) as well as poverty being a prominent factor, as about one-half of all teen motherhood occur

in the 30% most deprived families while 4% occur among the least deprived (Honig, 2012) respectively.

While some researchers attributed factors determining teenage motherhood to poverty, others too think it is cultural issues that lead to higher teenage motherhood. For example, In Jamaica, research conducted found that cultural factors contribute to these high rates of teenage motherhood. Bria (2009) concluded that social norms in Jamaica discourage discussions of sexual matters between parents and their children, or at least among parents and daughters. This lack of communication between parents and children about sexuality is devastating and perpetuates a lack of knowledge and power (Bria, 2009).

Likewise, in Ghana, our culture still frowns on open discussion of sex with children. Study done by Ajufo (2013) on parents showed that it is not proper to talk about sex with children and that, you spoil them when you do that. They continued that when you discuss sex with teenagers, they begin to behave like adults and therefore tend to be bad- mannered.

In some societies, early marriage and traditional gender roles are important factors in contributing to the rate of teenage motherhood. According to Therese (2000), in some sub-Saharan African and other African countries, early motherhood is often seen as a blessing because it is proof of the young woman's fertility. This is because in most societies, sterility is viewed with contempt and shame, therefore, it is desirable for a woman to prove her fertility before the marriage is settled. For example, in the Arab world, patterns of early marriage prevail. Marriage often translates into immediate childbearing

as girls and their families are anxious to prove the fertility of the just married (Dryburgh, 2002; Kost, Henshaw & Carlin, 2010).

Another cause of teenage motherhood is intergenerational cycle by the teenage mother. Studies have documented that children of teenage mothers are likely to become teenage parents themselves than children of older mothers, thus perpetuating an intergenerational cycle (Hardy, Astone, Brooks-Gunn, Shapiro & Miller, 1998; Jaffee, Caspi, Moffitt, Belsky & Silva, 2001; Manlove, 1997). For example, among a national sample of urban African Americans, 33% of daughters of teenage mothers compared to 21% of daughters of older mothers became teenage mothers (Furstenberg, Levine, & Brooks-Gunn, 1990). Similarly, among a nationally representative cohort of British children, 20% of daughters of teenage mothers compared to 8% of daughters of older mothers became teenage mothers (Manlove, 1997). Also in a New Zealand birth cohort, children of teenage mothers were 2.6 times more likely than children of older mothers to become parents before their 21st birthday (Jaffee et al., 2001).

Similarly, a study that identifies the number of teenage pregnant women who also have mothers who became pregnant when they were in their teenage years showed that the number of teenage women who reported that they had a mother whose first baby was born to her when she was under 20 years of age were 33 (69%) for the pregnant group and 12 (26%) for the non-pregnant group (Tamkins 2004).

Again, Wahn, Nissen and Ahlberg (2006) in their study described the perspectives, experiences, and reasoning about becoming and being a teenage mother by Swedish teenage mothers, aged 15 to 19 years. The teenagers

described a pattern of early childbirth in their families as reasons for becoming teenage mothers.

However, another research which challenged whether a mother or older sister teenage childbearing strongly predicts teenage motherhood concluded that the relationship between an older sister teenage childbirth and a younger sister teenage childbirth is much stronger than that between a mother teenage childbirth and a younger daughter teenage childbirth (Wall-Wieler, Leslie & Nickel, 2016). This study used linkable administrative databases housed at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP). The original cohort consisted of 17,115 women born in Manitoba between April 1, 1979 and March 31, 1994, who stayed in the province until at least their 20th birthday, and had at least one older sister, and had no missing values on key variables. Propensity score matching was used to create balanced cohorts for two conditional logistic regression models (Wall-Wieler et al., 2016).

Other factor like use of contraceptives cannot be left out of the discussions (Beazley, 1996). For example, a study by Silva, Barbosa, Martins and Muller (2016) in Southern Brazil (Novo Hamburgo) which employed structured interviews, indicated that 87.5% of the teenagers became mothers because they were reckless about contraceptive methods. This association is statistically significant and we understand that, based on the social group to which these teenagers belong, being a teen mother is natural, as the recklessness associated with protection during sexual intercourse is directly related to their desire to get pregnant, a common, easily accepted, and highly value behavior in the social group in which they are found.

Berquó (2012) reached similar conclusions using Brazilian data. The authors also claim that lack of knowledge about contraception and contraceptive failure are important factors associated with teenage motherhood, independent of educational and economic status. Slater (2000) concluded that teenagers may lack knowledge to conventional methods of preventing pregnancy, as they may be too timid to seek such information. Additionally, study done in South West Nigeria which employed a multi stage sampling technique with questionnaire administered to 400 people indicated that teenage mothers could be caused by teenagers having sexual intercourse without adequate knowledge on contraceptives (Olaitan, 2012).

The environment in which teenagers find themselves can also cause teenage motherhood. Women exposed to abuse, domestic violence, and family strife in childhood are more likely to become pregnant as teenagers, and the risk of becoming pregnant as a teenager increases with the number of adverse childhood experiences (Tamkins, 2004). Nnodim and Albert (2016) added their voices to the discussion by examining the impact of teenage motherhood on the academic and socio-psychological well-being of rural women in Etche ethnic nationality, Rivers State. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents' data were collected with structured questionnaires through scheduled interviews and analyzed using frequency and mean statistics. The findings established that the environmental factors like care free attitude of parents was a factor that pre-disposed the girl-child to early motherhood.

Also, underlying factors such as reduced sexual abstinence, contraception use amongst teenagers, fewer employment and educational aspirations (Hanna, 2001) as well as an acceptance of teenage childbearing as a

normal pattern of behavior within context have also been outlined causes of teenage motherhood.

Also, it has been argued that being a teenage mother is often the result of an absence of a life plan like access to better education, better living conditions, and greater options during youth. In absence of good options for the future, pregnancy and motherhood are a contingent decision made by the teenager today (Kamal, 2009).

Anna (2001) opined by outlining the causes of teenage motherhood as accelerated sexual maturation, early onset of sexual life, fragile family unit, and uncontrolled urbanization process with significant changes in lifestyle. Mcleod (2013) added that Postulated contributory factors including reproductive ignorance, risk-taking behavior, precocious pubertal development, single-parenting, female-headed households, family dysfunction, poverty, poor self-esteem and moral development, poor health services, peer influence, coercive sexual relations, the breakdown of tradition and, conversely, the cultural value placed on fertility as some other factors causing teenage motherhood.

Further study by Cygan-Rehm and Riphahn (2014) in East and West Germany using data from the German Socioeconomic Panel and from the German Mikrozensus, hypotheses on the patterns of teenage motherhood, identified different groups of determinants of teenage births as individual and parental background factors such as low education or low household income; indicators of cyclical labor market developments; state policies such as the availability of contraception and the generosity of welfare benefits; and factors which indicate marginalization: poverty, unemployment and the inequality of

the income distribution, which describe teen social background and perceived opportunities for a better life.

Similarly, another research done in Nigeria to investigate the general causes of teenage mothers indicate some of the root causes as poverty, peer pressure and media influence. The study adopts descriptive method to identify basic factors (Ayuba & Gani, 2012). Also, in Zimbabwe, using Hurungwe District (a rural community in Zimbabwe as a case study), a research which sought to find out the factors that are contributing to teenage motherhood in rural communities of Zimbabwe revealed some of the factors contributing to teenage motherhood as: socioeconomic background, peer influence, lack of sex education, non-use of contraceptives, traditional roles, low self-esteem and low level of education. The researchers adopted the qualitative research design and the target population were women who got married before they reached the age of 18 years, their husbands and local leaders in the community (Mutanana & Mutara, 2015).

Likewise, in Ghana, a qualitative study was based on data from focus group discussions and in depth interviews with teenage mothers in a suburb in Accra in which participants were recruited from health facilities as well as by snowball sampling. Results indicated that some of the participants became pregnant as a result of transactional sex in order to meet their basic needs, while others became pregnant as a result of sexual violence and exploitation. A few others wanted to become pregnant to command respect from people in society (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). To add to that of the Ghanaian context, a study done in Chorkor (Ghana), designed to explore the determinants of teenage motherhood indicated that poor parenting, poverty and peer influence were the

major causes. A total sample size of fifty-five (55) respondents was used for the study. Questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation were used to collect data for the study.

In comparing factors that promote teenage motherhood between US and Ghana, Keller, Hilton and Twumasi-Ankrah (1999) in their paper with data collected from personal interviews and focus group discussions in Ghana, evaluated explanatory factors cited in the teenage motherhood literature in the United States. As in the United States, teen motherhood in Ghana reflected early initiation into sexual activity and little effort on the part of teens to prevent being mothers, despite knowledge about birth control. Another pattern similar to the United States was the relationship between poverty and teenage motherhood and the role of adult males as fathers in teenage motherhood. However, contrary to findings in the United States, peer pressure did not emerge as a major factor in teenage motherhood in Ghana (Keller et al., 1999).

Some scholars continued that teens living in rural communities, especially those with limited economic resources, are at significant risk of early conception (Farber, 2014; Furstenberg, 2016). Many scholars acknowledge that the life experiences of teenage mothers are affected by different social, cultural and policy contexts (Hanna, 2001; Moss-Knight, 2010; Njooa, 2003). For instance, motherhood commanding respect, beliefs and our attitude towards open sex (Bellido, Marcen & Molina, 2016; Widmer, Treas, & Newcomb, 1998). Therefore, to gain the best understanding of the experiences of teenage mothers, socio-cultural contexts in which teenage mothers are found need to be taken into account.

Cultural values have a lot of impact on teenage mothers. For instance, research has shown that even before teenagers engage in sexual relations, some aspects of culture will be taken into consideration. For example, a study that comprised 465 individuals including 405 school students aged 14-16 and 60 mothers of the teenagers were examined. The results demonstrate that the refusal of teenagers to begin sexual life, provided they have this opportunity is linked to their subjective perception of the basic values reflected in their consciousness. The research continues to show that teenage sexual intercourse is mainly driven by cognitive motives and cultural values (Kurbatova & Valova, 2017).

Furthermore, culture has been proven quantitatively that it has an effect on fertility of women and for that matter, teenage girls. A study that looked at the relationship between culture and fertility results show that culture has quantitatively important effects on the fertility behavior of teenagers (Bellido et al., 2016). This research was conducted at US (which took an epidemiological approach) exploiting the variations in teenage women's fertility rates by ancestral home country, using three different databases of the women (Resnick et. al, 1997; Resnick, 2000).

Effect of culture on teenage motherhood can be from the values that communities attach to teenage motherhood. For instance, early motherhood is held strongly by values and customs within the community they find themselves. For example, early pregnancy and parenthood retain strong continuities with core Brazilian values and norms of sexual culture (Ajufo, 2013). This finding was from over five years of empirical research alongside an

analysis of a sample of newspaper articles representative of the dominant positions in the Brazilian press concerning teenage motherhood.

Some of the values attached to teenage motherhood in the communities are exhibited in a lot of studies (Ajufo, 2013; Preston Whyte & Allen 1992). For example, teenagers saw being a mother as a way of commanding respect in their community. In Ghana, a study by Ajufo (2013) indicated that people place so much premium on child bearing as the most important role of women (teenagers) in society. They continued that teenage mothers enjoyed considerable respect, pride and higher status in society because of the way they are attended to as mothers. This higher status motivates other teenagers and they actually wish to be in same situation. As a matter of fact, motherhood is placed above education in terms of importance. Likewise, in some other African communities, motherhood is viewed as an avenue to achieve adulthood status in the event of a delay of marriage through the necessity of amassing bride wealth (Preston-Whyte & Allen, 1992). Again, teenage childbirth are occasions of celebration in the community when girls receive greater attention, care and food in the family (Bersaglio, Enns, & Kepe, 2015).

Moreover, these core values provide fertile grounds to promote teenage motherhood in such communities. A paper by Mkhwanazi, (2009) that presents ethnographic data collected over a five-year period in the South African township of Nyanga East drew attention to the circumstances that surrounded teenage motherhood and discusses reactions to them in the community. Findings highlighted that despite the negative perception of teenage pregnancy and motherhood within the township, particular social and cultural circumstances provided fertile ground for its occurrence. These cultural

circumstances were reproducing social norms and ideals regarding intergenerational relationships, which ultimately ensured that the rates of early childbearing remained high.

Evidences presented above show that teenage motherhood cannot be understood outside the complex realms of culture, (Ngabazaa, 2016) but some researchers have views contrary to these evidences. Even a study in South Africa with participants found to be at the intersection between traditional Thai values and more modern values indicated that though traditional values underpinned some policy and service responses, their influence was not significant at the level of family and community (Sa-ngiamsak, 2016).

Furthermore, in Swaziland, research indicated that teenage mothers were not accepted by their peer groups and were denied access to the Swazi cultural maiden groups who take part in the annual reed dance festival, where Swazi men can select their (virgin) wives. Teenage mothers also find it difficult to get husbands because Swazi men prefer marrying virgins and are deterred from marrying women with children (Merwe & Ehlers, 2003). Also, teenage mothers are scolded for such misbehavior because it decreases their bridal price (“lobola”) which the fathers could get from their future husbands. (Dlamini, 2000).

In addition to cultural values, cultural beliefs have influence on being a teenage mother. Data gathered from urban teenage mothers regarding their beliefs related to motherhood indicated diverse ideas about motherhood according to their beliefs. These data were conducted by collecting In-depth interviews (from 20 Native American Indian teenagers, 18 white and 17 black women from the same Pacific Northwest city). Beliefs of the white women

stemmed from their religious backgrounds. The American Indian women believed that within their culture, high value was placed on early parenting and becoming a mother validated one's feminine role. Black women did not perceive negative sanctions within their culture if they did not meet the ideal norm of education followed by employment and marriage and children. Becoming a mother at a young age, although not highly desirable, had a fairly high level of acceptance. The white women believed that motherhood at a young age was undesirable (Horn, 1983).

Apart from cultural values and beliefs, people or community attitude towards sex is another socio-cultural practice which has its roots in culture. When it even come to open attitude towards sex as a form of value and culture in a country, the differences are always very clear. Because of culture, people still found sexuality a difficult topic to discuss.

Mostly because of religion, parents even found it difficult to recommend the use of contraceptives to their daughters, let alone to talk about safer sex practice (Amorevieta-Gentil, Daignault, Robitaille, Guimond & Sacha, 2014). For instance, a study done in the US by Finer and Henshaw, (2005) found that, for similar levels of sexual activity, American teenagers have the highest pregnancy and birth rates in the developed world because while developed countries report much more openness and supportive attitudes in discussing teenage sexuality, and provide clear messages and consistent informational campaigns (usually through the national media channels) about what is expected from teenagers and where they can get help, these messages are, different in the US, part of comprehensive national education strategies (Sorina, 2017).

While other communities, societies and countries feel reluctant to talk about sexual activities, other countries talk about it freely. For example, a study in Canada assessing the ‘openness’ of the society towards sexuality by Alfe (2001) note that Canada can be considered to be slightly more conservative than Sweden and France and more liberal than the United States. The investigators concluded that Canadians have become increasingly tolerant of a wider diversity of sexual norms and behaviors. For instance, the discussion of teenage sexuality and behavior does not focus on morality and religion as in the US, but on the health implications of these behaviors, and the economic burden for the society. While sex education curricula are a provincial responsibility, the federal government provides guidelines to ensure the uniformity of these programs (Maticka-Tyndale, McKay, & Barrett 2001).

In sum, culture plays a role in teenage mothers’ life through cultural issues such as values, beliefs and attitudes towards sex education. This may also indirectly or directly influence teenage mothers’ aspirations and perceptions towards giving birth (Sieger, 2007).

Teenage Mothers’ Assessment of Motherhood Status

Negative

Teenage motherhood is often viewed as challenging and detrimental. Consequently, there is an overabundance of research which claims that becoming mother during the teenage years results in collection of adverse outcomes for the teenage mother and her child (Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 1999). The challenges cover all aspects of their lives. The teenage mothers in our study described experiencing substantial economic strains in their everyday lives (Mollborn & Jacobs, 2012).

Some other evidences could be found in works of researchers like Aparicio, Giona and Pecukons (2018) who found out that teenage mothers are less likely to finish their education, and are more likely to bring up their children alone and in poverty. He continued that the children of teenage mothers are generally at increased risk of poverty, low educational attainment, poor housing and poor health, and have lower rates of economic activity in adult life. In UK, Teenage pregnancy costs the NHS an estimated £63000000 a year, and can result in significant physical and psychosocial problems in both mother and baby.

Becoming pregnant at a young age can be associated with an adverse impact on educational achievement, social isolation, poverty, and physical and mental health. The resultant child can have an increased risk of developmental and behavioral disorders, as well as poorer educational outcomes (O'brien & Kenny, 2015)

Another research found out that, teenage mothers were also more likely than older mothers to be living on welfare benefits, experiencing unemployment, lacking in school and university qualifications and living in social housing (Wiggins et al., 2005). They were also more likely to experience stigma, moral condemnation, outrage and social exclusion (Lawlor & Shaw, 2004; SEU, 1999; Shaw, Laylor, & Najman, 2006). Most often, the challenges included coping with increased responsibilities following the birth of the baby, managing the competing demands of schooling, work and taking care of a baby in a site settlement (Watts, Liamputtong & Mcmicheal, 2015).

Research regarding adjustment to motherhood, suggested that teenage mothering is stressful with consequences including low personal self-esteem,

and personal efficacy (Thompson & Peebles-Wilkins, 1992). Even in the society, teenage mothers are often seen as members of an under-class with different moral values from mainstream society and therefore considered as threats to their families (Rofel, 2002).

Most of the researches anchored the challenges mainly in education and health wise. Some of the evidences are presented below:

Being a teenage mother hampers further education of female adolescents and consequently earning capacity and overall wellbeing. Also, it usually terminates a girl's educational career, threatening her future economic prospects, earning capacity and overall wellbeing (Dangal, 2006). For example, a qualitative study was conducted to explore the challenges experienced by teenage mothers in Hlanganani South Circuit Secondary Schools in the Vhembe District in Limpopo, South Africa indicted that teenage mothers had difficulty in balancing schooling and taking care of their children, because they lacked support from their educators, peers, parents and the community at large. With this research, purposive sampling was used and twelve teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 were selected. Semi interviews was used to collect data (Chauke, 2013).

Furthermore, a study by Karimi (2015) found out how teenage mothers experienced challenges associated with motherhood as learners. It was evident that lack of the much needed financial, emotional and social support was a challenge for the teenage mother learners to cope with education successfully. A qualitative research approach was employed to gather information for the study. Four teenage mother learners were interviewed. Additional information

was sought from the head teachers/director of the institution these teenage mother learners were schooling.

Some of the challenges on their health were also reported by some other scholars. For example, teenage motherhood is associated with higher rates of morbidity and mortality for both the mother and infant. An increase in maternal mortality and low birth weight, are the major adverse outcomes of adolescent pregnancies. Teenage mothers were at greater risk of socioeconomic disadvantage throughout their lives than those who delayed child bearing until their twenties. The younger the mother, the greater the likelihood that she and her baby will experience health complications. The health consequences of adolescent child bearing for mother and child are the problem recognized universally (Dangal, 2006).

Similarly, research aimed at exploring the challenges encountered by Iranian teenage mothers indicated five main challenges of teenage mothers as physical, psychological, mental and social. These were explained further as: increasing burden of responsibility, experiencing physical problems, receiving insufficient support, inefficiency in maternal role, emotional and mental distress; and role conflict. Inductive conventional content analysis approach was used in this qualitative study. Face to face in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 Iranian teenage mothers in the Kerman province (Mangeli, Rayyani, Cheraghi & Tirgari, 2018).

Positive

Although teenage mothers faced a number of challenges that compromised their development needs, many teenage mothers successfully overcome these disruptions and become resilient (Pellegrino, 2015). For some

of the young women, the transition from childhood to motherhood was the catalyst for positive change as they shared stories of growing up, becoming more independent and responsible since becoming mothers (Brand, Morrison & Down, 2015).

Some of the teenage mothers also found success in terms of education, occupation, aspiration and supports from all people (Smithbattle, 2007). For example: many teenage mothers were able to complete school, find remunerated occupation because of higher educational success and a skill they were trained in. Having access to employment helps to cater for themselves (Smithbattle, 2007).

Also, Dlamini (2016) revealed that teenage motherhood marks the beginning of an important phase in their lives, one marked by responsible behavior, care, love and courage. Other teenage mothers also argued that being teenage mothers made them fulfill their social and personal aspirations in having children and this displays high expectation for their lives.

Hanna (2001) argues that teenage mothers may see motherhood as a way of achieving adulthood and a sense of identity and competence and may see motherhood as a positive outcome for themselves. Participants in the study displayed evidence of this as they stated positive outcomes relating to caring, loving and being responsible for someone else in their lives when they became teenage mothers. In addition, young women from impoverished backgrounds saw pregnancy as a way of finding love and a sense of belonging for themselves. Some studies indicate that some women place emphasis on the social value of having children than on the financial value (Fawcett, 1988). In England, 9 women who conceived their first child while still teenagers expressed positive

attitudes to being mothers. For instance, motherhood had been the impetus to change direction and consider career because they had someone else to cater for (Seamarks & Lings, 2004).

Other researchers have documented the fact that being a teenage mother leads to positive outcomes because of strong adaptation strategies they employed. For example, a qualitative study explored the factors that contributed to positive outcomes for 11 UK respondents who were teenage mothers. The study revealed a number of adaptation strategies and protective factors which aided positive outcomes in a number of areas of the respondents and their children's lives. These strategies began with a rejection of the common negative stereotypes associated with teenage motherhood and a very strong resistance to perceiving their pregnancies as adversities. They also had strong desire to be role models for their children which had given them the momentum to pursue educational and career goals, because they had someone else for whom they had responsibility. The findings strengthened the growing consensus that an early pregnancy, despite its many adverse consequences, could lead to positive outcomes for both mother and child in the presence of the right protective factors and adaptation strategies (Clarke, 2015).

Similarly, a study also concluded that, a striking characteristic of these young women was their capacity to embrace and creatively adapt to their new mothering roles despite the many challenges they faced. To the researcher, none of the teenage mothers interviewed shared the dominant negative views of motherhood. On the contrary, they viewed becoming pregnant and having babies as opening doors that offered new and meaningful experiences. Their resilient characters (developed during childhood) were central to their ability to

remain tolerant and openly adapt to their changing circumstances while transitioning to their motherhood roles (Brand, Morrison, Down, 2015).

Teenage Mothers Assets

Assets are the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood (Ellis, 2000). Ellis (2000) defined assets broadly to include natural, human, financial, public and social capital as well as household valuables. Assets may be tangible, such as food stores and cash savings, as well as trees, land, livestock, tools, and other resources. Assets may also be intangible such as claims one can make for food, work, and assistance as well as access to materials, information, education, health services and employment opportunities. People's assets were not merely means through which they made a living but were means that gave them the capacity to be and to act (Bebbington, 1999).

Research has also demonstrated that assets can be both internal and external. External assets are structures, relationship and activities that create positive environment. Examples are support from people, empowerment and encouragement (Search Institute, 2008). Internal assets are values, skills and beliefs necessary to fully engage with other people and function well in the world. Example, commitment to learning, positive values, social competence and positive identity (Search Institute, 2008). Both internal and external assets help navigate successfully through childhood. Research has shown that the more of these assets a particular youth has, the more likely it is that the youth will make responsible lifestyle choices, do well in school and avoid alcohol and other drugs (Search Institute, 2008).

Assets function as both a stock of resources for the future and a safety net (Grinstein-Weiss, Trina, Shanks, & Beverly, 2014). A mix of assets help

sustain a livelihood because assets can be converted to many assets which overlap categories and have unclear boundaries. There are significant cultural differences between what an asset is and how an asset is valued, and some assets are inherently difficult to define (Hunter, 2005). The possession of assets like savings accounts, homes, and the likes has the potential not only to relieve some of the stress of living in poverty but also to make a better future seem like a real possibility (Grinstein-Weiss et.al, 2014). For example: Evidence suggests that children who grow up in families with assets are better off than children who grow up in families without them (Grinstein-Weiss et.al, 2014).

Assets can be owned, controlled or claimed (Leonard, 2013) and may depreciate over time or may be expanded through investment (Kajia, 2007). Another way of understanding the assets, or capitals, that people draw upon to make a living is to categorize them into the following five groups: human, physical, social, natural and financial (Frankenberger, Becht & Mccaston, 2002).

According to Ellis (2000), human assets are training and skills acquired through pursuing one or more economic activities. Education, good health and skills training are important human assets that enable people to engage in different activities to achieve their livelihood objectives (Carney, 1998). For instance, education plays a crucial role in every economy. As a form of human capital, it contributes greatly to the livelihood of people and for that matter, teenage mothers (Safo-Kantanka et al, 2006).

Meanwhile, human assets that are acquired through education and training have been a challenge for most teenage mothers. A number of studies found that teenage mothers were more likely to have fewer school years

compared to adult mothers (Jason & Wolfe, 2009; Perper, Peterson, & Manlove, 2010) who have limited educational opportunities (Letourneau, 2004) and are more likely to drop out of school (SmithBattle, 2007).

Another research buttresses this assertion that even where school services were provided, many teenagers still found it challenging to balance their educational needs and the demands of motherhood (Pellegrino, 2015). Their limited education and lack of training could restrict job opportunities and potentially reinforce the cycle of deprivation and teenage motherhood (Paranjothy, Broughton, Adappa & Fone, 2009).

Human asset is also measured by access to good health as quality health of the people determines their capacity to engage in diverse livelihood activities to attain particular outcomes (Carney, 1998). However, several studies have indicated that teenage motherhood is associated with negative health outcomes (Jeon & Magilvy, 2011; Yasmin, Kumar & Parihar, 2014). For example, research done in Sierra- Leone (Freetown) by Yasmin et al. (2013) which assessed health seeking behavior of teenage mothers using a descriptive cross sectional and a semi closed ended questionnaire concluded that teenage mothers did not engage fully in majority of activities that have been proven to contribute to the survival of babies in the Tropics thereby making their children vulnerable to malnutrition, measles and diarrhea diseases.

Again, teenage motherhood or pregnancy was associated with higher risk of adverse pregnancy as well as fetal outcomes (Raut & Patil, 2014). This study was done by using prospective case control study carried out at Obstetric department. Teenagers (13-19yrs) and Control (20-25yrs) age group pregnant women were included for the study. Complications during pregnancy like

Pregnancy Induced Hypertension, anemia, ante partum hemorrhage, as well as foetus outcome like birth weight, and term pregnancy were recorded. Similar study confirmed that in terms of health (both physical and mental), teenage mothers were considerably worse off than older mothers (Jeon et al., 2011). Again, lack of proper antenatal care was found to have adverse impact on the health of teenage mothers leading to various adverse maternal and fetal outcomes (Yasmin et al., 2014).

Secondly, DFID (1999) denotes social assets as social groups such as associations, clubs and voluntary organizations that rural residents draw upon in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. Often times, social assets represent a place of seeking refuge in mitigating the effects of shocks or stress through informal networks (DFID, 1999). Research has shown that teenagers seem to understand that their importance and value just exist when they repeat what is reinforced by their social group (Butler, 2016). For instance, some social groups like the family has an internal function of protecting and promoting the development of its members and an external function of socialising and transmitting of a particular culture (Afonso, 2009).

Some studies have suggested that the family system is an indispensable resource in the primary activities of teenage pregnancy (Casper, 1990; Quinlivan, Tan, Steele, & Black, 2004) and a preferable focus for promoting more adjusted developmental trajectories for teenagers who become pregnant and opt for motherhood (Shanok & Miller, 2007).

Additionally, Moser (1998) indicated that marriage (household relations) is an asset in the form of social capital. Thus, marital status has either a positive or negative influence on livelihood outcomes, as marital partners

contribute to each other's welfare by helping to provide productive resources that enhance livelihoods. But a quantitative study by Jeon and Magilvy (2011) in Australia (using the first five waves (years 2001-2005) of the HILDA Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey) found that teenage mothers are less likely to be partnered or married at the time their first child was born. This assertion by Jeon and Magilvy (2011) means that most of these teenage mothers are not married and it may have some consequences on their social capital.

DFID (1999) describes natural assets as natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived. These include land, forests, rivers, streams and others (Ellis, 2000). The main assets whose accumulation has been promoted has been land, based on the argument that land ownership and access are closely linked to agricultural production and corresponding food security and rural income generation (Winter, Davis & Carletto, 2009). Natural resources provide families with food, fuel, construction materials, and income. For many poor families, natural resources are the only assets they own, and they often serve as insurance to help them weather calamities (or as economists say "to smooth consumption during shocks"). Not surprising, therefore, declining access to these resources can severely affect family welfare (Paluzzi & Holmes, 2007)

Physical assets (buildings, irrigation canals, roads, electricity, and hospitals) are not only important for meeting people's needs directly but also for providing access to other assets (Safo-Katanka et al and Jonasson, 2005). Most of the time, when physical assets are present, other types such as human assets, financial assets (savings, access to credit and loans) and natural assets

(land, water, wildlife, trees) could become accessible to the people, since physical assets provide the avenue through which other types of assets can be harnessed (DFID, 1999; Ellis, 2000). Lack of social services such as health clinics and pharmacies, primary and secondary schools, electricity, and piped water all affect household welfare by diminishing work capacity, labor productivity, and by working against individuals' efforts to improve their knowledge and skills, hence, livelihoods (Paluzzi & Holmes, 2007).

Financial assets are assets built around financial resources such as cash/loans, savings, bank deposits and stocks (Jonasson 2005). Of all the resources, food stocks and livestock are the main sources of finance to most rural communities (Ardayfio-Schandorf, Attua, Agyei-Mensah, Yankson & Asiedu, 2007).

A study in Ghana which examined teenage mothers' assets found out that social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), economic capital (command over economic resources, mainly cash and assets), cultural capital (personal dispositions and habits; knowledge and tradition stored in material forms and institutionalized) and symbolic capital (honour, recognition and prestige) contribute to the development of teenage mothers.

Most of the time, two or more of assets can be combined in times of difficulty. For example, in Ghana, research that examined teenage mothers' assets found out that social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), financial capital (command over economic resources, mainly cash), cultural capital (personal dispositions and habits; knowledge and tradition stored in material forms, institutionalized honour, recognition and prestige) contribute to the development of teenage mothers (Shanok & Miller,

2007). Subsequently, a qualitative research to explore the resilient mothering practices that teenage, British, working-class mothers indicated that teen mothers utilize the only two resources to which they may have access: their families and their own personal capacities (human assets) (McDermott and Graham, 2007).

To conclude, assets increase welfare of the people and for that matter the teenager.

Livelihood of Teenage Mothers

Livelihood has been under discussion for a considerable time now, but has been a central development topic only in the last decade (Leonard, 2013). Chambers and others spearheaded this sharpening of interest in their seminar papers. The concept of livelihood as a systematic set of ideas has only been together a few years ago (Brand, 2002). Livelihood is the activities, assets, and the access that jointly determines the living gained by an individual or household (Ellis, 1999). Drawing on Chambers and Conway (1992: 23), Carney (1998: 7) defines livelihood as “comprising the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Capabilities refer to a set of alternative being and doing that persons can achieve with their economic, social and personal characteristics (Leonard, 2013).

Livelihood also describes the resources people use, the ways in which they are used, and the benefits obtained (Baruah & Hazarika, 2007). Shephard (1998) extended the definition to include, the quality of life and dignity of individuals. The livelihood definition directs attention to links between assets and options people have in practice to pursue alternative activities required for a living (Leonard, 2012). Essentially, livelihood is about the ways and means of

making a living (Scoones, 1998). It deals with people, their resources and what they do with their resources.

Livelihood also involves creating and embracing new opportunities. In their quest to gain livelihood, people have to contend with risks and uncertainties such as rainfall failures, pressure on land, inflation, diminishing resources, global economic downturn, epidemics and natural disasters. These uncertainties, together with new emerging opportunities, influence how material and social resources are managed and used, and on the choices people make (Ellis, 2000). Livelihood can be made up of a range of on-farm and off-farm activities that together provide a variety of procurement strategies for food and cash. Thus, each household can have several possible sources of entitlement which constitute its livelihood. Entitlements include the rights, privileges and assets that a household has, and its position in the legal, political, and social fabric of society (Frankenberger, Becht & Mccaston, 2002).

There are three broad types of livelihood strategies that are available to rural folks in developing countries: these are agricultural intensification, livelihood diversification and migration (Carney, 1998). That is, rural folks that can increase agriculture productivity from intensification or off-farm income activities like carpentry, mason, etc. or seek job from elsewhere.

Agricultural intensification is the use of a greater amount of non-land resources (labour, inputs etc.) for a given land area, so that higher output is produced (Hussein & Nelson, 1999). That is, it generally focuses on the increased production of crops and agricultural commodities best suiting the agro-ecological conditions of the region and the farm as well as existing market outlets. Rural households in many different contexts have been found to

diversify their income sources allowing them to spread risk and smoothen consumption (Ellis, 1998). Diversification can be in the form of promoting rural non-farm activities, and these activities can be simulated by improving the enabling environment (post market processing and marketing of agricultural goods), providing advisory services based in non- farm areas, and the capacity to build and train the rural folks in order to enhance economic and employment opportunities in the non- farm sector.

Teenagers who are mothers have variable needs and aspirations and utilize different livelihood strategies to cope with the stress of pregnancy and parenthood (Kaye, 2008). Teenage mothers have various ways of coping with their situation. Some of the ways teenage mothers cope are, indulging in petty trading, curtailing their fertility after the first born, receiving of public assistance, admitting and embracing the situation. This can be seen in research done by Futenberg (2016), and Lee (2010) as well as Melvin and Uzoma (2012).

First and foremost, some of the teenagers accept the phenomenon that they need to fend for themselves and their babies (Lee, 2010) or some teenage mothers cope by admitting and embracing the situation they find themselves. For example, research by Kaye (2008) which explored what teenage mothers perceive as their struggles and to describe strategies employed in coping with stress of pregnancy and parenthood in Uganda indicated three strategies by which teenage mothers cope with parenting and pregnancy stress as utilizing opportunities (thriving), accommodating the challenges (bargaining and surviving), or failure (despairing). The data was collected using longitudinal qualitative study involving twenty-two in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions among pregnant teenagers who were followed from pregnancy to

delivery (from January 2004 to August 2005) with participants being selected through by theoretical sampling and data.

After accommodating the challenge, the envision success by challenging traditional notions of achievement when it comes to teenage mothers. For instance, a paper which illustrated the narratives of three Latina and Black women who graduated from high school as mothers showed that participants expressed resolve and flexibility in the face of difficult and unforgiving life circumstances, and they articulated new ways of envisioning success that challenged traditional notions of achievement. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with each participant and one focus group interview with all participants (Chase, 2016).

Because teenage mothers challenge the status quo, most of them start finding employment as a way of fending for themselves and their babies (Lee, 2010). Specific employment activities such as petty trading and apprenticeship have been discovered as ways in which teenage mothers cope with their situation. For example, in Africa, research done in Nigeria which explored teenage mothers' livelihood strategies indicated that teenage mothers used strategies such as petty trading and apprenticeship to reduce the social consequences of unintended pregnancy and earn a living. Data was collected using in-depth interviews (from thirty respondents). Content analysis was used to identify salient themes and patterns. (Melvin & Uzoma, 2012).

Furthermore, these coping strategies come in various forms. For example, in order for teenage mothers to complete education, some of them adopted some coping strategies such as curtailing their fertility after the first birth and avoiding an early marriage (Futenburg, 2016). Also, some of the

teenage mothers used support from close relations as a coping strategy skill. A study that described the antecedents and consequences of teenage motherhood with 10 teenage mothers aged 14-19 (that were selected purposively shared their lived experiences). Phenomenological type of qualitative research was utilized in this study. The findings revealed that the coping mechanisms of the teenage mothers were getting family support such as support from the husband's family (Lee, 2010).

Again, in Ghana, a paper that draws on Bourdieu's concept of capitals, specifically economic capital found that for the ever-pregnant or parenting teenagers, financial support helped them to cope with teenage motherhood. But parents stood out as significant source of economic support for their teenage girls (Gyan, 2017).

Finding consolation in spirituality and religion was also revealed as a coping strategy. For example, a phenomenological research study explored the experiences of eight African American teenage mothers and their families with the purpose to examine the process of developing resilience following teenager transition into motherhood. Semi-structured interviews conducted and genograms were used to track multigenerational histories of teenage motherhood and relationship dynamics. The results indicated three primary mechanisms which enabled them to cope with the teenage motherhood and demonstrate resilience: communication, religion or spirituality, and support from their families and communities (Ducket, 2009).

Supporting Systems Available for Teenage Mothers

Lander (2010) argues that being a teenage mother requires a special need for social support in order to help teenage mothers navigate the many changes

and challenges associated with being a teenage mother. Again, social support enables access to material resources such as food, clothing, shelter, financial, educational, medical and employment assistance in overcoming adversity (Ungar, 2007). Social support also assists teenage mothers in their motherhood duties by enhancing self-esteem and by helping them to feel more positive about their babies (Samuels, 1994). Availability of social support for teenage mothers also leads to positive outcomes (Furstenberg, Brooks and Morgan, 1987). SmithBattle (2007) argues for the need to connect with teenage mothers, noting that they usually cannot overcome their pasts or deal with their social environments on their own. Social support thus leads to new skills, emotional growth and hope for the future (SmithBattle & Leonard, 1998).

Social support comes in different kinds, sources and amount of supports. Considering kinds of support, it may consist of emotional back up: a sympathetic person with whom you can talk or receive reassurance. It may also take the form of help with responsibilities, particularly caring for home and the children. It may be concrete in form, as when necessary money or items are supplied. In addition, support may consist of information that directs and assists individuals (Cobb, 1974). Considering sources of support, social support systems may come from different bodies. It may be individual, family, professional bodies or institutions like teachers and welfare services (Benson, 2004). Research has identified a wide range of necessary support for teenage mothers such as: education, training opportunities, access to safe and affordable child care, transportation, parenting classes, medical insurance for their children, and good paying jobs (Johnson, 2008).

The first support system is the support the teenage gives to herself. These supports decrease stress and increase self-esteem. For example, an exploratory study that focused on the association between social support and teenage response to early motherhood major finding was that support from individuals is related to a decrease in stress and an increase in self-esteem (Colletta & Lee, 1983). Subjects were 64 black teenage mothers who were interviewed using structured interview.

Given support systems, the family system has emerged as a crucial context to understand and to intervene (Benson, 2004; East et al., 2006) for teenage mothers. As part of other spheres of the ecosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), family members influence and interact with each other in a circular and multidimensional process. Primary support usually comes from family, particularly the teenager's own birth mother (Rezek, 2010) and the child's father (Betance, 2004). Another study by Stevenson, Mattom & Teti. (1999) found that parents and boyfriends were important to the psychological well-being of teenage mothers. Other support persons mentioned in Betance's study were grandmothers, the mothers of the child father, aunts, sisters and friends (Betance, 2004). But because of the changing family systems, parents of teenage mothers are at the fore front when it comes to providing social support.

A paper confirmed this assertion when out of 820 teenage mothers interviewed, access to social support especially from their parents was the highest. Parents are taking the place of aunts and grandmothers in providing support to their teenage mothers due to changing social structures where extended families no longer reside together in most cases. The support teenage mothers were getting from their parents was access to economic support. The

method used was cross-sectional survey approach in which the researchers interview 820 teenage mothers aged 15–19 years in Accra, Ghana (Ahorlo, Pfeiffer & Obrist, 2015).

Consequently, other researches acknowledge the fact that the family was providing support for their wards but they added the individual support from friends. For example, a research project done in United State of America that employed both quantitative and qualitative approach to finding out more about the lives of pregnant and parenting teens, specifically using focus groups and anonymous questionnaires. The project looked at the support systems available and unavailable to pregnant and parenting teens. Findings revealed that some of the women were supported by the individual actions of family and friends as well as the programmatic support of social services, medical services, and school institutions (Vinson & Steven, 2012).

Furthermore, institutions like the school environment cannot be left out of the discussion about social support system for teenage mothers. A good school environment that supports learners give learners a sense of belonging (Khalil, 2013). Conversely a negative and unsupportive school environment adds additional stressors for the teenage mother (Khalil, 2008). In South Africa, at places where there is higher teenage motherhood, educators play an important role in terms of helping, caring, guiding and motivating academic achievement (Khalil, 2000). But another argument holds that, most teenage mothers who drop out of school are not encouraged by schools or educators to go back to studying; because teenage mothers are hopeless bodies (they are bodies whose lives are not regarded as “lives”) and whose materiality is seen as “unimportant” by schools (Butler, 2015).

In addition, an article by Lakganyane (2014) indicated that professionals, service providers and nurses are also playing a significant role in the life world of these teenagers. These professionals serve as mentees for the teenage mothers. For example, an article that examines assumptions about the potential effects of mentor programs, and presents the results of an exploratory case study of outcomes of low-income teen mothers who were paired with a professionally employed mentor, indicated that the teen mothers were highly motivated by their mentors so they went back to complete their education. Their enrolment in further education indicates the potential for increased earnings and reduced dependence on public assistance (Zippay, 1995).

Another support system for teenage mothers is welfare services. Jason and Wolfe (2009) found that being a teenage mother generally reduces annual income compared to other young adults. Teenage mothers are therefore more likely to receive cash assistance. In view of this, most teenage mothers depend on welfare services (especially those in developed countries). For example, a study that was conducted to confirm whether welfare services were a motivator for teenage mothers to continue having babies showed that welfare was a motivator to become pregnant (Johnson, 2008). This study was conducted among 75 teenage mothers. Also, Horton (2008) study which investigates the relationship between African American teenage child bearing and concentrated poverty (the study considers the city of Chicago, Illinois that has a substantial Black population and discernable inner-city communities, and in which economic conditions did not improve over several decades) indicated that welfare reform had a negative impact in worsening the economic circumstance

of Black teen mothers. The study utilizes a cross-sectional design with data available for each community area of the city of Chicago.

On the other hand, other researchers were neutral about this welfare services to teenage mothers. For instance, a paper that examines data on teenage fertility and patterns of uptake of the Child Support Grant in South Africa from 1998 to 2005, concluded that teenage motherhood was fairly high during the 1980s when state financial assistance to teenage mothers did not adequately serve the majority of South Africans but declined when the grant was expanded in 1998 to reach beneficiaries in all sub-groups of the national population. If teenage girls were having children primarily to benefit from the Child Support Grant, then more would be making claims than is in fact the case. The findings of this study did not suggest any significant positive association between the grant and the trend in teenage motherhood in South Africa during the past decade (Makiwane, 2010).

In another study, the receipt of public assistance (Welfare), was not a factor in the long-term success of young mothers except those who were on short term welfare which was also related to schooling and job training. Co-residence with the natal family had a contingent association with long-term success and paternal involvement in the children's lives also produced mixed results (Furstenberg, 2016).

While some supports have been beneficial, there are other supporting system that did not yield any response. For example, in Nigeria, a study that explored teenage mother subjective well-being by focusing on their childbirth, mothering experiences, and available network of supports, with thirty in-depth interviews conducted, content analysis was used to identify salient themes and

patterns. Findings showed that a high proportion of the teenage mothers' support systems did not yield any benefits and the supports were perceived as inadequate in contributing to their well-being and that of their children. (Melvin & Uzoma, 2012).

Meanwhile, some studies have emphasised the need for support systems for teenage mothers. For instance, Mitchell (2014) opined that, although motherhood is valued, most of teenage motherhood were not planned hence the need for support such as counseling due to their need for emotional and psychological support.

Other researchers argue for the need of support system from the stigmatization point of view. The stigma associated with teenage motherhood could evoke either harsh or supportive responses from others (Bolton, 1980). This could possibly make what is assumed to be a bad situation even worse. In view of that, strong family support and availability of adult care-giving is required for a teenage mother to return to school (Chohan & Gina, 2009).

Similarly, Sieger (2007) added his voice by arguing that, social support is pivotal for the teenage mother in terms of advice, financial aid, child-care, distribution of chores and responsibilities. Also, studies have shown that life experiences of teenage mothers can be both negative and positive depending on the support network these teenage mothers receive from their family, school, friends, baby's father and the welfare system (Sa-ngiamsak, 2016).

In addition, some studies have found that social support is the key factor in teenage mothers having positive experiences (Ballard, 2006; Stevenson et al., 1999). This was confirmed by findings in a research done on teenage mothers' experiences in England that motherhood could be experienced positively with

sufficient support (Alfe, 2008). Therefore, a strong support system will protect the young mother from negative consequences believed to be associated with teenage pregnancy (Sieger, 2007). Evans (2010) confirm this assertion in his research that while many teenage mothers were struggling and experienced complex challenges, others, with the right support, had overcome the barriers they faced and were keen to do the best for themselves and their babies.

Furthermore, some researchers have outlined ways of supporting teenage mothers. These are: keep teen parents in school until graduation, connect teen parents with the support and services they need, reduce second pregnancies to teen parents during the teen years, provide quality early childhood education experiences for children of teen parents (Alfe, 2008).

Aspirations of Teenage Mothers

The term aspirations have been defined by a lot of scholars. For example, aspiration was defined as a strong desire to achieve something high or great in future. Also ability to achieve identify and set goals for the future while being inspired in the present to work towards the goals (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996). Some scholars argue that aspirations address both present and future perspectives while others said aspirations can only be satisfied in the future and aspirations are also motivators for future achievements. For example, a longitudinal perspective was taken to investigate the predictive validity of teenage job aspirations, and the relative impact of individual and contextual factors on the formulation and realization of career aspirations at age 16. The follow-up study of a nationally representative cohort of 7649 individuals born in the United Kingdom showed that teenage job aspirations predict specific occupational attainments in adulthood. Occupational attainment at age 33 was

significantly related to the job aspirations expressed at age 16, but also to the belief in one's own ability, mathematical test performance, specific personality characteristics, as well as social background and gender (Schoon, 2001).

Likewise, a paper that examined the associations between teenage career aspirations, and career attainment in mid adulthood drawing on two large representative samples of the British population born in 1958 (population of 6,474) and in 1970 (population of 5,081) results showed that in both males and females, career aspirations measured at age 16 predict career attainment of cohort members in their mid-30s, even after controlling for family social background and general cognitive ability (Schoon & Polek, 2011). A developmental-contextual model of career development was tested, using Structural Equation Modelling to map the pathways linking early experiences to adult outcomes. Research like these helped to explain aspirations as goals individuals are willing to invest time, efforts or money to attain (Schoon, 2001). This means that aspirations have direct attention to the dynamic processes by which individuals assess opportunities, constraints, risks, choose goals and strategies for attaining the goals.

Aspirations have become multi-dimensional encompassing a range of future desires from personal needs to collective duties. For instance, a study that examines the life experiences of young people aged between 14 and 24 revealed that having a family was the most important priority for youngest people in the United Kingdom (Prince Trust, 2004). This is followed by having an interesting job, a nice home and making a lot of money. Another study by Seamark and Lings (2004) showed participants displaying optimistic and realistic attitudes because of their aspirations in life. While some have decided a full time

motherhood is critical, others too have put on long term plans in place. These participants did not feel like life was over.

But it appears that traditionally, aspirations have focused on the career and educational ambitions of young people. Younger mothers' aspirations to return to education and work and becoming economically independent have been documented by many researchers. For example, Hanna (2001) echoed in her study that employment together with getting married, having a partner, having more children was seen as an escape of poverty, hence aspired by most of the respondents.

Similarly, young mothers described how becoming pregnant has disrupted their positions in education and employment. But they expressed aspirations to return to education or employment and did not feel that having a baby was going to stop them from achieving this goal. In fact, it provided them more determination to succeed (Anwar & Stanistreet, 2014). Another study on teenage mothers' aspirations projected imaginary perspectives of the future for their children, different from the trajectory they have followed. They intended to promote and secure a career or good job (Schoon, 2001)

Researchers have also argued that aspirations do not just occur in a vacuum especially for young mothers but rather in a social context. Young mothers draw on resources to achieve these aspirations. For instance, McDermott and Graham (2005) opined that young mothers draw on only two resources to which they have access. These resources are, their families and their own personal capacities. For example, regardless of younger mothers' ambitions to engage in education and employment, their aspirations were generally dampened by mediating social and economic conditions. Ray (2006)

found out that individuals draw their aspirations from the lives of others around them. In this sense, individuals have some aspiration window through which they view their possibilities that exist between the social sphere.

Apart from the vacuum in which aspirations do happen, there are gaps in individuals' aspirations. These gaps can be explained on the basis of different opportunities and socialization processes (Schoon, 2001). For example, young people from more disadvantaged homes have greater access to materials and financial resources such as computers, tuition and private tutoring, educational opportunities and many more. Also, socialization processes such as role models, occupational knowledge and informed kinship/social networks may also explain socio-economic differences in aspirations (Schoon, 2001)

Consequently, young people who believe they have the ability to achieve and who attribute success to hard work rather than luck tend to have higher aspirations than their peers (Gutman, 2008).

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of existing literature, related theoretical issues and conceptual framework underpinning the study. For the purpose of the review, the chapter is divided into the following sub-headings: social learning theory, resiliency theory, ecological system theory, the concept of livelihoods and conceptual framework (Family Resilience Enhancement Program Framework).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modelling (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Bandura is the proponent of Social learning theory, which emerged during the 1960s and 1970s, highlights the common interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental determinants of human behavior (Bandura & Walters, 1977). People learn new behaviors by watching others in a social situation, absorb it and then imitate that behavior.

The theory emphasizes the importance of social context in mediating the processes of learning, modifying, and maintaining behaviours, which provide a useful model for teenage mothers. Within this theory, behaviour is seen as resulting from the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental variables (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The Social Learning Theory is built on four central grounds consisting of differential association, definitions, differential reinforcements and imitation (Akers & Jensen, 2017).

The first central ground theory is differential association. Differential associations mean those with whom they interact with, both directly and indirectly. It exposes people to acceptable and unacceptable behaviors as well as variety of behavioral models. Individual's immediate social group generates behavioral models, which become a source of imitating behavior. The direct social group includes family, friends, teachers, neighbors and churches. These social groups transfer attitudes, views, values that an individual can accept and inculcate. They also spell out suitable social behavioral codes of conduct (Akers & Silverman, 2014).

Definitions are what an individual interprets to be acceptable behavior, correct values and attitudes for themselves. Definitions are usually developed and strengthened through the process of differential association. If definitions conform to conventional and traditional values, then certain behaviors and actions would automatically be reduced (Akers & Silverman, 2014).

Differential Reinforcement can be described as the process by which individuals experience and anticipate the consequences of their actions. If the consequences are unpleasant, it might hinder the future occurrence of the same behavior (Bandura & Walters, 1977). Reinforcement of values, attitudes and beliefs acquired through differential association and imitation can be either positive or negative. Positive reinforcement increases the likelihood of the same behavior through pleasant outcomes and rewards, while negative reinforcement tries to reduce behavior from occurring through punishment and harsh negative consequences.

Reinforcements usually come from society and outside surroundings (their interactions with peer groups and family members) (Akers & Jensen, 2017).

Finally, the last element is imitation. Individuals engage in behaviors previously observed from others. People observe characteristics of the models, their behavior and the aftermath of that behavior, and then imitate them. To a large extent, the people with whom one is in immediate contact will become sources of imitations (Akers & Jensen, 2017).

Social Learning theory can be effectively used to understand the occurrence and reoccurrence of teenage motherhood. The concepts of differential association, definitions, imitation and differential reinforcement can be used to explore the different facets within a teenage mom's life and their decisions to become mothers early.

Social learning theory provides a more inclusive model, which emphasizes the need for attention to both the contextual variables such as environment, culture and the individual factors like beliefs, perceptions, and skills that influence behaviour (Ballasone, 1991). In addition, social learning theory provides for the investigation of cognitive and developmental processes underlying the learning and maintenance of behaviour. These processes, which may be different for teenagers, must be considered in attempting to specify the factors that influence teenage motherhood (Ballasone, 1991).

However, in spite of being an effective theory to understand observational learning and modeling, this theory suffers from a major limitation. Bandura and Walters (1977) and his colleagues developed conceptions of modeling and mechanisms of internalization but ignored that not all human beings will behave like this if they are part of the society. There are exceptional people who will not behave rationally.

Ecological Systems Theory

According to Tudge, Gray, and Hogan (1997), the term ecology was coined in 1873 by Ernest Haeckel, a German zoologist and evolutionist. Tudge et al. (1997) define ecology as, “the study of organism-environment interrelatedness” and although the term originated in biology, other disciplines such as geography, sociology, anthropology, and economics have incorporated ecological approaches.

The Ecological Systems Theory is the study of the “progressive, mutual accommodation between the developing person and the changing properties of the immediate and broader context in which the person lives” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological theory draws heavily on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecology of human development, suggesting that parenting is the result of the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors and that to understand parenting, these factors must be considered in terms of their existence at each level as well as their interaction across each level.

The interaction between factors in the person’s maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers his development. The ecological systems theory focuses on the phenomenon of human development (Ryan, 2001). An ecological perspective encourages one to consider the holistic environment for an individual.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) delineated an ecological perspective that consisted of four levels of interacting variables: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem and later he added the fifth one namely; chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The microsystem is defined by Bronfenbrenner (1977) as a set of relations between the individual, her immediate setting, activities, roles (Example, mother, daughter, or employee) and time. The microsystem thus consists of characteristics of the individual, his or her immediate setting, life roles, and time. As the microsystem focuses primarily on the individual, it highlights the individual characteristics and differences that may predispose one to a condition and can influence skills and choices. It questions the aspects of the children's environment that have the most significant effect on the child's development. The concept further questions the factors that influence parents in the way that they bring up their children in a vacuum.

For Bronfenbrenner, the individual is not a passive recipient of experiences but is someone who reciprocally interacts with others and helps to construct the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) points out the significance of the environment as it is perceived by the developing person as what matters for development and behaviour.

Factors from the microsystem can contribute to both teenage motherhood status and livelihood activities that they will undertake (Breheny & Stevens, 2007; Merrick, 1995). As teenage mothers grow and go through the whole motherhood process, they learn and discover many things about themselves as individuals that can influence the strategies they will indulge in based on personal strengths and preferences like abilities and interests. All this information is about the self. Most often, this information about self (Example, individual differences and personality traits) is acquired from interactions with family, peers, and other sources (Merrick, 1995). The relationships with family members, peers, and other sources that generate thoughts, feelings, and attitudes

about self that may be viewed through interactions present at both the microsystem and mesosystem levels depend on subjective interpretation (Berry et al., 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Merrick, 1995).

However, not all microsystems are identical as the influence of one may outweigh the others. For example, the effect that family exerts may be greater than the influence of peers or vice versa, depending upon the developmental milestones of the individual (teenage mother). Again, the family appears to have a main role in the cause of teenage motherhood, since it exerts a central influence on other relational contexts and environmental factors (East et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

To understand the context for the experiences of teenage mothers in Adaklu, the microsystem is the immediate environment of which Adaklu teenage mothers are part, such as family, the father of the child, neighborhood, school and peers. It is the layer closest to these teenage mothers and where direct contact is made. At this level, relationships have an impact in two directions which Bronfenbrenner calls 'bidirectional influences'.

The mesosystem is described as the environment in which an individual interacts. It is a set of interrelations between two or more settings in which the person actively participates. In other words, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). With respect to teenage mothers, the mesosystem is often viewed in terms of the family dynamics, religion, peers, education, neighborhood, and level of acculturation (Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt, 2004; Dehlendorf, Marchi, Vittinghoff, & Braverman, 2010). The influences at the mesosystem level often compete and conflict with one another in terms of the messages teenage mothers receive with respect to sexual attitudes

and livelihood strategies. For instance, family and church serve as important socializing agents in the African community and may promote abstinence as the only acceptable level of sexual activity. Example of such situation would be the connection between the microsystems such as the relationship between members of the teenage mother's family and the family of the baby's father, or the connection between the teenage mother's family and the mother's school.

The exosystem contains the external environmental settings and other social systems that indirectly affect development of the person. The exosystem includes settings that affect the individual but with which the individual does not directly interact (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events that occur influence processes within the immediate settings that contain the person (Example, for a teenage mother, relation between the home and the parent's work place; for a parent, the relations between the school and the neighbourhood group) (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). For instance, in this study, the exosystem of Adaklu teenage mothers is the community, media, organised religion, health and social services.

The macrosystem comprises of the overarching patterns of culture that affect the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). It is the culture or sub-culture in the form of social organizations, beliefs and lifestyles. This system contains various beliefs and values of the culture, and is made up of written and unwritten principles that regulate behavior. These principles include: law, politics, religion, education, economics, region, race, class, ethnicity which award individual life with meaning and value which controls the nature and scope of

the interactions between the various levels of the total social system. In this research, it is understood that Adaklu culture and beliefs shape the experiences of teenage mothers in the community. The value of virginity, gender expectations and double standards, education policy and religious beliefs are part of the macro system of Adaklu teenage mothers.

In a research involving the livelihood strategies of adolescent mothers, the variables studied at this level can be socioeconomic status. Living in poverty and minority group membership are both significant contributing factors to adolescent motherhood (Merrick, 1995). Research indicates that teenagers from lowered socioeconomic status face a higher risk of teenage pregnancy and parenthood than teenagers who are more financially secure (e.g., Southorn, 2016; Baumer, 2000). Teenagers from lowered socioeconomic status homes and communities may not accurately perceive the implications of teenage motherhood and may view teenage parenthood as a means to attaining adult status if other means are not explored. In communities with high rates of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood, this may be perceived as normative behavior with few negative consequences making the cycles of poverty and adolescent parenthood difficult to break.

The chronosystem is a description of the evolution, development or stream of development of the external systems in time (Short or long period of time and he used the terms like change, development, history, time and course of one's life) (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Accordingly, the study of teenage mothers should consider the different ecological levels of teenager lives and the interactions between them (Brooks-Gunn, & Paikoff, 1991). Fundamental to these nested systems is the

interconnectedness between them, and as Bronfenbrenner (1979) argues, what happens between these systems can be as influential to development as what happens within them.

The application of the ecological system theory as a holistic theoretical approach is crucial as teenage mothers do not exist in isolation but are embedded within a larger social structure interconnected with other social institutions and social domains. Extending Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to the study of teenage mothers places them in the centre of an interactive system that consists of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 1986).

More explicitly, the ecological environments can be perceived as a collection of subsystems of different sizes from the smaller to the larger. Further, each structure is unique and represents a significant development context for teenage mothers. In other words, the theory infers that the construction of teenage mother's experiences cannot be comprehended effectively without investigating the interconnectedness between these multiple layers of social structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Ecological theory integrates the interactions of various environmental settings in a person-process-context-time model. It functions as a theory of knowledge that helps identify ecological risks facing teenage mothers. While each system has explanatory value in understanding the development context of teenage mothers, the first three systemic structures are the closest to the teenage mother's unique life circumstances: microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem.

Christensen (2010) for example, argues that ecological theory dwells so much on the negative effects of how individuals develop when exposed to

adversity. He argues that ecological theory fails to explain how individuals raised in poor neighbourhood can survive and become successful. Thus, the theoretical perspective did not argue the possible success out of difficult circumstances. It is within this context that Bernard (2012) and Engler (2007) advocate that ecological theory is lacking on the dimension of resilience.

The primary contention of ecological theory has often remained that the individual always develops within a context. Ryan (2001) for instance, acknowledges that the surrounding context is often important as it interacts and impacts on the individual, but points out that individuals need to be recognized for their individual conditions. They rather argue that the individual's ability to influence his or her success should be the focus of attention instead of the context.

Ecological theory as presented by Bronfenbrenner (1977), examined development from different layers of relationship: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. Christensen (2010) describes the macrosystem, for instance, as the overall societal culture in which individuals live and therefore looks at the cultural values, customs and laws of a society as constituting the macrosystem. Drakenberg (2013) on the other hand, has argued that this layer fails to forecast the all-pervasive force of globalization influencing the individual. In the era of global village, technological and environmental factors depend on each other and influence everyday life in ways where knowledge processes among individuals have become more diversified.

Resiliency Framework

The term was first popularised by Holling in 1973 within his work entitled 'Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems'. This work formed the

foundation for most studies on resilience (Bhamra, 2011). Resiliency was used to explore the persistence of different states of nature in complex dynamic systems such as socio economic systems. Resiliency has been defined in many studies or researches. For examples, resiliency is the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risks (Masten & Powell, 2003).

Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990), refer to resilience as the processes in place when risk is present and produces outcome similar to or better than outcomes when risk is not present. Jensen and Fraser (2005) on the other hand characterize resilience as successful adaptation in the presence of risk or adversity.

Studies have noted that without struggle, resilience cannot happen. For instance, Hawley (2000) stated “without struggle, resilience does not exist.” In view of that Mallak (1998) defined resiliency as the ability of an individual or organization to expeditiously design and implement positive adaptive behavior matched to the immediate situation (struggle), while enduring minimal stress. Another study viewed resiliency as the ability to successfully cope with change or misfortune (Wagnild, 1993). This scholar introduced a new word which was “coping”. Definitions of resilience which emphasise on coping, relies on reducing vulnerability, resisting and adapting to change, and returning to a desirable situation as quickly as possible.

Researchers also argue that the concept of resilience may be a set of traits (Jacelon, 1997), an outcome (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick, & Sawyer, 2003), or a process (Olsson et al., 2003).

Most of the time, resiliency consists of both internal and external factors that shape an individual. Internal factors include positive self-evaluation, confidence in one's abilities and the ability to cope (sense of humor, hopefulness, balanced perspective, positive strategies for dealing with stress and coping strategies) (Cooper, Long & New, 1982; Mayhew, 2009, Prince-Embury, 2008; Short & Russell-).

External factors include environmental and social factors that can support positive teenage development. These factors include healthy school environments, positive relationships with family members, peers, older adults' community organizations (Cooper et al., 1982; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Prince-Embury, 2008), and a sense of relatedness which refers to relationships and feeling connected socially. Sense of relatedness includes trust, perceived access to support, comfort with others and tolerance of differences (Prince-Embury, 2008). Other scholars also explain the same internal and external factors of resiliency as promotive factors; protective, individual; and social support (Dyer and McGuniness, 1996; Sameroff, 1999; Sameroff & Fiese, 2000; and Sameroff & Gutman, 2004).

Teenage mothers are viewed as young people who follow paths that are limited in resources (Brick, 2002; Donald & Swart-Kruger 1994;) and are considered to be vulnerable, and having need of rescue (Ennew, 2003). Because teenage mothers are considered as vulnerable, assets, resources, and environmental factors (internal and external factors) help bring about a positive outcome or reduce a negative outcome. Resilience theory, though is concerned with risk exposure among teenage mothers, focuses on strengths rather than deficits. Strength interacts with a stressor to reduce the likelihood of negative

outcomes. Researchers have identified a number of strength factors, including but not limited to hardiness (O'Leary, 1998) self-esteem, (Kobasa, 1979) social support (Mann, Hosman & Schaalma, 2004) optimism (Pengilly, 2000) and positive effect.

In overcoming life challenges, individuals can exhibit resilience in a range of domains such as education, emotion or behaviour (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). Adopting resilience perspective for this study offers the chance to look at teenage motherhood from different perspectives. It will provide a solution orientation which emphasizes hope and potential for teenage mothers (Resnick, 2000). Resiliency theory makes the researcher view teenage mothers as resources to be developed, not problems to be solved (Resnick, 2000). The theory will help the researcher focus on the complexity of teenage mothers' experiences and the specific contexts and circumstances of their lives to be explored (Ungar, 2003).

Thus, resiliency is any behavioural, attributional, or emotional response to social challenge that is positive and beneficial for development (such as seeking new strategies, putting forth greater effort, or solving conflicts peacefully). Any response to a challenge that is negative or not beneficial for development (such as helplessness, giving up, cheating, or aggressive retaliation) will be considered as not resilient. The researcher will dwell much on bounce back and bounce forward notion of being resilient by Manyena et al. (2011 & 2018). The bouncing back and bouncing forward ability will make the teenage mother go beyond recovery but will discover new opportunities and possibilities to transform her struggle through novelty, experimentation, and invention.

But it is argued that hardship and resilience are just mere terms coined. Some writers think that resiliency is just people's perceptions but not a fact that exists. Some of the reasons were the fact that some cultures encourage people or community members to do what we may term as not resilient. Examples are how some cultures actively encourage 'stealing' or encourage teenagers to be teenage mothers (Boyden & Mann, 2005). That means that resilience is therefore culturally and normatively loaded terms that are socially constructed (Ungar, 2004).

Conceptual Framework

Family Resilience Enhancement Program Framework

Family resilience enhancement program framework is a vulnerability to resiliency framework that explains how individuals transit from being vulnerable to adapting to the risk or threat that individuals, organisations or communities face. The conceptual framework was adapted from Lim and Han (2013) in their study about effects of the family resilience enhancement program for families with patients with chronic schizophrenia.

The framework evaluated effects of family resilience enhancement program on family hardness, family sense of coherence, family problem of solving communication, family crises oriented, personal evaluation and adaptation in families of patients with chronic schizophrenia. That is, the framework shows the effect of leading the families to positive family adaptation (Lim & Han, 2013). The conceptual framework is illustrated below as Figure 1

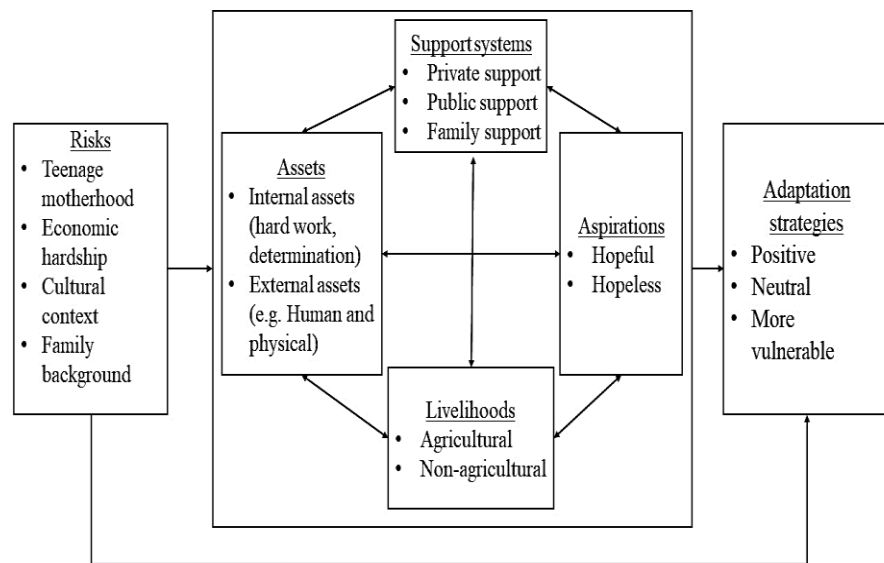


Figure 1: Family Resilience Enhancement Program Framework

Source: Adapted from Lim and Hann (2013)

From figure 1, the first component represents both background characteristics and the risks the teenage mother faces. Risk and background characteristics work hand in hand with each other. Risks associated with teenage motherhood can emanate from either the background of the teenage girl which led her to being a teenage mother or the risk associated with being a teenage mother. Literature has shown that a lot of factors lead teenage girls to become teenage mothers. Examples are their socio-cultural background, poverty, inadequate knowledge on the use of contraceptives, transactional sex and many more (Bria, 2009; Dlamini, Der Merwe, & Ehlers, 2003; Gyan, 2013; Kearney & Levine 2012).

Apart from these factors affecting one to be a teenage mother, other challenges associated with being a teenage mother will also make the teenage mother more vulnerable. Examples of such challenges are: teenage motherhood is positively correlated with low socio-economic status, and that teenage

mothers are more likely than older mothers to live in socio-economic deprivation, to be benefit-dependent, and to have lower education and literacy. Again, they further point out that teenage mothers are less likely to receive social support from friends, family or their children's fathers, and more likely to have substance abuse problems (Chauke, 2013; Fergus and Zimmerman, 2004).

These challenges make it very difficult for teenage mothers to come out being successful. Meanwhile research has revealed that some teenage mothers were able to be successful because they had access to some supports, resources, aspirations and assets (Seamark & Lings, 2004). For instance, researchers and practitioners working within resilience recognize that, despite these risks, some teenage mothers growing up in poverty exhibit positive outcomes. These adolescents may possess a number of promotive factors, such as high levels of self-esteem or the presence of an adult mentor (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2004), which help them avoid the negative outcomes associated with poverty.

The framework then tries to understand how assets, supporting systems, livelihoods and aspirations of a teenage mother could make a teenage mother very resilient despite the risk they face. Within these components (assets, support systems, livelihoods and aspirations), the background characteristics of the teenage mother is still embedded. For instance, one's background characteristics will influence her access to assets. Access to assets will influence the kind of livelihood activities she will undertake as well as the kind of support that will be available for her. In addition, one's background characteristics will also determine what she aspires for in the near future. Even how the teenage mother will be able to achieve her aspirations also depends on the background

of the person. These examples show that, the background of the teenage mother is embedded in every aspect of the framework.

Many factors can influence a person's resilience, including the environment, risks, assets, resources, and support systems that surround them (Masten, 2001). These variables are the affecting variables that will help the teenage mother to either adapt positively or negatively to being a teenage mother. From figure 1, there are four main variables that are available for the teenage mother to use and adapt to her situation positively. These are assets that the teenage mothers can depend on, livelihood activities of the teenage mothers, support system that can enable them adapt to the situation and aspirations that always keep them going. These variables are explained below per how it will be used in the conceptual framework by the researcher.

First and foremost, assets are the positive factors that reside within the individual, (such as competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy) or external assets (natural, financial, physical, cultural, human, social) that can be available to the teenage mother. Combination and proper balancing of these assets will aid in proper coping or adaptation by the teenage mother. Assets are the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood (Ellis, 2004). By building assets, individuals develop their capacity to cope with the challenges they encounter and to meet their needs on a sustained basis. Again, people's ability to escape poverty depends on access to assets.

Resources or supports are also positive factors that help teenage mothers overcome risk or struggle. Resources are external to the individual. Resources include parental support, adult mentoring, governmental support, teachers support and community organizations and others that promote positive

development. The term resources emphasize the social environmental influences on the teenage mother and the child development (Sandler, Wolchik, Davies, Haine & Ayers, 2003). These external resources can be a focus of change to help teenage mothers face risks and prevent negative outcomes. For example, in the context of these teenage mothers, the role played by key stakeholders like the central government, decentralized departments (District Assembly, religious groups and schools), various NGO's and private organizations can significantly increase or decrease these teenagers' wellbeing (Addo, 2008).

Livelihoods consist of the capabilities, assets, resources and the activities required for a means of living (Christensen & Pozany, 2010). Livelihood also describes the resources people use, the ways in which they are used, and the benefits obtained (Baruah & Hazarika, 2007). The kind of livelihood one undertakes will help in coping or adapting to a risk that the individual is facing. Hence, Sherpard (1998) even extended the definition of livelihood to include the quality of life and dignity of individuals. Livelihood activities and their strategies have been identified as agricultural intensification, livelihood diversification (including both paid employment and rural enterprises) and migration (Carney, 1998; Ellis, 2004, Scoones, 1998).

Generally, people tend to choose livelihood activities which, in their estimation, provide them with the best or optimum livelihood outcomes. Households or individual livelihood activity is determined by different exogenous and endogenous factors, such as environmental, socio-economic, political and institutional factors. It varies from place to place and from condition to condition (DFID, 1999).

An individual can combine two or more livelihood activities at a time. For instance, Lerise (2001) confirms that most of people in Africa and Asia rely on the combination of activities; these people do not specialize in crop production or trade and services to the total exclusion of other income-earning activities. But the kind of livelihood strategy an individual or household undertakes will enable these actors to cope with the situation. As individuals cope with the situation, they become resilient to that particular phenomenon.

The next item on the conceptual framework is aspirations. People make choices that influence whether their potentialities will be cultivated or remain untapped in the near future (Gutman, 2008). These choices they aspire for are partly influenced by parents, government policies, opportunities available, qualifications and many more. This means that one's aspirations do not just happen but resources, supports, livelihoods and assets come into play for an individual to realize it.

The last component on the conceptual framework is the outcome. The outcome may be both negative and positive. Though the researcher is interested in positive outcomes, combining all these variables however, can increase stress for some of the teenage mothers which can even lead to death or being more vulnerable. Examples of expected positive outcomes can be life out of poverty, good job, life free from challenges, high level of education, positive mitigation and coping) and negative (death, drop out from school, complication, low job remunerations and becoming more vulnerable) for the teenage mother.

Being teenage mothers means the mothers had experienced many adversities before and after giving birth to their children. To overcome these previous experiences, they had to mobilize inner strength, draw on external

resources, and make changes to central aspects of their lives. They gain strength by going through these processes, notably by acquiring knowledge and skills and reinvesting them to cope with new adversities (Levesque & ChamberLand, 2016). The idea of the framework can be applied to teenage mothers' ability to respond to shocks. Difficult beginnings do not necessarily determine outcomes (Bird, 2007). Boyden and Mann (2007) suggest that resilience, used in this context, usefully highlights the competencies of these teen mothers, families and communities, instead of focusing solely on their vulnerability and deficits.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the profile of the study area, research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, data and sources, research instruments, pretest of instruments, community entry protocol, data collection and analysis procedures as well as ethical issues.

Study Area

Adaklu District is one of the 46 Districts in Ghana created in 2012 and one of the Seven (7) Districts created in the Volta Region. It was carved out of the former Adaklu-Anyigbe District and was established by Legislative Instrument (LI 2085) of 2012. Its administrative capital is at Adaklu-Waya which is geographically located in the centre of the District. It shares boundaries to the east with Ho to the West, North-Tongu District to the South, Agotime-Ziope District to the North and to the East with Akatsi-North District (this is shown on figure one). The District covers a total land area of 800.8sqkm (GSS, 2014).

The District is characterized by hills, mountains, lowland and generally rather undulating landscape. Adaklu District is underlain with two major soil formations namely the Forest soil (forest ochrosols, lethosols and intergrades found in the Adaklu Mountains area) and Savannah soil (heavy clay soil). The District has a very good temperature that supports plant growth. Food crops such as maize, sweet potato, tomato, yam, cassava and groundnut do well under this climatic condition. Generally, the mean monthly temperature ranges between 22°C and 32°C. The major vegetation cover in the District is Savannah

Woodland. However, few areas, mostly Adaklu-Aboadi and the river banks of Kalapa and Awator have semi-deciduous forest (GSS, 2014).

The population of Adaklu District, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 36,391 representing 1.7 percent of the Region's total population. Males constitute 49.0 percent and females represent 51.0 percent. The localities in the District are completely rural with no urban settlements. This implies that no locality in the District has a population of up to 5,000 persons. The population of the District is youthful with 36.4 percent below 15 years with a small number of elderly persons (7.6%) who are 60 years and older. The total age dependency ratio for the District is 72.1. The General Fertility Rate is 71 births per 1,000 women aged 15-49 years (GSS, 2014).

Of the population aged, eleven (11) years and older, 80.5 percent are literate and 19.5 percent are not-literate. The proportion of illiterate females (24.1%) is higher than that of males (14.7 %). Of the population 3 years and older in the district, 19.0 percent have never attended school, 41.1 percent are currently attending school and 40.0 percent have attended school in the past (GSS, 2014).

About 67 percent of the population aged 15 years and older are economically active while 33.3 percent are economically inactive. Of the economically active population, 95.4 percent is employed while 4.6 are unemployed. For those who are economically inactive, a larger proportion is in full time education (55.1%), 20.6 performed household duties and 4.7 percent are disabled or too sick to work. Of the employed population 15 years and older, about 63.1 percent are engaged as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, 12.6 percent in service and sales, 14.6 percent in craft and related trade,

and 3.4 percent are engaged as professionals (GSS, 2014). The private informal sector is the largest employer in the district, employing 93.9 percent of the population followed by the public sector (3.6%) (GSS, 2014).

The most dominant economic activity in the District is agriculture which employs about 78 percent of the labour force. The District is well known in the Region for the production of cereals and legumes such as maize, cowpea, groundnut, rice and tubers including cassava, sweet potato and vegetables (i.e. tomatoes, garden eggs, pepper, okro, etc). Livestock rearing plays an important role in the lives of the people as the District is endowed with large livestock populations of cattle, sheep, goats, poultry and others. About 30 percent of agricultural land available in the District is used by livestock farmers as pasture for animals. If properly harnessed and developed, job opportunities would be created for the youth in the district (GSS, 2014).

Trade and commerce are the least developed and characterized by petty trading mostly of household consumables. Items traded include foodstuffs, clothing, charcoal and fuel wood. All other items need to be imported but the poor nature of the roads makes this quite difficult (GSS, 2014).

Tourist sector holds a potential for the District development. Important tourist attractions include the Adaklu Mountain with beautiful sceneries and caves harbouring tropical wild animals including bats, different breeds of monkeys, etc. Also some feasibility studies have been done with the aim of developing the mountain for the purpose of paragliding. This, when implemented, could transform the District into a major tourism destination in the Region. Another attraction is the Kalakpa Forest; it is a game reserve to

improve the fortunes of the District if well developed. There is also a Cemetery for German Allied Missionaries at Adaklu-Waya (GSS, 2014).

Education is one of the most important sectors of the District. The District has both public and private educational institutions. Though the District cannot boast of any tertiary institutions, its strategic location has provided the proximity to such facilities located at Ho, Amedzorfe and Akatsi. The sector is divided into five circuits namely: Ablonu, Abuadi, Ahunda, Kalakpa and Waya circuits. Inadequate teaching staff is an issue of concern in the District (GSS, 2014).

Health is one of the major sectors of the District economy. Health service provision is mainly by the Government through Ghana Health Service and supported by the Christian Health Association of Ghana. The District lacks a Hospital as such health services are delivered at facilities located at Adaklu-Helekpe H/C, Adaklu-Waya H/C, Sofa Clinic (CHAG), Ahunda H/C, Torda CHPS zone, Ahunda CHPS zone and Kordiabe CHPS zone. There are also uncompleted CHPS compounds at Kpeleho and Kordiabe. The various health facilities and their locations are shown on figure 2. The District epidemiological profile shows a concurrent significant prevalence of diseases including Malaria, Upper Respiratory Tract Infections, Intestinal Worms, Diarrhoea and Rheumatism/Joint Pains (GSS, 2014).

Adaklu District has the highest depth of poverty (46.9%), followed by Kadjebi (30.1%) and Agortime Ziope (24.2%) districts. Traditionally, Adaklu has three traditional divisions namely Aboadi, Goefe and Helekpe. The Aboadi division is the paramountcy which serves as the traditional head and Goefe is the division where the linguist for the paramountcy is selected while Helekpe

division serves as the warlord or in modern terms, the Military / Security division of the Paramuncy. The District has one Paramount Chief currently at Abuadi and other sub-chiefs who assist in the promotion of peace and stability in the District (GSS, 2014). The people of Adaklu celebrate the Glidzi festival every January to remember the death of their ancestors during their escape from Nortsie, their ancestral home (GSS, 2014).

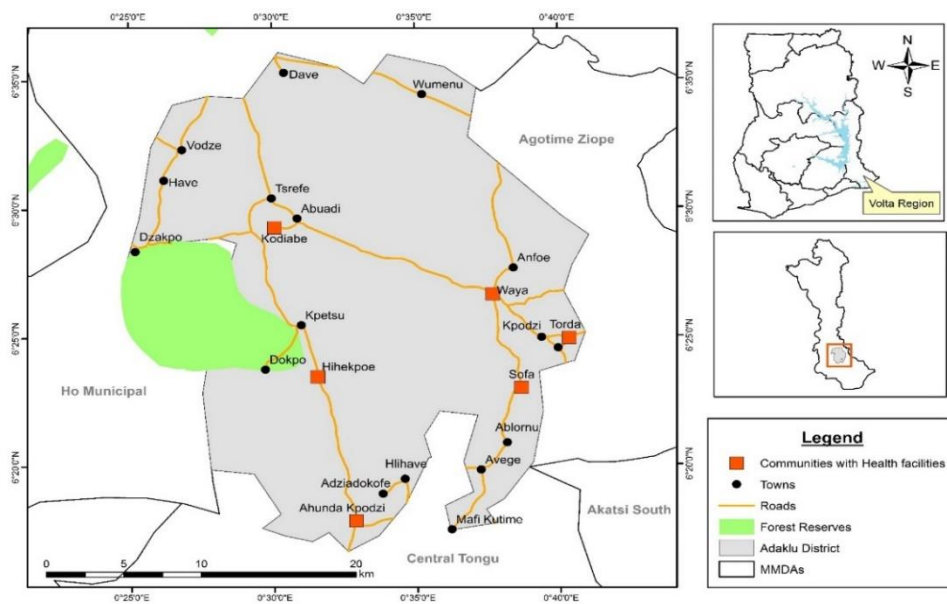


Figure 2: Map of the study Area

Source: Geographic Information System and Cartography Department, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast, 2018.

Research Design

Interpretive perspective or paradigms are basic set of beliefs that guide action (Guba, 1990). Interpretivism paradigm refers to the approaches which emphasize the meaningful nature of people’s character and participation in both social and cultural life (Elster, 2007; Walsham, 1995). It denotes the method of the philosophy which adopts the position that people’s knowledge of reality is

a social construction by human actors, and so it rules out the methods of natural science (Eliaeson, 2002). It has its roots in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology. Interpretivists look for meanings and motives behind people's actions like behaviour and interactions with others in the society and culture (Whitley, 1984).

To the interpretivist, cultures can be comprehended by studying people's ideas, thinking, and the meanings that are important to them (Boas, 1995). Bernstein (1983) commented that, interpretivist researchers always aimed at a correct understanding of what the objects of their interpretation said. The researcher employed this paradigm because it allows her to ascertain the role culture plays in these teenage mothers' lives.

The interpretivist school of thought holds qualitative research approach which can be explained as the mode of understanding meaningful relationships through interpretation of social knowledge and experience (Husley, 2011). Thus, qualitative research allows the respondents to share their views and experiences to expand theoretical and practical knowledge and suggest possible interventions (Hindly, Hinsliff & Thomson, 2006).

Furthermore, qualitative study allows the researcher to capture the meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and discover the meaning in a specific socio-cultural setting (Neuman, 2011). Qualitative research tradition proposes that the perspective of people is meaningful, knowable, and can be made explicit (Patton, 2002). It aims to provide an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories (Richie & Lewis, 2003).

Qualitative design was selected for this study because it allowed participants (Teenage mothers) to freely express their understanding of their experiences in their own terms (Patton, 2002). It also allowed the researcher to obtain genuine information on teenage mothers and explore the underlying social representations that emerged (Lewis & Richie, 2003). It also allowed the researcher to describe and understand human behavior, and analyze social representations rather than just explaining it (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Moreover, qualitative methodology brings rich and complex understanding of the meanings derived from the lived experiences of teenagers who have given birth on the belief that personal interviews would best capture how participants interpreted their experiences of adaptation strategies that they engaged in (Watson & Vogel, 2017).

The participants themselves shed light on the factors responsible for teenage motherhood. This made the researcher discover the inner life of the participants, or rather their unspoken everyday experiences to gain insights about the various events taking place in their lives. This process is known as phenomenological analysis hence the use of phenomenological research design.

Phenomenology, according to Miller (2003) 'is transforming lived experience into a textual reflection of its essence'. Phenomenological studies describe the common meaning of several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon. Phenomenological studies focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence (van Manen, 1990). Also, phenomenological research design is concerned with understanding social

and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved (Welman et al. 2005). It is to borrow other people's experiences in order to reflect on the meanings that may inhere in them (Van, 1990).

The researcher employed phenomenological design because the study focused on teenage mothers to get a deeper understanding of their adaptation strategies. This design will allow the researcher to step into the life or world of another person. Where insights, emotions, and understandings are evoked from mere words, and where to read these words is to see, touch, feel, hear, and smell these teenage mothers lived experience (Van, 1990).

Study Population

The study population constitutes the groups of persons, objects or institutions that define the objects of the investigation (Creswell, 2003). The study population was teenage mothers who were between the ages of 13 and 19, who have had a live birth, and were living in Adaklu District.

Opinion leaders or stakeholders such as Queen mothers, Health providers, Educationist, Religious leaders, NGOs, Assembly members at the District were also included as key informants because they played key roles in ensuring necessary support systems for the teenage mothers, through policies and programs they implement. Because Ghanaians live communally, our elders (who form part of opinion leaders) in the various communities have a role to play when it comes to upbringing of the teenager and the child.

For example, the Queen mothers educate the teenagers to take charge of their lives and resist male predators; Health providers have the duty of being in charge of the teenager's health, identifying teenage mothers and supporting them by monitoring their health. Educationists work harder for teenage mothers

in school to produce better results to justify the investment the nation is making into education; Religious leaders play a significant role in promoting understanding of sexuality as affirming or expressing mutual respect, care and love. These teenage mothers also see religious leaders as important social resources (Chase, 1990); NGOs build capacity among teenagers in areas like poverty eradication, adolescent reproductive health, gender inequality and discrimination (Francais et al., 2010) while Assembly members act as fathers and mothers who see the day to-day running of the teenage mother and her child. The examples mentioned above justify why these opinion leaders were included in this research.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The concept of saturation was used in selecting respondents for the study. Saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, Hanel & Motsinger-Reif, 2012), or when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained (Guest et al., 2006), and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). Again, data saturation is not about the numbers per se, but about the depth of the data (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012).

A large sample size does not guarantee that one will reach data saturation, nor does a small sample size rather, it is what constitutes the sample size (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012). What some do not recognize is that no new themes go hand-in-hand with no new data and no new coding (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). If you reached the point of no new data, then it is also most likely to reach the point of no new themes; therefore, one has reached data saturation.

With the concept of data saturation, researcher can conduct the research in a manner that will help attain data saturation (Francis et al., 2010) by collecting rich (quality) and thick (quantity) data (Dryburgh, 2002, 2011), although an appropriate study design should also be considered. One could choose a data collection methodology that has been used before (Porte, 2013) that demonstrated that data saturation had been reached.

Interview is one method by which one's study results can reach data saturation. Bernard (2012) stated that the number of interviews needed for a qualitative study to reach data saturation was a number he could not quantify, but that the researcher takes what he can get. Interview questions however, should be structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions, otherwise one would not be able to achieve data saturation as it would be a constantly moving target (Guest et al., 2006).

Recruitment of the teenage mothers for the study occurred at the community level. At the health facilities level, a nurse volunteer compiled a list of all teenage mothers who had visited the facility and were still in their teenage ages. From the list, mothers were traced who, in turn, through snowball sampling, helped locate other teenage mothers. This process was used at all the health facilities in the District namely: Adaklu-Helekpe H/C, Adaklu-Waya H/C, Sofa Clinic (CHAG), Ahunda H/C, Torda CHPS compound, Ahunda CHPS compound and Kordiabe CHPS compound. Also, a list of number of teenage mothers in the District was collected at the District Health Directorate with aids in tracing of the teenage mothers. It also gave us ideas about communities with higher teenage mother rates in the District.

Those who did not visit any of the Health facilities were reached by using the snowball sampling technique, which is often used in hidden populations that are difficult for researchers to access. The community recruitment was done through appropriate community gatekeepers or “mobilizers”. With their substantial local knowledge of the community, and based on the briefing of the researcher, the community mobilizers identified houses where potential study participants resided. To ensure that the study included teenage mothers who may not have attended health facilities, the facilitators specifically helped to identify such teenage mothers. The snowball approach was employed to expand the list of potential participants. The identified study participants were visited at home by the researcher and her research assistants. The home visits were done to help establish rapport and build confidence among parents, guardians, and the investigator. During the home visits, dates and venues for the in-depth interviews, photo voices and focus group discussions were discussed.

In all, thirty (30) teenage mothers were interviewed and one focus group discussion was conducted. Purposive sampling technique was used to select key informants from the District. The purposive sampling technique was deemed the appropriate means of getting respondents who were knowledgeable and well abreast with the subject matter of interest (Sarantakos, 1998). The following key informants were identified for the in-depth interviews: Opinion leaders (a Chief, a queen mother, 2 health providers, 3 educationists, 1 religious leader, 1 social worker, 1 girl child club patron and 4 assembly members, director at the district health directorate, quality and promotion officer at the district health directorate and Officer in charge of girl child at the district health directorate). In all

seventeen (17), key informants were interviewed. These key informants were selected and interviewed because they worked in the interest of the teenage mothers.

A group of seven (7) to ten (10) photo voice participants has been suggested as an ideal size (Wang 1999). Hence this study employed seven (7) teenagers to participate in the group or collective photo voices. Gathering of seven individuals was large enough to offer variety of experiences and ideas. It also allows enough time for each person to contribute in a meaningful way. Groups of this size was small enough so the members felt safe to share and take part in discussions. The group nurtured a sense of belonging and group commitment. A smaller group like this helped to ensure that individuals felt they were being listened to and responded to in a sensitive and respectful way (Wang 1999). Apart from the group photo voices, individual photo voices were also collected to complement the group photo voices. Every respondent was given an opportunity to create his or her own photo voice. This helped the teenage mothers to share their stories from different angles.

Data and Sources

Data for the study was from both primary and secondary sources. It is argued that using multiple methods of data collection reduced the peculiar biases of each one (Blaikie, 2000). Hence, narratives, in-depth interviews and photovoices formed the basis of primary data collection. Data collected from these sources were centered on the background characteristics of respondents, causes of teenage motherhood, how the teenage mothers envisage their whole situation, their assets and livelihood activities, their aspirations in the future and support systems available for them. Information on the role of stakeholders in

ensuring livelihood security for the teen mothers was collected through the field survey.

In the case of secondary sources, information from published and unpublished sources including journals, textbooks, periodicals, the internet as well as reports and official documents from the District Assembly and Non-Governmental Organizations were used to support the primary data.

Data Collection Methods

In line with the underlying philosophy guiding the study, the study employed four main data collection methods. Namely: Narrative, focus group discussion, photo voice and in-depth interview. These four primary sources of data collection methods were used because it is generally agreed that narrative guide, focus group discussion, interview guide and photo voice are appropriate means of primary data collection when information should come directly from 'people' and 'actors' who are actively involved and are aware of the problems under investigation (Patton, 2002).

Narrative

What causes teen motherhood rates within Adaklu district? How do teenage mothers envisage their own situation? What type of assets do these teenage mothers depend on? What livelihood activities do these teenage mothers indulge in? What supporting systems are available for teenage mothers? What strategies can be implemented to help these teenage mothers emerge as confident and successful young women? What do the teenage mothers aspire for? These are issues, which can be effectively answered by the teen mothers themselves.

It can be important for them to voice their own stories to bring alive their experiences, lifestyles and problems. Listening to the voice of the teen mother would allow proper understanding of their issues and the strategies they are involved in. Again, listening to the teens' stories drew the researcher into their world, their reality and their lives (Eggengerger, Grassley & Restrepo, 2006).

In order to get their experiences well, the researcher used verbal narratives to capture their experiences in relation to causes, assets they are depending on, livelihood activities, and supporting systems. Verbal narrative allowed the researcher to link sequential description of events or situations, illustrated with reports of spoken words or verbal exchanges, observations, evaluations, thoughts and feelings, that are drawn together in a sense-making which aims to achieve a particular communicative goal (Akella & Jordan, 2014).

Narratives are in-depth ways of gathering, analysing and interpreting the stories that people tell about their lives. During narrative data collection, ways of collecting information include interviews, diaries, photographs and letters (Marshall & Rossman 2011). While the term narrative can include a broad spectrum of definitions, my concern was with stories of experience. For the purposes of this research, stories are what Andrews, Sclater, Squire and Treacher (2004) refer to as external expressions of internal phenomena (events, thoughts and feelings).

It is important to clarify that I was interested in obtaining autobiographical narratives. Kirkman, Harrison, Hillier and Pyett (2001) suggest that autobiographical narratives are of interest in themselves. They are

not studied as factual accounts but as evidence of the way that people construct their life histories.

Stories, for Freeman (2000) act as a channel for circulating discourses. Furthermore, those who listen have no means of detaching ourselves from our own, culturally-based. Our means of understanding adjust ourselves by creating possible and appropriate interpretive contexts. Part of the interpretation we make calls for the listener to resist taking accounts at face value, suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) but instead to question, disagree, counter, interpret, and notice hidden agendas using every-day knowledge.

With the narratives, teenage mothers were asked to narrate their stories from factors that led to them becoming teenage mothers, how they see their situation, assets they are depending on, livelihood activities of these teenage mothers and then to support systems available to them. Allowing them to narrate their stories helped the researcher to understand what these teenage mothers are going through in order to survive with their children.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A focus group discussion was held for teenage mothers in the District. Focus group discussion is a qualitative technique for data collection. A focus group is a group comprised of individuals with certain characteristics who focus discussions on a given issue or topic (Gerritsen, 2011). The purpose of a focus group is to collect information about people's opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions to make decisions (Gerritsen, 2011)

A moderator's guide was developed to cover teenage mothers' issues from their individual levels to the community level. The discussion aimed at soliciting information on the study topic within a group environment. There

were seven participants in the group with two facilitators; one as the moderator and the other, as a note taker of responses from participants. In addition to the note taker, a digital voice recorder was used with the permission of the participants. The FGD was conducted to complement the responses of the main respondents in the narrative guides. The focus group discussion was conducted in Anfoe because that was the community that the research team had the opportunity to gather more teenage mothers.

This data collection method was employed because it provided a setting for the homogeneous group (teenage mothers) to reflect on the questions asked by the interviewer (Dilshad & Latif, 2013) and was also provided insights into how people think and provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied in a community (Baral, Uprety & Lamichane, 2016).

PhotoVoice

The Photovoice methodology was also employed. Photovoice is a participatory method that enables people to identify, represent and enhance their community life circumstances or engagement with a program through photography and accompanying written captions (Wang, Cash & Powerls, 2000). Photovoice involves giving a group of participant's cameras, enabling them to capture, discuss and share stories they find significant (Wang, Cash & Powerls, 2000). With photovoice, different stories are told, different photographs are captured and different outcomes are sought. The heart of photovoice is the intermingling of images and words (Hunter, 2005). Three main objectives of the photovoice methodology are: identifying and recording community strengths and struggles, explaining their experiences through

critical reflection and group dialogue, and informing decision makers and influence policy (Wang & Burris, 1997).

Photovoice is a comprehensive methodology because it places control of the research in the hands of study members from the beginning. It enables vulnerable and marginalized people to record and mirror their personal life experiences through photographs which generate discussion, and share knowledge about important issues (Wang, Cash & Power, 2000).

It has been used to involve and enable marginalized and disadvantaged individuals who are frequently left out of decision making processes. Photovoice is not a linear process; rather, it evolves through cycles of reflection, evaluation, and action (Freeman, 2004). VOICE is an acronym for Voicing Our Individual and Collective Experience. The focus is on what is important to community members and moves beyond traditional assessment by “inviting people to become advocates for their own and their community's wellbeing” (Wang & Burris, 1997).

The participants were trained to use phone cameras and storytelling to voice their experiences and concerns. In photo voice, the cameras are provided for people who are often marginalized in community social decision making, yet whose lives are greatly affected by those decisions made by stakeholders. The cameras encouraged recording of important issues and it led to discussions and reflections on the meanings of the images. The images and the accompanying stories developed through group dialogue assisted in sharing people's expertise for change (Kelly, Eldonna, Schwartz, Kuckleman, & Veal, 2006). Wang (1999) stressed that images can influence our definition of the situation regarding the social, cultural, and economic conditions that affect

women's health and for that matter their livelihoods and policies emerging from local expertise which will be more effective in developing appropriate and healthy public policy.

Pictures as evidence constitute an image at one point in time and are influenced by the observer's worldview. This worldview affects decisions on what is photographed and how. Harper (2003) wrote about the importance of making visual statements by knowing how the camera interprets social reality. This is more of a concern when outsiders take pictures of others in their context. With photo voice, participants as co-researchers investigate their own lives and ideally choose the form of public representation. What is left out of a photo shoot may be as important as what is included, but the choices of the participants are respected and they decide what is significant.

Although the power of documentary photography is well known as a way of bringing issues into public view, and an image is said to be worth a thousand words, presenting only photographs leaves the interpretation completely up to the viewer. Because photo voice combines both picture and story, there is less chance of misinterpretation, and the process allows the possibility of moving beyond awareness as participants become catalysts for social change, including healthier public policy.

A major strength is that the process enables people with no research background to become active partners in an inquiry. This could be considered a high level of social participation because that is not easily attained in everyday practice. Because lay people are involved, the findings are more likely understandable by a broad cross section of people and, therefore, have the

potential to reach a wider audience than more traditional forms of dissemination aimed at other professionals (Patterson, 2004).

Also, photo voice engages vulnerable and marginalized individuals in sharing their ideas, perceptions and life experiences (Israel, Schulz, Parker & Becker, 1998). The actions taken through photovoice, taking photographs and telling stories as they relate to the photographs, are empowering. With these feelings of empowerment, community members are likely to possess greater authority to advocate for an improved quality of life for themselves and for other members of their communities. Photovoice requires that community members take on multiple roles. As a photovoice participant, individuals share ideas and concerns about their experiences and their community (Hunter, 2005).

Again, photo voice methodology not only gives marginalized people a voice, it creates an opportunity to raise shared awareness of issues and challenges that they have experienced (Wang, 1999). Photo voice benefits research as it can be used to increase knowledge about building the capacity of participants by valuing their knowledge and experiences. This can ultimately promote and influence changes that will impact the people who have been involved in the process. The process is a credible and effective way for marginalized individuals to become advocates in their own lives and communities (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001).

Teenage mothers who participated in the photo voices learned more about the photo voice process, the risks and benefits of the method, the goals of the research and the benefits of the research to the teenage mothers. This was done before the respondents were given the phone camera to go home and create their pictures.

In-Depth Interview (IDI)

A key requirement for using IDIs is that questions posed to informants during the interview must address the research objectives (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The IDIs sought the opinion of respondents on the causes of teenage motherhood, assets teenage mothers depended on, the livelihood activities they were undertaking and supporting systems available for the teenage mothers. The interview guide for the IDIs was semi-structured format in line with Hockey, Robinson and Meah's (2005) assertion that semi-structured interviews are flexible, and they allow for the exploration of emerging themes and ideas.

Data Collection Instruments

The construction of the narrative guide, focus group discussions and photo voices was guided by the work of other researchers in the field, especially those connected with some of the studies on teenage mothers. The instrument sought the opinion of respondents on the factors affecting teenage mothers, assets that teenage mothers depend on, livelihood activities of the teenage mothers, support systems available to the teenage mothers and their aspirations. Background information of the respondents such as age, education, marital status, occupation, religious affiliation and household size was also taken into account.

Data Collection Procedures

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in the study communities were conducted between 27th March, 2018 and 30th April, 2018.

In-depth interviews (IDIs)

In-depth interviews were employed to source opinions from some key informants, including community opinion leaders like Queen mothers,

Educationists, Health providers, Assembly members and Religious leaders. Most of the data collections were done during the latter part of the mornings, with few of them in the afternoons. Interviews were conducted in various locations – community center, houses, or in an open (often under a tree), respondents’ offices. Responses were taped or audio recorded. Other observations, including facial expressions, and gestures, were written in a field notebook.

Respondents were interviewed on causes of teenage motherhood, assets teenage mothers depended on and supporting systems available to them. Interviews with teenage mothers and opinion leaders who were not fluent in either English or Akan languages were conducted by a Research Assistant in Ewe. The duration for the interviews lasted between a minimum of one hour and a maximum of 2 hours.

Focus group discussion (FGD)

One focus group discussion was conducted. The researcher was assisted by Research Assistants in which observations and field notes were taken in a notebook. Discussion was held at identified convenient locations within the community. Of course, Ewe Language was used for discussions which bothered the respondents’ experiences on adaptation strategies, assets, livelihood activities, and supporting systems available to them.

Photo Voices

Each participant was given a camera for taking photographs. During the days of photography, the teenage mothers learned more about how to capture the image they wanted, how to use photography as a form of self-expression and received encouragement to express meaning through photographs. The

participants were encouraged to use the camera to take pictures that would represent their experiences as teenage mothers (that is what it feels like to be a teenage mother at this age).

After taking their photographs, the participants met to share their pictures with each other (collective photographs) or the researchers (individual photos) and talked about what the photographs meant to them. The researchers guided the discussion and helped the participants to engage in critical analysis and reflection as a means of moving from personal experiences to understanding the collective implications. With their permission, discussions were being tape recorded. The recorded discussions were used as the basis for creating captions for each photograph. Each teenage mother selected which of her photographs and words she wanted to include in the research.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the investigator engaging in an interpretative relationship with the transcript. It is when one is attempting to capture and do justice to the meanings of the respondents. Thus to learn about their mental and social world, it must be obtained through a sustained engagement with the text and a process of interpretation (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The in-depth interviews and the Focus Group Discussions were transcribed.

The Qualitative Data Miner Software was used to code and analyse the data. Developing coding centered on the information from the interviews and the relevant literature consulted, in which causes, how teenage mothers represent themselves, assets and livelihood activities of the teenage mothers were considered (Table 1).

Table 1: Coding frame for the analysis

OBJECTIVES	CODING FRAME
Causes of teenage motherhood	Transactional sex, celebration of festivals and funerals, marriage system practiced, the fear of the curse and sleeping arrangements
Teenage mothers' assessment of motherhood status	Teenage motherhood as a stepping stone for greater heights, Teenage motherhood as challenging
Assets of the teenage mothers	Types of assets, how accessible are these assets, what teenage mothers use a particular asset for and the challenges associated when using any of the assets
Livelihood activities of the teenage mothers	The type of livelihood activities practiced, migration as a livelihood strategy and sustainable livelihoods
Support systems available	Type of support teenage mothers can access, form of support, institution that provides such kind of support, how these supports can be access by the teenage mothers
Aspirations of the teenage mothers	Teenage mothers who were hopeful, teenage mothers who were not hopeful

Source: Field Data, 2018

The participants' interviews that were transcribed and coded were analysed using content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis involves the systematic and objective reduction or simplification of recorded language to a set of categories or themes that not only identify similarities and differences in word data but also create a comprehensive word picture about the meaning or experience of an event (Fawcett & Garity, 2009). According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive because it can be conducted without disturbing the study's setting or participants.

Information were independently checked, reviewed, and analyzed. Because data for the present study were derived from qualitative data (DeVito, 2007), content analysis was a suitable approach. Furthermore, the technique generated significant themes that enhanced understanding of adaptation strategies of the teenage mothers.

Findings of the research were summarized after the identified coding. After that, the researcher identified and articulated relationships in order for the findings to answer the research questions. After that, the findings were related to those in other situations or other studies. This helped to put the findings in perspective. The categories of the analysis were established according to the teenage mothers' own approach to their experiences on their adaptation strategies. The aim here was to succeed in interpreting the data through the social construction of the experiences of participants in adapting to being a mother. In general, the idea was to gain a clear understanding of the

context of the situation, focusing on different situations, in order to move from the particular to the general, and to be able to contextualize the group of teenage mothers interviewed.

Content analysis was used because the data communicates message from the sender to the receiver (Marsh & White, 2003). For example, the photographs combined with the texts convey meanings which can be subjected to content analysis by looking at the relationships between images and the texts. Hence after sorting the pictures (backed with the voices), content analysis was also used to analyze the photo voices.

Field Challenges

The researcher did not understand the Ewe language which was largely spoken by most of the respondents. In view of that, the researcher employed two Research Assistants to help with the interviews especially if the respondent could not speak Twi or English.

Again, the data collection period coincided with Easter festive activities. Most of the communities in the District marked the Easter period with activities like mountain hiking, games, church activities and many more. In view of that, most of the respondents were in hurry to leave and participate in these activities. Scheduled interviews were rescheduled to cater for them. This extended our stay in the district for about a week.

Furthermore, some of the respondents were feeling very reluctant to share their experiences at the beginning of the study. This was because the teenage mothers were very emotional about their stories. Some of them cried throughout the interview. There were some interviews that were rescheduled because the research team could not control their sorrows. In addition, those

who were ready to share their stories too were disturbed by their babies. This situation stretched most of our scheduled interview times longer.

Ethical Issues

Various ethical issues were considered before, during and after data collection exercise. First, ethical clearance was sought from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast. This initial ethics approval was applied, with the intent and procedure for the study well explained. All necessary documents were provided to the board for their perusal in order to grant the permission to undertake the study.

At any first point of entry into a community, our intentions were communicated to an assembly member or a unit committee member (where assembly members are not available) of the community, who in turn introduced us to the chief of the community. We then told them our purpose of being in the community and then those (teenage mothers and opinion leaders) with knowledge and experience on the subject of discussion were consulted and purposively sampled or recruited for IDIs and photo voices.

On another level, it was ensured that participation was voluntary, and that respondents were given the option to withdraw at any time. Their confidentiality was also assured. All responses were anonymized before analysis, and a particular care was taken not to reveal any potential of identifying details of places, practices or even respondents.

CHAPTER FIVE

CAUSES OF TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD IN ADAKLU DISTRICT OF GHANA

Introduction

This chapter discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the causes of teenage motherhood. The chapter is presented under the following headings: socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, and causes of teenage motherhood (transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangement of the families in the district).

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Information was sought on some socio-demographic characteristics of respondents that had a bearing on the study. The socio-demographic variables covered in this study included age, level of education, ethnicity, religion and marital status.

From Table 2, the predominant ethnic group of the research participants (28 respondents out of the 30 respondents interviewed) were Ewes. The other two respondents were from Dagomba and Togo respectively. Also, almost all the respondents interviewed were Christians. It was only one person that was a Muslim. Furthermore, larger number of the respondents were aged 18 (10 out of 30 respondents) and 19 (13 out of 30).

Analysis of marital status is important in experiences of individuals because Moser (1998) argues that among other things, marriage (household relations) is an asset in the form of social capital. Thus, marital status had either a positive or negative influence on livelihood outcomes, as marital partners contribute to each other's welfare by helping to provide productive resources

that enhance livelihoods. It was therefore relevant to find out the marital status of respondents.

Table 2: Socio – demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity		
Ewe	28	93
Dagomba	1	0.3
Togolese	1	0.3
Religion		
Christian	29	96.6
Muslim	1	0.3
Marital status		
Never Married	24	80
Co-habitation	6	20
Age		
15	1	3.3
16	3	10
17	3	10
18	10	33.3
19	13	43.3
Educational level		
No formal education	1	3.33
Primary Level	20	66
Basic level/JHS	7	23.3
Secondary School	2	6.7
Number of children		
One child	25	83.3
Two children	4	13.3
Three children	1	3.3

Source: Field Data, 2018

From Table 3, none of the teenage mothers interviewed was married. It was just 6 out of the 30 respondents that were cohabiting during the time of the research while the rest were never married.

Table 3: Socio – demographic Characteristics of the Respondents who participated in the focus group discussion

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
Ethnicity		
Ewe	7	100
Age		
16	1	14.3%
17	1	14.3%
18	2	28.6%
19	3	42.9%
Educational level		
Primary	5	71.4%
JHS	1	14.3%
SHS	1	14.3%
Marital Status		
Never Married	5	71.4%
Co-habitation	2	28.6%
Number of children		
One	7	100%

Source: Field Data, 2018

Education plays a crucial role in every economy as well as in livelihood analysis. As a form of human capital, education contributes greatly to the

livelihood of people (Safo-Kantanka et. al, 2006). It was found that 20 out of 30 respondents had primary education, followed by 7 who had completed JHS while 2 had their Senior High Education and one had no formal education.

Causes of Teenage Motherhood

The major causes of teenage motherhood in the Adaklu district of Ghana were categorised into three main factors. These were transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangements.

Transactional Sex

Evidence from the field confirmed that transactional sex was one of the major factors promoting teenage motherhood in the District. Transactional sex in this regard means teenagers have sexual relationship with either older men or teenage males of their age in exchange for material support as a survival strategy. Perspectives on transactional sex differ because of the various triggers that lure the teenagers into that act. Also, perspectives may differ because of the man in question (the man can be of the same age with the teenager or it can also be an older man).

Triggers for Indulging in Transactional Sex

Within the District, transactional sex is driven by desperation to earn quick money for daily survival because of the economic hardship in which they find themselves. Economic hardship is due to low agricultural income characterised by inability to meet basic needs such as food, clothing and decent shelter. Other triggers for these transactional sex apart from economic hardships are lack of parental care, generational poverty, food insecurity and contribution towards family programme. These triggers push teenagers into more economic hardship and the nature of the District leaves them with few livelihood options

to choose from. Hence the easiest economic option is transactional sex. One of the teenage mothers interviewed explained this issue as:

If I need sanitary pad for my menses and my father or mother cannot provide, then I have to look for a way of providing them myself. Gone are the days when our parents were using rags but these days it is no longer there. There is something we call “pad” and you cannot go to a pad seller and clap to him or her and it will be given to you for free. I need to go with money but where do you expect me to get that money? I will by all means go and have sex with a man to get that money to buy the pad. My friends will laugh at me when I stain myself at school. Unfortunately, my first attempt to get money for pad got me pregnant [19-year-old teenage mother]

From the participants, other leading triggers of transactional sex is illustrated in the following quotes. The first illustration is the quest for basic needs such as food, shelter, etc

Life was difficult after giving birth to one. I was not doing any work but I had to take care of the child alone. Then this man said he will take care of the child for me and send me to learn a trade. I was very happy and I accepted his proposal”. But eventually I had sex with him and gave birth to another child [18- year old teenager]

Examples of payment of school fees as a trigger for transactional sex are:

When I was in school the boy helped me to pay my school fees. And he later told me that he wanted us to have sex, otherwise he won't give me the money anymore. He was supporting me in my education so I couldn't say no to him [17-year-old teenager]

In some cases, perhaps they have left you with someone to take care of you and the person too is unable to provide you with your needs. Meanwhile you are schooling and you need to buy books, pay school fees and all that. And so a man may meet you and tell you that he would provide everything for you and in the end he gets you pregnant [19-year-old, focused group discussion]

There are others who engage in transactional sex because there is no livelihood option apart from farming

Farming is tedious; we hate farming because we become tired even at the small thing we do at the farm. Because you did not go to farm, a guy sees you around and tells you that he will give you some amount of money so come and visit him. Since you don't have money and you need something urgently, you would go and he would do anything that pleases him with you. [FGD 17-year-old girl]

Apart from the teenage mothers, some of the opinion leaders corroborated the reasons the teenage mothers gave for engaging in transactional sex. An opinion leader explained:

“Mainly men help teenagers and take advantage of them and in the long run they end up having sex with them which will result in the teenage motherhood [A-35-year-old opinion leader].

Factors that determine the mode of Transactional Sex

There were different factors in the mode of sexual transactions between the teenager and their client. These factors included the community the teenager is coming from, who the teenage mother was staying with before becoming a mother and the feeling of having sex.

Community the Teenager is Staying

Teenage mothers interviewed around communities in the District that are closer to the Regional capital (communities like Helepke, Wumenu, trefe, and Ahunda) are into transactional sex with older men who can cater for them by giving them money or other support. Most of the men were working and they could provide school fees, food security and even a place for them to lay their heads when life became very tough. Meanwhile teenage mothers in the remote areas like (Waya, Anfoe, Kpatove, torda) were into transactional sex with men who were at the same age with them.

The interesting aspect of this transaction sex is that, most of the males the teenage girls entered into agreement with are of the same age with them and they do not have any source of employment. They feed on their parents and are still students at either primary, junior high school, senior high school, motor rider or drop out from school. They do not have money to feed themselves than left alone feed their so called “fiancée” or teenage girls. So the men will just give them some small amount of money at the beginning of the relationship and they do not even know where the man had that money from. This difference in

men that teenage mothers enter into transaction with made life tougher for those in the remote villages than those closer to the Regional Capital, Ho. One of the teenage mothers from the interior narrated her story as:

He was in JHS Two and I was in JHS One. I was staying with my grandmother and even food to eat was difficult for me. My grandmother did not care about me. I met Kofi and he promised to help me cater for myself. He gave me 10 Ghana Cedis on that day and that was all. He will always tell me that he is a student like me so he will give me more money when he gets money. But unfortunately I got pregnant after some months and things are even tougher than before [a-16-year-old teenage mother].

Teenagers Staying with People other than their Parents

The other perspective was that teenagers staying with people other than their parents were more likely to indulge in transactional sex than teenagers staying with their real parents. Most of the teenage mothers interviewed used to stay with a relative (aunty, uncle or grandmother) while others too were staying with people as house helps before they got pregnant. They used to stay either outside or within the district with these relatives. But these relatives of the teenage mothers sent them back to their parents after they got pregnant at where they were staying (either outside or within).

Some parents at Adaklu ask their children to stay with other family members or people because of large family size, economic hardship and the practice of the extended family system (Where a child belongs to the whole family but not just the nuclear family). Parents send these children in order to

ease pressure on them to supply the needs of their children but the teenagers come back with a lot of problems like getting pregnant. One opinion leader said:

For us Ewes, we practice extended family system. Your uncle is supposed to take care of you. Mostly their uncles at the city come to pick them to go and continue their education or learn a trade. But in one way or another, they come back with pregnancy and they tell us a lot of bad things about their uncles. But the truth is most of them who are sent to stay with their uncles come back successful [A-55-year-old opinion leader].

Feeling for Sex

On the other hand, while transactional sex is mostly triggered by request for daily bread or materialistic things, there were few who involved in transactional sex for the enjoyment of sex. That is the mutual feeling for one another. These were the teenage mothers who had everything at their disposal (thus their guardians made sure that they did not lack material things and food) but they saw sex to be a need that has to be satisfied and they cannot live without it. It was like a habit that they had built over a longer period of time. One teenage mother told her story as:

I am a mother because I enjoy sex. Yes [she giggled] what are women made for? We were made to enjoy the penis of man. Yes, that's why we were made [all laughs]. We were also born because of the same penis [17-year-old teenage mother]

One of the Stakeholders interviewed narrated his personal experience as:

My own observation tells me that some of children are very sensitive in terms of sex. I have that teenage motherhood problem in my house, so I can cite myself as an example. In fact, I tried to take very good care of my children because once they are brought into this world; you have to care for them, advise them, carry them till you find out they secure a good job. My youngest child, particularly was very brilliant when she was in primary school, and I imagined a brighter future for her but she became a teenage mother. I can't say she became a mother because of lack of parental responsibility because we did whatever possible for her but she still sneaked out of the house. In fact, it was a very amazing situation because sometimes I had to whip her to an extent that I might be even committing crime; I tried to stop her but finally she got pregnant at the age of 14. She told friends that she really enjoys having sex with the so called "boyfriend" [A-55-year-old opinion leader].

Cultural factors

Furthermore, culture plays a significant role in promoting teenage motherhood in the District. Cultural issues such as type of marriage system practised in the District, funerals and festivals celebrations and the fear of a curse emerged.

Marriage System Practised

One other cultural norm was the type of marriage arrangement practised in the area. Most men can stay with a woman as husband and wife without paying their bride price (that is men and women could easily cohabit).

Teenagers tend to imitate this habit by staying with their “lovers” or “so called boyfriends” and this is perceived as a norm in the district. Males tend to impregnate girls that they are interested in and because of the cultural norm described above, automatically the girl will or can become their wife forever. This is what one teacher said:

Concerning marriage, I have only witness very few marriage ceremonies since I came here. This is because there is a type of relationship in Ewe we call “kpekpla” and it really means that you meet the man somewhere, you get together, you do your thing (that is have sex) and a child comes out. So hardly will you see this legal bonding where two people agree to get to married. I think I have encountered only three or four in five years. Secondly, when you go to the churches, you see these adults who happen to be women and parents who are not legally married but they are living with men who just impregnated them when they were still in their teen ages and some way somehow they turn out to live with the man as if they are married [A 31-year-old opinion leader]

Another opinion leader tried to explain why women stay with men under the same roof even when their bride prices have not been paid:

Yes, once you have a child with one man, under no circumstance can you go to any other man to have sex with or flirt with. At times, elders in the town will come together and make the man aware that because you and their daughter have a baby, you have to stay with her and take good care of her. In

case anything happens to her, the whole community will hold you responsible (A-60-year-old opinion leader).

Another opinion leader provided a different perspective on the same issue as:

In truth, a man is supposed to marry you before you get pregnant for him but children of today have lost values, they get involved in sex at an early age, and they become the man's wife automatically. With us, there is no taboo in the community that you cannot stay with a woman because you have not paid her bride price. We do not follow any strict pattern or any taboo like that. Sometimes the men who get them pregnant are willing to pay the girl's bride price but money to buy the necessary items becomes a problem for both of them [A-70-year-old queen mother].

Celebrations of Funerals and Festivals

In addition to the marriage arrangement practised, culturally, celebrations like funerals were not left out of the factors promoting teenage motherhood in the area. The introduction of “sound systems” that plays contemporary music like hip life, dancehall and reggae music at funeral grounds have led to increase in teenage motherhood in the area. These contemporary music attracts teenagers (both male and females) to the funeral grounds especially during wake keeping or vigil burial service. Most of the time, when organising funerals in the area, the community organises vigil nights, a place where the whole community mourns with the deceased family till day break. In order for the community members not to dose off, contemporary music is played

throughout the night to the next morning. Adults become tired and may go home at dawn and the whole funeral grounds are left for these teenagers. Some of the teenagers use these vigil nights as an excuse to get away from home and visit their sexual partners. Other teenagers just look for darker places around the funeral grounds and have sex with their partners who also came for the wake keeping. Because of this act, teenage pregnancy increases after funeral celebrations in the community. This cultural cause of teenage motherhood stems from different angles and some of the different perspectives have been narrated by the teenage mothers. They shared their perspectives of their experiences as:

My boyfriend and I met at funeral wake-keeping and we had sex that same night [18-Year-old teenage mother]

There was a funeral at town, and I spent three days at the funeral and after I returned home, I realised I was pregnant. I sneaked out to my boyfriend's room and had sex during the funeral celebration. I was sleeping at the man's (cohabiting now) place throughout the funeral celebration. My parents were not aware, they thought I was at the funeral grounds [16-year old teenage mother]

During funerals, as you participate in any of the activities, a man can see you and tell you to come and see him afterwards. And when you go he will offer you whatever you need from a man, since you don't have anybody supporting you, you give in to it and it brings about teenage motherhood [17-year-old teenage mother -Focused group discussion]

Teenagers like us will always want to go because there is good music over there. We go there to dance and “choked” (Stay at a dark place where we will not be found to have sex) around in the night [19-year-old teenage mother, focused group discussion]

The researcher wanted to know why celebration of funerals which has always been in existence is now causing more harm to the youth than before. In view of that, one of the assemblymen interviewed took time to explain the whole situation as:

Although funeral is a cultural thing that we have performed several times in the olden days, it was not leading to teenage motherhood. I may say we have shifted from the cultural aspect that we normally do. The use of “borborbo” (traditional dance ensemble of the Ewes) and all those things have become archaic things now. We are using Azonto dances (Modern dances and songs) and some other ones to do our funeral celebrations. When kids listen to this type of music they glue themselves to the music until the next morning. And you know after 12 to 1am, most of the parents might have left the funeral grounds to their various homes but forgetting to take their kids as well as any other person that they took to the place to their homes. So the kids are left to themselves and then they begin to do their own thing (having sex) which in turn will lead into pregnancies and motherhood [50-year-assemblymen]

Funeral as a factor promoting teenage motherhood was not peculiar to only teenagers in the remote areas: Communities closer to the regional capital also had this factor as a cause of teenage motherhood.

The cultural celebrations were not limited to funerals alone but festivals were also promoting teenage motherhood in the district. The district has rich festivals which they term as homecoming. But every community in the district has their own name for this homecoming festivals. These festivals have come to stay with the communities and they celebrate them yearly. One opinion leader described their community festival as:

Another is our festival, that is Denonyo festival. The aim of that festival is to develop the community. So after every two years, arrangement will be made for people outside the community (both non- residential and residential) to come together and celebrate that in November [A-55-year old chief]

Natives of the district who do not live within the district come and celebrate with their people. The aim of the festival is to encourage development in their respective communities. Natives outside come as role models and they are there to encourage the younger ones to follow their paths. Most of the natives outside the district invite their friends to witness the celebration which is often interesting because of the various activities.

Some of the activities are musical nights, games, hiking on the mountains (as the district was characterised with a lot of mountains), educational shows and many more. Some of the men who grace the occasion come along with bigger cars and money which they use to lure some of the teenagers to have unprotected sex with them. Because the teenagers do not even

know much about these men, their whereabouts and others, they are not able to trace the men who impregnated them. Hence the child becomes their responsibility. Some of the opinion leaders explained it from different perspectives, as illustrated in the following quotes:

Nature is so wonderful [With a lot of laughter] you see the more they are trying to caution the young girls in terms of these celebrations, it also leads to teenage motherhood. You see a lot of young boys come for the festival and men and women get attracted to each other. Before they realized, they have had sex then what we are trying to control gets out of hand [A-52-year-old chief]

When visitors come around, sometimes even somebody who has borrowed somebody's car and brings to the celebration, just imagine the way people (especially young girls) feel when they see luxurious cars. They feel there is enough money so instantly the teenage girls get into relationships with these people with cars. They will not protect themselves and even before they realize that they are pregnant, they will not be able to trace the one responsible because it is just one-night stand [A-70-year-old queenmother]

The assertion that festivals cause teenage motherhood in the District was confirmed by some of the teenage mothers as they narrated their experiences as:

We met during a festival in the town in 2017 and we had sex and I got pregnant. I tried calling his number but it did not go through. The friend who introduced me to him too tried

calling him but it did not go through [A 16-year-old teenage mother])

For instance, during festivals if you are dancing and there is a guy around watching you, he would be admiring how you shake your buttocks. So he would approach you and tell you he wants to meet you in the evening. And if you go then both of us will have sex and we get pregnant [16-year old teenage mother, focused group discussion].

The fear of a Curse

Interestingly, another cultural factor that was causing teenage motherhood was the curse on aborting a child. Historically, around 1980's, it was forbidden for any woman to commit abortion in the district. Anyone that tried causing abortion died or had some complications and they believed that it was a punishment from their ancestors. The curse came about because women in the District were having indiscriminate abortion around 1970's which was leading to collapse of their communities since the population was declining. In view of this, community leaders in the District met and in one of their meetings with the community members, libation was poured and pronouncements were made that anyone who committed abortion would face consequences or wrath from the gods they serve. One community leader explained it as:

Around 1980 or there about, the whole community gathered that they wanted to stop abortion and you know abortion is mostly common among teenagers. This was because when teenagers become pregnant, and they do not want their parents to see, they will abort the pregnancy. In view of that, the

whole community gathered then they pleaded and poured libation that anybody who caused abortion should bear a lot of consequences associated with that abortion. They did this in trying to stop abortion especially relating to teenage pregnancy. Because at those times the teenagers were like doctors, they were causing abortion rampantly. Whether the libation worked or not, I cannot tell. But because of that, most of the girls feared to abort their children. The only option for them is to give birth. [A-52-year-old chief]

Our culture varies from community to community and tribe to tribe. In our community here, at a point, tradition was championing teenage pregnancy, but our parents were educated on it and they refrained from it quickly. The reason being that girls who were even married were committing abortion without their husbands' knowledge. In order to stop that, the community came together and prayed traditionally that anyone that commits abortion should incur the wrath of the gods. Those who attempted to abort their pregnancy passed on. I can remember about 2-3 women who died but they were not too young anyway. They were adults, but it begun to affect younger ones who fell victims. [56-year old assembly man]

Although Christianity is on a rise and has wiped away traditional beliefs in the area, having an abortion was never an option to any of the teenage mothers I met during the study because they have this fear that they will die when they try aborting their babies. They explained this by stating a lot of instances from

their friends who aborted their pregnancies and the consequences they faced. It was not just abortion the teenagers were afraid of but even the use of contraceptives was also considered as abortion too. Some of the teenage mothers narrated that:

I got pregnant and I told the boy and he said we should abort and I said I don't want to abort the baby because in my family anyone who tried aborting their babies died or they destroyed their wombs. I told him point blank that I will not abort the baby because nine months was just around the corner [A-17-Year-old teenage mother].

When I got pregnant, we decided to abort the pregnancy and my boyfriend decided to buy the medicine or we will go to Ho and abort it. Few days later, he came back and told me that in their family they don't commit abortion and I also told him that my grandmother said the same. So we decided not to abort the pregnancy because we did not want to die. [18-year old teenage mother].

When my sister got pregnant, she decided to abort the pregnancy. My grandmother told her to give birth but she said no, so she aborted the baby but because she did not listen, she had a lot of complications and she nearly died. Now she has never been able to give birth again. From that time on I feared that if you get pregnant and try to abort you will die [A-17-Year-old teenage mother].

Subsequently, another libation was poured to revoke the pronouncement after the community leaders saw an increased in teenage motherhood in the area and the consequences people faced when they tried to abort pregnancies or use contraceptives. This was what one chief said:

The whole community... you see the Ahoda is two communities; Ahoda Kpodzi and the other one is Ahoda Boso, so these two communities operate under one traditional divisional chief (who is Togbe Kekeli Dzokoto) and tradition over here. The two communities came together at the church premises, which was our meeting ground to discuss the issue of taboos and abortion and how to abolish it. In fact, the two communities decided to revoke the curse about abortions. In view of that, libations were poured (bottles of drinks) to the gods and the gong-gong was beaten to seal the revoke. [56-Year-old assemblyman]

One other disagreement in the community was whether the people who died when committing abortion after revoking the curse was or will still be attributed to the gods. Some of them believe that the revoke of the curse was not done properly while others think the people who commit abortion die because of their own negligence. This has led most of the community members in a dilemma. This was what some opinion leaders expressed when they were asked about their view on whether it was teenagers' negligence that kill them during abortion or it was still a curse to commit abortion. A 56-year-old assembly man said:

Somewhere along the line, opinion leaders in the district came together to revoke the curse. Thus, those attending school and even European council came in. With that they quickly counselled the whole community and the curse was revoked. This was about 20 years ago; we cannot attribute people who died when committing abortion in this community to the curse again [56-year-old assembly man].

Another opinion leader also expressed her idea as:

Well some people die when they commit abortion. They can die but I will not attribute it to the curse. There are so many ways to abort pregnancy, if you do channel it through the proper way like visiting the hospital, I think you can come out successfully, but if you want to do it by your own way, the cheapest way, maybe you can fall victim and die; then it could be to your own negligence [70-year old opinion leader].

Sleeping Arrangements

Another revealing cause of teenage motherhood was sleeping arrangements which was agreed on by both opinion leaders and the teenage mothers. Sleeping arrangement means that teenagers were left to sleep at other places than their caretakers' homes. Another reason is because of the nature of their rooms and sleeping patterns with their caregivers, teenagers tend to see their parents having sex and in turn practice it. There were variations in sleeping arrangements as a cause of teenage motherhood. These are: parents pushing their wards to sleep with other family because of inadequate space and children seeing parents having sex because they sleep in the same room.

Parents Pushing Children away because of Sleeping Space

Due to large household size and poverty in the district, some of the teenagers are sent away to sleep with other friends or families at night. Mothers do not follow up and see what happens to the teenage girl at that new sleeping space. Some men at the new sleeping space lure these teenage mothers into having unprotected sex with them which leads to teenage pregnancy. Some of the teenage mothers narrated their experience as follows:

Sometimes, the room is not enough for all of us and they can ask you to go and sleep with somebody in another room. So if the person is a man, he can force you to have sex with him and you also end up doing it. [19-year-old teenage mother, focused group discussion]

One other cause of teenage motherhood is sleeping arrangement in the house. Some teenage girls sleep in the same room with their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. When the teenagers and the children are out with their boyfriends, sometimes it becomes the joy of their parents that they are out there because they too they can have their privacy [A 40-year-old nurse]

Teenagers Seeing What Parents do and Tend to Practise it

In addition to sleeping outside family house by the teenagers, some of the teenagers tend to see their parents having sex and in return they also start practising it with other males outside. One of the teachers interviewed gave a scenario like this:

Look at these little ones playing over there, as little as they are, they tend to imitate what they see, how much more teenagers who can hear moans of their parents when having sex. There was a day when they closed, and I don't know if they were waiting for their parents and a young girl and a boy passed this side. I was wondering so decided to check on them at the back of the school building. Just about getting there, I saw that the young man was "fingering" the young girl, so I shouted at them. Hurriedly the young man shouted aahhh and when I asked them what they are doing she said I am showing her what my mother and father always do when they think we are asleep. [A-29- year-old- teacher]

Again, a nurse also added that:

And then another is all children sleeping with their parents in one room because you would think that they are asleep, but they are not asleep. The following day, they would also go out and experiment. So they practise what they see and what they hear. [36-year old woman-opinion leader].

Discussion

From the findings discussed above, the major cause of teenage motherhood in the Adaklu District of Ghana was transactional sex which was pushed by economic hardship with the triggers being quest for daily bread and material things. The teenage mothers were from very poor economic background and in trying to fend for themselves, they engaged in all forms of transactional sex. This finding corresponds to a study done by Luke and Kurz

(2002), which confirmed transactional sex as a major cause of teenage motherhood. To them, transactional sex was motivated by financial rewards ranging from economic survival to desire for status and possessions. Teenage mothers engaged in transactional sex to meet their basic needs. Similarly, in Ghana, a qualitative study about causes of teenage motherhood in Accra found that teenagers became mothers as a result of transactional sex in order to meet their basic needs (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013). Another study also confirmed that transactional sex, is the major cause of teenage motherhood. The finding indicated that teenage mothers exchange sex for food with either older men or younger men (Bantebya, Ochen, Pereznieta, & Walker 2014).

The findings suggest a link between culture and occurrence of teenage motherhood. As the research participants participated in some of the cultural celebrations such as funerals and festivals, it led to teenage pregnancy and motherhood. This finding corresponds to findings by Akella and Jordan (2014) that some cultural factors cause teenage motherhood.

One other culture norm was the type of marriage arrangement practise in the area. Most men can stay with a woman as husband and wife without paying their bride price. Teenagers tend to imitate this habit by staying with their “lovers” or “so called boyfriends” and this is perceived as a norm in the community. This is in line with Brofenbrenner (1979) ecological framework. According to him, the innermost system, microsystem, which is the immediate environment directly affects an individual. This system involves daily activities, roles, and relationships that encompass one’s family, friends, school or where one is involved face to face. For the teenage mothers, their caregivers have effect on how they view themselves and their situation in a given environment.

Hence the teenagers in Adaklu tend to imitate what was been practised in their environment.

In line with the conceptual framework, there are some risk factors that cause teenage motherhood and these risks factors go on to make them vulnerable. From the present study, these causes of teenage motherhood (transactional sex, cultural causes and sleeping arrangement) are the risk factors that led the teenager in becoming a teenage mother hence making the teenage mothers vulnerable.

CHAPTER SIX

TEENAGE MOTHERS' ASSESSMENT OF MOTHERHOOD STATUS

Introduction

In this chapter, teenage mothers describe how they visualise their situation as teenage mothers. The major themes that emerged were teenage mothers who saw the whole experience as a stepping stone for greater heights and those who saw the situation as cumbersome and would not be able to adapt.

Teenage Motherhood as a Stepping Stone for Greater Height

The research found that the respondents (teenage mothers) have different views about themselves as they experience motherhood. Some saw motherhood as very challenging but a stepping stone for greater opportunities. It was a stepping stone for greater heights because it led to change in positive behavior since they have another child to cater for or something that has changed their miserable lives to good lives. That is, many have different circumstances from which their lives evolve.

Generally, majority of the teenage mothers saw the whole experience to be challenging but one thing about these teenage mothers was that, they were not ready to be consumed by their situation. Most of them looked at their experiences as something that could be changed. They were sure that things would be better for them when they strategized well with the little resources available to them. Pictures such as a tree by the river side, maize, car and mango tree were used to express how they visualized themselves. Most of the pictures they took were from their environment, which they thought could relate to their world. They chose objects from their environment because they understood the symbolic of such objects in their day to day activities. Moreover, the

environment dictates most of the things they do. Teenage mothers recognized that their situation was cumbrous, but they knew that when they put good strategies in place, they would make it in life. For instance, in the collective photo voices, teenage mothers who used a tree by the riverside (Figure 3) visualized their experiences and had this say:

We chose a tree by the river side because such trees would never shed off and their leaves are evergreen. Whether during rainy or dry season, they always look fresh. For us, we have a baby now but we want to go back to school so we can become like a tree planted by the river that would never shed off. And so if we get someone to take care of us, we can become great people in the community [Collective photo voices].



Figure 3: Tree by the river side

Source: Prisca, 2018

For this group of teenage mothers, motherhood had not and would not tear them apart. They were strong, determined and were strategizing about their lives. Though they were mothers at that early age, they were at least not bothered about their circumstances but were sure that they would still make it and the world would be proud of them. Apart from the collective photo voices, other teenage mothers interviewed also admitted to the fact that being teenage mothers had not been all bad but they had something to rejoice about. This was what one teenage mother said:

When I got pregnant, I thought I was going to die. I did not die, but I learned to strategize my life and how to cater for my baby. I started farming and petty trading. I am fine and now I can provide food for myself and my baby. Little by little, things are getting better [19-year-old teenage mother].

Similarly, some teenage mothers also chose a mango tree to visualize their whole situation of being teenage mothers (see Figure 4).

We chose to relate the mango tree to our life because the mango tree cannot bear fruits if the weather is dry; it can only bear fruits during the rainy season. So it's the rain that enables it to bear enough fruit. Today, might not be our rainy season and people make fun of us and we become laughable, just as a drought does to the mango tree. Maybe tomorrow as the rain revived the mango tree to bear good fruit, rain would fall on us too so we can become useful [Collective photo voice].

For this group, motherhood has taught them so many lessons. They had been stigmatized and had become laughing stocks in their community but life still went on. They were never worried because they anticipated better times. During the individual interviews, some of the teenage mothers shared their experiences of being stigmatized as:

From the period I got pregnant till few months after giving birth, I did not know what was wrong with my grandmother. She could laugh at me from morning till we go to bed. She did not have any genuine reason why she was doing that [19-year-old teenage mother]

I hardly go out nowadays because people gossip about me. The most painful of them all is that they tell me in my face that I am useless [15-year-old teenage mother]



Figure 4: A picture of a mango tree
Source: Prisca, 2018

Likewise, others used a picture of maize plant (see Figure 5) to explain their experiences as teenage mothers. For them, now they may be seen as rotten children who may not be of any help to their families. Like how the maize (seed) rots before it germinates, that is how their life would be. From this category, they are adapting to the situation and will come out successful. This is how they explained their photo:

Eiiii! For every maize seed you sow, it rots before shooting up (germinates), and when it germinates it then produces another fruit of maize. And so for the maize seed, it is always expected to do well when planted. Although some of us have dropped out of school as teenagers, our expectation is that we would shoot up again when we are able to go back to school.

[collective photo voices]



Figure 5: Picture of a maize plant

Source: Prisca, 2018

Since this category of people were determined to make it in life, most of them had the right adaptation measures that would help achieve their expected successes. These adaptation strategies will be discussed in the next chapter.

Another group of teenage mothers indicated that motherhood had been an impetus of positive change in their lives. For them, before they gave birth, they were hungry, financially not sound and almost all the time in pain because there was no one they could run to for help. This category of respondents used a picture of a white sheet (See Figure 6) to make us understand how they envisaged the whole teenage motherhood experiences. This is how they explained their picture:

Yeah!! We would say that in the past, we were in a mess (life was dirty) but now we find ourselves at a better place and so we are clean now [Collective photo voice].

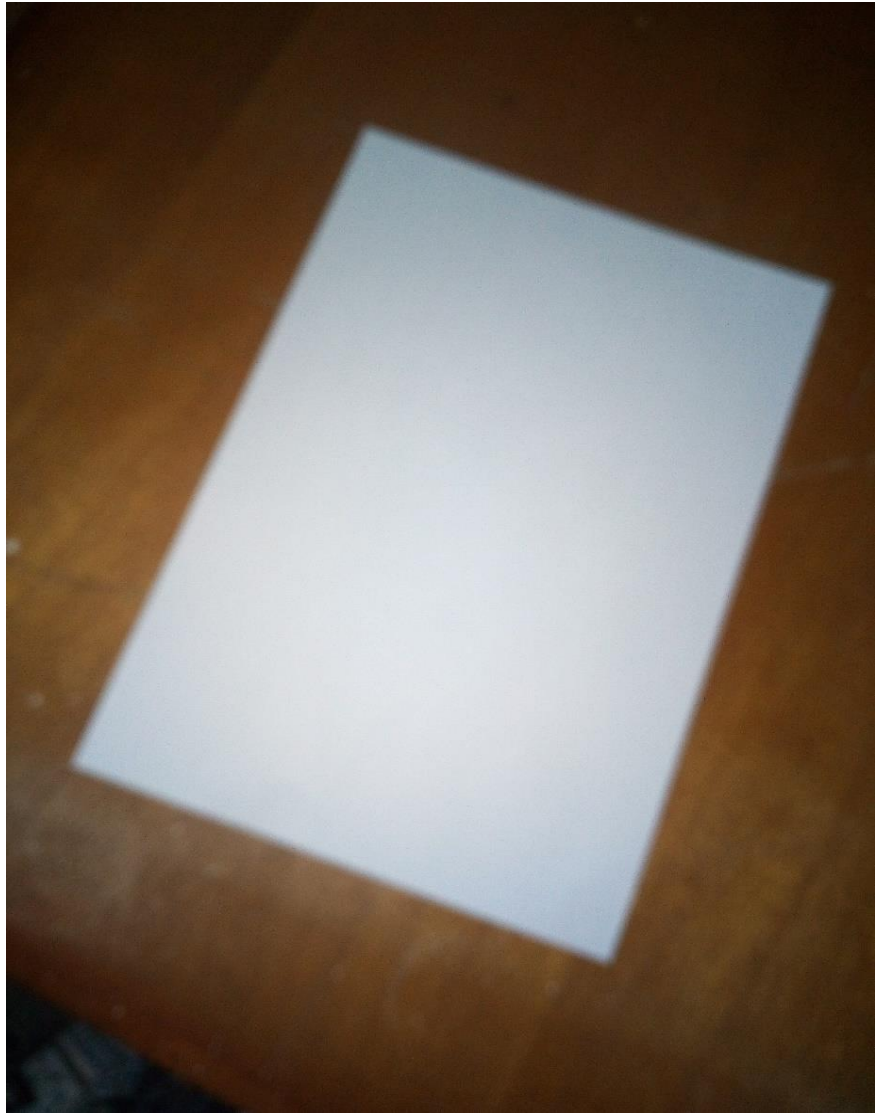


Figure 6: Picture of white sheet

Source: Field data, 2018

This group of teenage mothers were the group who had their baby fathers and family members helping them to take care of themselves and their children. Most baby fathers were with them in all situations and were sending them money every month for their upkeep. At the beginning, their parents did not really respect them but the tables turned when the fathers of their children took up the responsibility of caring even to the benefit of the whole family. This was also confirmed by some teenage mothers interviewed individually. This is what they said:

I was indulging in promiscuous behaviors. But the moment I pushed this child out of my womb, it came with some change in attitude and behavior. At times, it even surprises my grandmother, she never knew that I could be calm and concentrate on my studies [19-year-old teenage mother].

Teenage Motherhood as Challenging

Although some of the teenage mothers saw the situation to be challenging, they were positive about their outcome. There was another group who felt their experiences were very negative and hopeless. To them, they were already consumed in the whole teenage mother's experience. Life has been very challenging as they could not find food to eat and even a place to lay their heads. There were some who thought ending their life one day might even be the best solution. Some of their stories are shared below:

Life has been very difficult for my daughter and I. What to eat is even a problem. Madam, I did not even have a sleeping place. It was my cousin who had pity on me and made me share his room with him. At times I feel like killing myself [16-year old teenage mother]

As am talking to you now, I have not eaten throughout the day. There is no food for me. This boy too has been breastfeeding every minute. I am suffering [18-year-old teenage mother.]

Apart from the individual interviews with the teenage mothers, a group used red cloth (see Figure 7) to explain their situation, as the following excerpt illustrates:

Hmmmm, when we were growing up, we were really “wild” and not respectful. We gave birth in that situation. We are calm now but nobody believes in us. We are left alone by family to fend for ourselves. Our parents are alive but we live our lives like they are no more. Red signifies how we have cried for our eyes to be red. Red signifies that we are in danger. Red signifies that we are helpless. Madam, we are stranded in life. We don’t have anyone to help us. [17-year-old teenage mother]

This group of teenagers were mostly the group who were into drugs, promiscuous behaviors and were very disrespectful when growing up in the community. Although some of them have quit their bad behavior, people still do not believe in them and they are left alone to fend for themselves. This has made the experiences of teenage motherhood more challenging for this group of teenage mothers.



Figure 7: Picture of a red cloth

Source: Prisca, 2018

Discussion

Firstly, the research highlighted that teenage mothers in the District had different experiences. While some of the respondents saw motherhood as challenging, some saw it as a stepping stone to achieve greater heights. Others also believed it had changed their lives for the better.

Similar finding was highlighted by Yardley (2007), that teenage mothers have different experiences about their situations and that teenage mothers' lives evolve around three main themes such as: whether the feeling was positive, negative or have taught them lessons to work positively towards their future. Both Yardley (2007) and Dlamini (2016) cautioned researchers to take into account the different diversity of teenage mothers and their associated experiences. They continued that, every teenage mother has her own version of how the situation has affected their lives.

The first group of teenage mothers were those who saw their experiences to be difficult but focused that things would be better for them. They are evergreen and they will continue to thrive for better things in life. This research was in line with the resiliency theory and framework used by the researcher, as teenage mothers are ready to bounce back, cope and adapt to the situation for betterment of their lives. They did not feel vulnerable about their situations but were ready to fight and make it in life. Issues of perseverance, motivation, hard work were the order of the day (Manyena et.al 2011 & 2018;). Also, this finding confirms a study that concluded that teenage mothers were realistic about their future, often making places to develop themselves in their present situations and in their future (Seamark & Lings, 2004)

Positive experience of being a teenage mother has not been the norm but some teenage mothers saw giving birth as a turning point in their lives. Some of the teenage mothers interviewed admitted that motherhood has been a stepping stone for greater things in life. Others also said that motherhood has led to change in behaviour from bad to good. Similar research indicated that teenage motherhood was the catalyst for positive change as they shared stories of growing up, becoming more independent and responsible after becoming mothers (Brand, Morrison & Down, 2015).

Likewise, other researches also indicated that teenage motherhood marks the beginning of important phase in their lives, one marked by responsible behaviour, care, love and courage (Dlamini, 2016). Similarly, Hanna (2001) highlighted that some teenage mothers find fulfilment in having a child.

Most of the teenage mothers having positive experience in one way or another have the support of their families especially the support of their baby fathers. The baby fathers were with them throughout their experiences as teenage mothers. On the contrary, Gill (1991) revealed that some baby fathers have been tagged as irresponsible fathers to both their babies and their child mothers (Gliman, 2004). Though a larger number of baby fathers in this research were not responsible, (see chapter nine) the few who supported their baby mothers did it and did it well. They were always part of their stories. This support from some baby fathers was an integral part of the positive experiences of motherhood both in the present and in the future.

Apart from the support they had, some of the teenage mothers put in place the right adaptation strategies like going back to school or starting a job.

These strategies correspond to the conceptual framework (vulnerability to resiliency framework). The framework states clearly that assets, support systems, livelihood activities and aspirations of the teenage mothers will lead to the right adaptation strategies.

The research also indicated that teenage motherhood was very challenging for some of the teenage mothers. Motherhood has led to financial constraints and also being deserted by loved ones. There was no hope for these teenage mothers in their present circumstances and in the near future. Equally, a lot of studies have concluded that being a teenage mother is very cumbersome for the younger ones. To them it leads to poverty, stigmatisation, drop out from school, health complications and many other negative associations (Amorim et al., 2009; Dattani, 2007; Hilton, 1986; Kearney & Levine, 2012).

In sum, teenage mothers' experiences on being a teenage mother were either positive or negative. Although the situation was challenging (especially for the negative experiences) they were ready to work out things and come out successful from the situation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASSETS OF TEENAGE MOTHERS

Introduction

From chapter six, majority of the teenage mothers showed resilience and were determined to come out successfully from the compromising situation they found themselves. In view of that, this chapter looks at both internal and external assets that the teenage mothers were depending on to adapt to the situation. Internal factors are individual attributes or characteristics that have positive effects on people's lives, irrespective of the level of risk exposure they find themselves. Internal assets such as hard work, determination, motivation, perseverance and some positive attributes were portrayed by these teenage mothers. In addition, external assets such as; physical, natural, social, financial, cultural and human assets were also available to the teenage mothers.

Internal Assets

Consistently, majority of the teenage mothers admitted that they had some challenges associated with being a teenage mother but they exhibited some positive attitudes towards their situation. They focused on prospects and opportunities that will break them away from their challenges, as narrated by one of them in the following excerpt:

Let's say I didn't listen to my grandmother and I got pregnant, that is people's opinion. But I see it from this direction of thinking, if I had listened to my grandmother, I would have been in class four by now. Because she won't pay my school fees, sometimes she sends me to my parents for the school fees. But my parents tell me rubbish. I was repeated 3 three time because

of school fees. In Class two I repeated because of 22 Ghana Cedis, class three, I repeated because of printing fees. I go to school on an empty stomach. When you are going to school, they would not give you money. They tell you to go and come back at break time and eat. And when you come during first and second breaks there would be nothing to eat and I will just go back on an empty stomach. But I engaged in sexual act because of my education and I was able to complete with better grade. Now I can go back to school after my child grows [A-17-year-old teenage mother]

From her story, although she is a teenage mother, she is not focusing on that right now but rather focusing on the fact that she has been able to complete her Junior High Education and could be able to continue her education when the child grows. She was focusing much on what she holds as an individual which is her Junior High Certificate. To her, that will enable her to continue her education when the child grows. This teenage mother was determined to continue her education no matter the circumstances.

Consequently, it was realized that the challenges have built the confidence level of most of the teenage mothers and they do not care about what people say about them. To them, they were much concerned about things that will help them climb greater heights in life. They became hard workers and did not rely much on what people will offer them. They relied on their internal strength, qualities and abilities. Evidences of such are shown below:

I encourage myself every day because of what the children will eat [19-year-old teenage mother].

Sometimes when I sit down and I think, I say that maybe this baby took me away from something that might have hurt me. Well I don't know. So all my hope has been that, it would be good. [16-year-old teenage mother]

I didn't/don't look up to anybody because my mother, father, sisters and brothers have nothing to offer me. I worked hard by roasting plantain to sell at Accra [18-year-old teenage mother].

My strength has been my hardworking abilities because I know that if I plant maize and the rain falls on them, I will at least get some maize that I can feed on. I always pray to God for rains when I am done with planting and He listens [19-year-old teenage mother]

People laughed at me, but I told myself that I will go through this circumstance in a brief time and I will be okay [18-year-old teenage mother]

From what they narrated, it is clearly seen that the respondents were relying on their individual internal assets to overcome the situation.

External Assets

Apart from these individual assets, there were other assets in the community that the teenage mothers also depended on to adapt positively to their situation.

Natural assets

Natural assets included land, forests, rivers, streams among others (Ellis, 2000). Because of the agricultural nature of the district, land was one of the

most important assets that the teenage mothers were depending on. The land was used for both cash and peasant farming. Some of the crops grown on the land were mainly maize, cassava, yam, vegetables and many more. Most of the teenage mothers depended on the land because they did not have any employable skills or any educational qualification that pushed them to other sectors of the economy. Hence, they are forced to till the land and feed on it as shown below:

Teenage mothers mostly depend on the land to survive; they till this land and get their food. Most of them became dropouts from schools so they solely depend on the land for survival. They grow cassava and some maize on the land [46-year old opinion leader].

Because most of the teenage mothers depended on the land as a way of surviving, the researcher was interested in the ownership and the usage of the land within the District. The interest of the researcher was to find out whether the teenagers own the land or hire the land for their daily farming activities. In view of that, teenage mothers and opinion leaders were interviewed about who owns land in the various communities and how these lands could be accessed. It was found that lands were owned by clans and managed by the clan heads. Lands are not sold to individuals but members of the clan request for a portion of the land to farm on. Other people who are not clan members can rent the land or will farm and share their yields with some other clan members. One of the opinion leaders summarised it as:

When the teenage mother is coming from a family that has land then it is easy to have access to land, because in this

community individuals do not own land, but it is the clans that have the land. If you are a member of that clan, you can only say my clan has land but you can't go as an individual to hijack the land permanently. You can only farm on the land to sustain you and your family. For farming, nobody will prevent you but to go and sell part of the land or to take anything that naturally existed on the land like palm tree is prohibited. It can be done only when the whole clan decides to sell or use that natural assets [36-year old opinion leader].

Because clan heads are the ones who manage these lands, acquisition of land in the various Districts is not difficult especially for those who are natives of the town. The only thing you need to do is to talk to any family member who has access to the land and they will look for a portion for you to farm and feed on. This is what some of the teenage mothers said when asked about how they acquire land for farming:

Oh we are blessed here; here is not like Accra where access to land is difficult. The land is available for anyone who wants to farm. We do not have problems when it comes to land. In short, access to land is not difficult at all (18-year-old teenage mother).

Our parents have sizable farm lands so they can give you either one or half acre of the land to work on [17-year-old teenage mother].

The only exception was if you want a very bigger portion of the clan land for commercial farming, then you need to see some of the landlords for

them to apportion bigger land for you. Seeing the land lords means that you have to pay a little amount of money to pacify the gods then you can have greater portion of the community land for your commercial activities. This was what an opinion leader said about the issue at hand:

The only exception is when you want to go into commercial farming, then you need to see some of the land owners to negotiate. But for peasant farming, you just slash and plough a place, plant cassava, maize or beans which you can also feed on. Once you farm there for a longer period of time, the land automatically becomes your own. Anybody who wants to farm on that particular land will have to seek your consent [46-year-old opinion leader].

Though access to land was not difficult in the various communities, it was difficult for the teenage mothers in the district who were not natives of the district. That means migrants who are now teenage mothers and have settled within the communities need to hire or rent the land or work with somebody for a very long time before they can have access to any portion of land to farm on. Because the teenage mothers who are not natives do not have enough money to hire the land, virtually most of them who fall under this category are not engaged in any activity that may involve the use of land. This was how one teenager narrated her ordeal:

The land belongs to someone, so we pay for the rental of the farm land when the time is due. We were supposed to pay our rent for this year, but we couldn't pay because we did not have

enough money to pay. Hence the land has been taken away from us [19-year-old-teenage mother].

However, the researcher found out that some of the teenage mothers who were not natives were desperately looking for land to farm on and so they went the extra mile to work for the people they stayed with. These teenage mothers then could work for either a member of the community, the mother in law or anyone who is ready to help for about two to three years. After their two to three-year long term service to these community members, some of them were able to get either half acre or about one to two acres of land to farm on. One opinion leader narrated as follows:

If you are teenage mother and not a native of the town, then you have to work with your mother in-law for some time before you can access land to farm on. There is this lady whose husband is a driver in Accra but the man is a native and the lady is Baganveve, but because she was pregnant, she came to stay with the mother in-law so she had to work with the mother in law for some time before the mother in law gave her a portion of land to work. This helped her to feed herself and her baby because the husband was not responsible [A-36-year-old teenage opinion leader].

This strategy of working with especially in-laws has become a norm and it appears it is helping teenage mothers to have access to land for farming.

It was also revealed that forest was one prominent natural asset they depended on but most of the respondents were very quick to respond that forests

are no more in their communities because of deforestation and the change in climate.

Now we cannot talk much about forest because they existed some time ago but now most of the forests have turned into grassland because of our indiscriminate cutting of trees not replanting or due to the hot weather [70-year-old-teenage mothers]

Nevertheless, there were few respondents who admitted that they used firewood from the forest for their daily cooking. Others also admitted that they cut some of the trees at the forest for charcoal burning which was very rampant at communities along the Aflao Main road, such as Wumenu, Twefedwanu etc.

Since rivers, streams are part of the natural assets, the researcher inquired if they had access to any form of river or stream. The respondents admitted that indeed these streams and rivers have been a source of daily source of water for all the community members. Additionally, the research revealed that most of the communities did not have access to safe drinking water. It was just recently that boreholes were drilled in some of the communities. Poor access to safe drinking water was one of the major constraints by both health workers and community workers in the district. This is what one health worker said:

You know most of the communities don't have access to safe drinking water. As we are here now, even at the directorate, we don't have pipe or bore hole water here. We depend mostly on sachet water from Ho. So in the community, those who cannot afford the sachet water go to the streams to fetch water and this

is not a good source of drinking water. It is only some few communities that have bore holes [41-year old opinion leader].

Physical Assets

Physical assets are made up of what is created by economic production processes. Examples are: buildings, irrigation canals, roads, tools and so on (Scoones, 1998; Ellis, 2000). Physical assets are not only for satisfying people's needs straight away but also for providing access to other assets (Safo-Kanatanka et al, 2007). Respondents were asked about the kind of physical assets available to them and most of them mentioned schools, health facilities, churches, toilet facilities, communication networks and radio stations. According to the teenage mothers, being a teenage mother does not in any way affect their usage of any of the physical assets in their respective communities. This is what one teenage mother said:

I have access to all physical assets in the community.

Under no circumstance have I been victimised or discriminated against using a facility in this community [19-year-old teenage mother].

In addition, an opinion leader also confirmed what the teenage mothers described:

Teenage mothers can have access to all physical assets, nobody will prevent or deny them to use any of the assets in the community. We even encourage them to use these physical facilities when needed [70-year-old opinion leader]

It was access to accessible roads that was a major problem in most of the communities. In view of that, motor bikes were widely used as mode of

transport in the communities. This made transport system a bit tedious to deal with in the various communities. One opinion leader explained it as:

Our nature of roads is very bad. This is a new district so they are now constructing our major roads. The roads become very muddy during raining season and dusty during dry season. Motor bikes are our main means of transport because of the bad nature of our roads. Travelling on the motor bikes for a longer period of time makes movement difficult in our communities [33-year old social worker].

Human Assets

According to Ellis (2000), human assets are training and skills acquired through pursuing one or more economic activities. Education, good health and skills training are important human assets that enable people to engage in different activities to achieve their livelihood objectives (Carney, 1998). From the education perspective, just two (2) out of the 30 people interviewed have been able to complete Senior High School. Most of the teenage mothers have either no formal education or were not able to complete either primary or Junior High School. Although teenage mothers were allowed to go through school even during pregnancy, most of them become dropouts after giving birth, as narrated by one of them:

During pregnancy, I was always at school. Even if I had to go to the hospital, I would still go to school and seek for permission when the time is due for me to go [18-year-old teenage mother].

The reason why teenage mothers are allowed to go to school throughout their pregnancy was explained by one headmaster:

I am a teacher myself, and from Ghana Education Service policy, you are allowed to come to school with pregnancy but you are not allowed to come with a kid. So if you don't mind or you don't feel shy nobody cares provided you can feel comfortable. You are allowed to come to school until the last day before you give birth but you are not allowed to come to school with a baby [A-55- Year- Old headmaster]

His last statement, “but you are not allowed to come to school with a baby” was the problem that teenage mothers were dealing with. Most of them wish to go back to school but there is no one to help take care of their babies as they go back to school. This has led to increase in drop out for most of the teenage mothers interviewed in the study area. One teenage mother summarised it as:

I wish I could go back to school but my aunty said she cannot take care of my baby so I have no option but to stay and wait for someone to come to my aid [17-year-old teenage mother].

According to Ellis (2000), human assets can be improved by training and skills acquired through pursuing one or different economic activities. Subsequently, further interviews were conducted to find out if the respondents had been trained in any employable skill(s). Indeed, some of them have some skills such as hairdressing, dressmaking and beads making. But the most interesting aspect was that none of them have had any formal or informal

training or apprenticeship on the skills they have acquired. They term these skills as God given because these skills came naturally and nobody taught them how to go about that skills. For example, one of the teenage mothers narrated her story as:

My level of education has not enabled me to get any work but God has given me the talent to sew dresses and make hair for people. I haven't learnt it from anyone but I can do it [19-year old teenage mother].

Most of the people who have these God -Given skills were depending on that as their sources of employment. Although people do not braid their hair or sew regularly but things were a little better than those who did not have God -given skills. While some of the teenage mothers use these God given talent as their source of employment, others were not using the skills because of superstitious reasons from parents and siblings. Some of the teenage mothers interviewed explained why they do not use their skills of ability to braid people hair although they have that skills. This is what they said:

They said marine spirits possess people who are hairdressers and I don't want to be possessed [19-year old teenage mother]

My mother doesn't allow me to make people's hair because she feels that people have supernatural powers which they can use to haunt me when I braid their hair. I need to be very strong in my Christian faith before I can use that skills as a form of employment [17-year old teenage mother]

People determine their capacity to engage in diverse livelihood activities by their access to good healthcare services (Carney, 1998). As a result, the study sought to ascertain how accessible the health facilities are, their health problems and how they overcome them. Most of the teenage mothers admitted that they easily access any health facilities in the District. They talked about how receptive some of the nurses are, nurses chasing them at their home and at times the free medical services they enjoy. This will be discussed into detail at the section on social support systems available for these teenage mothers.

Again, discussions on some of the common health problem these teenage mothers face were discussed. The major illness that came out clearly was malnutrition, anaemia, home delivery complications and birth of unhealthy babies. The most common of the health problems that the health directorate was dealing with regularly was the problem of anaemia. According to the Health Directorate statistics, three out of five teenage mothers who attended antenatal were anaemic. Some of the causes, effects and solution of anaemia were extensively explained by one of the health workers as:

What is causing the anaemia is that teenagers are not prepared for the pregnancy unlike that of adults. They were having fun with their guys and unfortunately they got pregnant in the process. The truth is some of the teenagers already have some sort of anaemia within their bodies before they even got pregnant [16-year-old teenage mother].

And then anaemia in pregnancy can lead to still birth, maternal death as well as bleeding and so many complications.

It poses a lot of challenges to the health worker who will be taking care of that person [34-year-old opinion leader]

That is, the issue of anaemia and malnutrition during pregnancy leads to a lot of complications after delivery. A teenage mother narrated her story as:

I was anaemic when I was pregnant. I was supposed to deliver on Friday morning but was in labour till 9 0'clock in the evening before I delivered. When I gave birth, my baby did not cry and was not breathing well so she was on oxygen for some time. She couldn't suck my breast after she was taken off from the oxygen. My baby cried the next day after birth which was Saturday and we were discharged from the hospital. She cried throughout the next day and my father rushed us back to the hospital. We were referred to the Regional hospital. Upon arrival, the child was already in coma. The nurses explained that it was a seizure so they put something into her nose and fed her through that thing. She was in bed for three weeks, three days before they discharged us. The child is three years now but cannot sit, talk or do anything [A 17-year-old teenage mother]

Because of the complications associated with malnutrition and anaemia, health workers were doing everything possible to bring solutions to the doorsteps of people. They realised that buying drugs was much expensive for the teenagers because most of them were very poor. Hence they resorted to the use of local vegetable called turkey berries which is accessible and cheaper for all the pregnant teenagers. A health worker has this to say about the plant:

We have tried to manage it by promoting turkey berry in the district. We have introduced turkey berry because it is very high in iron and so it promotes very good blood supply. We are promoting it because it is less expensive and it helps in building the red blood cells. Everybody can afford them [34-year-old opinion leader].

From the health workers, the introduction of the turkey berries has been able to reduce the number of anaemia cases that were reported at the various health facilities.

Financial Assets

Johnson (2008), observed that livelihoods are built around financial resources such as cash/loans, savings, bank deposits and stocks (food and livestock). From the study, most of the respondents relied on remittances from baby fathers, grandparents and parents, money from farming activities and petty trading, hairdressing and tailoring, gifts etc. The following quotations are illustrations:

Well those that have very good brothers and sisters outside the town or at the big cities may receive remittances. Most of the times, some of them do menial jobs at different places. Very soon some will come and help me in peeling this cassava. After we have finished they will by all means be given some amount of money [50-year-old-opinion leader].

Sometimes, people can present gift to your baby in a form of a cash and instead of using that money to buy some items that

may not be so beneficial, you can use it to start a business [17-year-old-teenage mother]

“Anytime her father sends us money, I save GHC 50 and that is what I used to start my small business” [18-year-old teenage mother, focused group discussion].

Efforts were made to look into details how much these baby fathers are giving to the teenage mothers at the end of every month. The research found out that the highest money that a man could give out to the teenage mother was 200 Ghana Cedis per month and the lowest amount was 50 Ghana Cedis. The researcher also found out that these monies were not paid regularly. It means that most of the teenage mothers virtually take care of their babies alone. This will be extensively discussed at the chapter on social support system available for teenage mothers.

Social Assets

The SL-Framework denotes social assets as consisting of social groups such as associations, clubs and voluntary organisations that rural residents draw upon in pursuit of their livelihood objectives (Tanle, 2015). The study revealed that most of the respondents belong to various social groups which they draw upon when things become tough. The various social networks in the study communities included family, teachers, religious associations, friends, community members, health workers, government and Non-Governmental Organisations. Teenage mothers receive a lot of support from these social networks ranging from emotional, psychological, food etc. The study found out that, most of the teenage mothers get food and emotional support from their

family members especially their parents. This was what some of the teenage mothers said about their sources of food.

My mother gives me and my child food. We depend on my mother for everything. [19-year-old teenage mother]

I stay with my grandmother now. She is just a petty trader. But she makes sure that I get something to eat in order to breastfeed my son. Though she was not happy that I got pregnant, she is trying for us [19-year-old teenage mother].

I was abandoned by my grandmother at Ho. My brother came for me and he has been feeding me from the time I got pregnant till now [17-year-old teenage mother].

Apart from the provision of food and emotional support teenage mothers were getting from their parents, some of the teenage mothers had psychological support from their churches and religious groups in which they were part of. This was how a 16-year-old teenage mother narrated her story:

I was devastated when I gave birth. Everything was going against me. But my youth leader encouraged me never to give up. The church provided me with counselling and they guarded my path. They also gave me gifts. [16-year-old teenage mother].

Details of support system teenage mothers depend on will be discussed thoroughly in chapter nine.

Cultural Assets

Cultural assets were part of the District's past and present that they considered cherished and craved to pass on to future generations. Cultural assets in this district included places, objects and practices of cultural significance. It

included tangible assets like buildings, landscape and intangible heritage like language, visual arts, music, performances, religion, beliefs and customary practices like marriage ceremonies, funerals and festivals. The researcher's interest was not only on old fashioned things but new practices that hold cultural significance for today's generation was not excluded from the study. The study revealed that tangible buildings such as the Chief and the Queen mother's palace and intangible materials like language, music, performances, beliefs and some customary practices like funerals, marriage ceremonies and festivals were observed in the various communities.

The study looked at teenage mothers' access or participation in these cultural assets. The interest was to find out if being a teenage mother excludes you from enjoying all these cultural assets. Almost all the respondents who narrated their stories admitted that under no circumstances have they been excluded from participating in either music performance like *borboorbor* and the rest. In fact, some of the teenage mothers were part of these traditional groups. According to the teenage mothers, the only thing that limits them from participating in these cultural activities is their babies. Apart from that, nobody has ever prevented them from participating or enjoying their cultural rights. One teenage mother narrated her story as:

I am part of the traditional dance ensemble in my area.

We go and dance at marriage ceremonies, funerals, festivals and festive periods. And there are other teenage mothers who are part of the group [18-year-old teenage mother]

Discussion

Teenage mothers in this study exhibited positive (internal) attitudes such as being hardworking, high confident levels and determination that will break them away from the challenges of being a teenage mother. This finding corresponds to the conceptual framework (vulnerability to resiliency framework) for this work. The framework states that people in adversity focus on the positive outcomes that will modify the negative effects of adverse life circumstances (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Mallak, 1998). So these internal assets were helping them focus much on the positive outcomes than the negative outcomes. Similarly, the findings of this study confirm a study by Xiong (2015) which indicated that teenage mothers in Hmong (Southern China) became very resilient despite hardships of being mothers. Having babies did not hinder their abilities to achieve positive outcomes, as well as educational and professional goals.

The research revealed that, land was one of the most important assets that the teenage mothers were depending on because of the agricultural nature of the rural communities. Similarly, other researches also revealed land as an important asset that rural communities and agrarian communities depended on. For example, the main asset whose accumulation has been promoted is land, based on the argument that land is the main source of rural income generation (Winter, Davis & Carletto, 2009). Again, Ellis (2000) and Sietchiping, Permezel & Ngomsi (2012), also commented that rural communities worldwide depend on land as their main source of livelihood.

Furthermore, the study looked at ownership of land in the District and how it affects teenage mothers' access to land for their farming activities. It was

found that lands were owned by clans, and managed by the clan heads. Likewise, a study done by Zippay (1995) found that land could be accessed from clan heads who are allodia land owners of the community or the family.

The respondents admitted that indeed these streams and rivers have been a source of water for all the community members. Additionally, the research revealed that most of the communities did not have access to safe drinking water because of over dependence on these unsafe water bodies. This finding corresponds to another research done in Nigeria which states that over seventy percent (70%) of households in rural communities do not have access to improved drinking water supply. They rely solely on self-water supply (free source) such as rivers, perennial streams, water ponds and unprotected wells (Ishaku, Majid, Peters & Haruna, 2011)

Physical assets like schools and health facilities were very accessible in the District by the teenage mothers. It was access to motorable roads that was a major problem in most of the communities. In view of that, motor bikes were the main means of transport which made transport system a bit tedious to deal with in the various communities. Equally, Sewell (2016) confirmed that access to good roads has always been a problem in rural areas.

Human assets of the teenage mothers was also part of the study. From the education perspective, it was revealed that most of the teenage mothers were not in school and have not had much education. They either become drop outs before they give birth or right after giving birth. Equally, a number of studies found that teenage mothers were more likely to have fewer school years (Jason & Wolfe, 2009), have limited educational opportunities (Lefourneau, 2004), and be more likely to be drop out of school (SmithBattle, 2007). Not having

much education means it will affect their earning capacity and wellbeing. This was confirmed by Dangal (2006) that being a teenage mother hampers further education of female adolescents and consequently earning capacity and overall wellbeing. Also, it usually terminates a girl's educational career, threatening her future economic prospects, earning capacity and overall wellbeing.

Subsequently, further interviews were conducted to find out if the respondents had been trained in any employable skill(s). None of the teenage mothers have had any training on any employable skills. Lack of training by teenage mothers on any employable skills has been done by Paranjothy (2009). This lack of training restricts teenage mothers' job opportunities. Those teenage mothers who had any employable skills termed their skills as God given ones.

With social assets, most of the participants relied on social networks for their support. The various social networks in the study communities included family, teachers, religious associations, friends, community members, health workers, government and Non-Governmental Organisations. Teenage mothers receive a lot of support from these social networks ranging from emotional, psychological, food etc. DFID (1999) revealed that social assets represent a place of seeking refuge in mitigating the effect of stress through informal network.

To conclude, teenage mothers relied on all the assets discussed above as ways of surviving and adapting positively in their various communities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES OF TEENAGE MOTHERS

Introduction

As discussed at chapter seven, it is out of the assets available to the teenage mothers that they construct and contrive a living, by pursuing a range of livelihood activities aimed at attaining particular outcomes. This chapter focuses on how an individual (teenage mother) obtains the basic necessities required for a living.

Livelihood Activities

The study found out that teenage mothers in their respective communities engage in different livelihood activities to survive. These activities mostly depend on what the environment provides for them. Location factors including geographical location and distance to key facilities such as road and market influences the livelihood activities the teenage mothers undertake.

Apart from the influence of the environment, teenage mothers' livelihood strategy depended on individual or household access to capital and control over type of livelihood capital. In view of these factors (environment, access and control of capital), the livelihood activities of the teenage mothers somehow differed from one community to the other. However, the commonest activities that the teenage mothers in the District involved can be broadly categorised as agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities.

Agricultural Activities (On-Farm activities)

Adaklu is a mountainous District with about 80 percent rural communities. The rural nature of the District makes farming the main livelihood activity of the population. That means that about 95 percent of the population

depend on the land (mostly subsistence farming) for their livelihood (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). In view of that, most of the teenage mothers interviewed indulge in agricultural activities especially farming as a way of survival. This is how some teenage mothers explained the situation:

The only work available here is farming. If you want to sell, it is not like selling in Accra that people will patronize. For example, if you cook even rice to sell, they won't patronize it. That is the more reason why I am farming [17-year-old teenage mother] .

For me I chose to farm because if I farm, at least I will get maize from the farming activity. I will not have to go and buy maize. Also, I can sell some of the maize and use some of the money to buy fish for soup [18-year-old teenage mother].

On-farm activities that teenage mothers involve in included mixed farming, then, planting and harvesting for others. Some of the teenage mothers interviewed described their on-farm activities as:

When I realized that things were becoming more difficult for me, I decided to get some portion of land and planted maize. Up to now, that is what I do to survive [18-year-old teenage mother].

The study found out that majority of the teenage mothers engaged in these agricultural activities (on farm) because of easy access to land especially for the indigenes of the District. Again, agriculture was a generational occupation that was passed on from older generation to younger generation

hence making it easier for the teenage mothers to follow suit. This is how one opinion leader summarised it:

This is Adaklu District and most of the people are farmers. This is what our great grandfathers left for us. We have bigger lands that are fertile. These lands serve as source of livelihoods for us. This place is not like the city that you have access to a lot of livelihood options [A-70-year old queen mother].

This is a farming community so most of us or let say 95% go into farming. So when these teenage mothers now want to survive and take care of their children, what they do is to go and farm [A-54-year old assemblyman].

This is the main occupation of the towns in the District. It is transmitted, she came to meet it so she would also do the same thing [A-36-year old nurse].

Another opinion leader also explained the reason why farming activities have become the major source of livelihood as:

We are farmers because we are not fortunate to have maybe factories where one may go for a by-day (labourer) in order to survive. Unlike big towns whereby somebody will put up a shop and will employ you to work in there, here we don't have anything of the sort. Well maybe as the town develops, people will start setting up shops but now we do not have them. When the child grows to maybe a year or two, the only thing the

teenage mother can do is to start farming [56-year-old teenage mother].

Moreover, the district is characterised by rich soil which attracts both old and the young into agricultural activities. Also, those who want to do other things apart from farming struggle to even get start-up capital. Access to financial capital is very difficult because of the level of poverty in the area. If individuals struggle to get capital, the kind of goods to sell also becomes an issue because if care is not taken, the people may not patronize it and the teenage mother may run at a loss. This risk taking left most of the teenage mothers without any option than to involve in farming activities. This was explained below as:

Even capital needed to start orange business is a lot of money for a teenage mother in this village. Also, it is not everything that you bring to this community that marketing it will flourish, it depends on where you venture your business and then what you really want to sell. Somebody may have the vision to go into orange selling or whatever but when the person tries the first attempt and the people do not patronize, then that means you will run at a loss. But for farming, we have rich soil, when the weather is favorable, just after some few months you will be getting some coins out of it [66-year-old chief]

Apart from reasons given above, some of the teenage mothers' farm because through these farming activities, they can provide for their daily bread which helps ease some of the challenges they find themselves. This is how some of the teenage mothers shared their stories.

For me I chose farming because, if I farm, I will get maize from the farming activity and I will not go and buy it again. If I sell the maize too, I will get money from there to go and buy fish [18-year-old teenage mother]

Farming is my source of livelihood. I do farming because I know that even if I do not get anything at all, I will still get something to eat at the end of the season [19-year old teenage mother].

The study revealed that communities far away from the Regional Capital but closer to the District Capital (examples are Anfoe, waya, kpodgi, sofa etc) were the ones engaging in agricultural activities like farming for themselves and, harvesting for other people. These teenage mothers did not have many options to choose from because their environment could not provide much for them. The land was the major resource that they could rely on. These towns were far from the major cities and their roads were not accessible hence low patronage for any other activity except farming. This was how some teenage mothers narrated their stories about their livelihood activities:

I help people during harvesting and they give me some of whatever crop we harvested in return. This is what my child and I feed on or go home and eat. Maybe if I harvest corn or beans for somebody I also take some for myself [16-year-old teenage mother].

From the story, we can deduce for ourselves that these teenage mothers do not get a lot of money from these on-farm activities but they still struggle to at least get hold of a job that they can depend on. Also, it was found that most

of these teenage mothers help either their parents or some others in these on-farm activities. This was because most of them were still young and farming was very tedious for them so they have to rely on these family members or loved ones help in other to sustain their livelihoods.

I help my mother to plant cassava and plantain. In return, she gives me some money and food to take care of myself and my son [18-year-old teenage mother].

Although most of the teenage mothers interviewed were peasant farmers, they have been able to make a living out of the little activities they engaged themselves. For the teenagers that were into agricultural activities, if not for anything at all, they can sell some of the farm products or eat their own products when things become very tough.

Non-Agricultural (Off-Farm activities)

The study also realised that few of the teenage mothers were trying to broaden their livelihood activities to generate additional income to ensure livelihood security, through off-farm activities. Off-farm activities like gari processing, charcoal burning, de-shelling of groundnut, fetching water for construction works or for some well to do people in the community, petty trading, hairdressing and washing of clothes were common activities for some teenage mothers. Reasons for the diversification for some of the teenage mothers were to ensure livelihood security because agriculture activities in the Adaklu district were highly vulnerable.

This vulnerability is as a result of high cost of production input, low productivity output, low product sales due to bad roads, over dependence on rain-fed agriculture and indiscriminate destruction of farms by cattle. This was

a very big challenge for some of the teenage mothers who were into agricultural activities. Some of them narrated their stories as:

First I did not sell the maize I planted because the prices of the crop at the time of harvest was very low (like 10 cedis). This 10 cedis cannot solve my problem so I just put the maize there and I am still using them for food. If I think about selling my maize at 10 cedis and later go and buy that same maize at about 100 cedis then it was better, I keep the maize for future use [19-year old teenage mother].

This means that the whole farming activity did not fetch her any income despite her production cost. She just kept the whole product for herself and family.

Other reasons for diversification were reported by some of the teenage mothers as:

Sometimes I plant crops and it does not rain. All the plants get spoiled and I ran at a loss. I just do it to survive but the farming activity is not sustainable [A-19-year-old teenage mother].

Now because of the menace of the Fulani herdsmen within the various communities, there are cattle all over. They come and destroy all the crops we have planted at our farms. The little stream we fetch to water our vegetables too; they also compete with us. This makes farming activities unattractive [18-year-old teenage mother].

Notwithstanding the reasons given above, there are others who think farming is tedious so they change their job into other activities. Examples of such stories can be found below:

Farming is difficult. I do not have the strength to farm [19-year-old teenage mother].

I fall sick easily. I cannot stand in the scorching sun to cultivate any crop. Who will even help me prepare the land. I cannot go through that [19-year-old teenage mother].

Some teenage mothers are into trading, some roast groundnut and sell. They are more into trading than farming because they are lazy. So they prefer to trade, they sell sugar, gari, and they prefer to do things that are easy to do [70-year-old queen-mother].

These are examples of some of the diversified jobs the teenage mothers were undertaking

I have been helping people to de-shell groundnut. If I de-shell one bowl, I get 5 Ghana Cedis out of it. But I am able to de-shell just 2 bowls within a day [19-year old teenage mother].

I process my mother's gari, and when we are done she divides it into three portions and gives me one portion [18-year old teenage mother].

With the issue of diversification, it was also noted that the livelihood of the teenage mothers varies across the District. The research saw that teenage mothers in the interior (thus around Waya, Sofa, Anfoe, Kpodgi etc.) engaged in domestic works like washing of clothes (for the white collar job workers) and

fetching of water for construction work (since the District was new there were a lot of construction works going on).

On the other hand, those around the Regional Capital especially along the Aflao road engage much into charcoal or firewood business because their location of living along a major road attracts lot of buyers for their product (charcoal burning). They fetch wood from their farms then they either sell the raw wood as firewood or burn them into charcoal to sell. Some of the teenage mothers do this with the help of their parents or do it alone. It was revealed that those into the firewood business do it alone while those into charcoal burning get helping hand from either elder brother or the father of their children. Some of these vantage communities are Wunume, Twefeadunu, then Helepke and Tsrefe which are at the other side of the Regional Capital. One of the teenage mothers narrated her story as follows:

We sell firewood and charcoal at the roadside. Big trucks from the city come and carry firewood and charcoal to the South for their daily activities. This is what we depend on for living. We are still teenagers but we can cut some wood and use for charcoal [17-year old teenage mother, focused group discussions]

These communities have buyers who mostly come from the city to buy charcoal for their domestic or commercial usage. Because of the potential buyers of charcoal from the major towns or cities around these communities, it appears teenage mothers who were into charcoal and firewood business were better off than their other counterparts who were into other agricultural

activities. They were making about 200 to 300 Ghana Cedis monthly after selling or burning charcoal.

These same communities closer to the Regional Capital also involve much in petty trading because their communities are situated at locations that enhance easy access to ready market. They trade in second hand clothing, toffees, biscuits, farm products and many more. Mostly, they deal in items that they term as “movable goods”. This means that they are goods that community members buy regularly. This is how one of the teenage mothers interviewed placed it:

I sell these items because they are very movable and people need them on daily basis so they can buy them quickly for me to go and buy some again [19-year-old teenage mother]

One Assembly man tried to show us some of the things or items the teenage mothers sell or trade in. This is what the Assembly man of the area said:

Most of the teenage mothers in town sell foodstuffs. They sell foodstuffs like tomatoes, cassava dough and many more. They don't have bigger provision store. They do petty trading [42-year-old assemblyman]

These petty trading activities seem to be one of the best choice for most of the teenage mothers but these activities have their own challenges. These challenges stem from buying on credit, community members not patronising because they feel the prices are high etc. Some of the challenges are narrated below:

I sometimes get nothing from my petty trading; people buy things on credit here. So sometimes you don't get back the

money you use to start the business [A-17-Year-old teenage mother]

Trading is not sustainable, some are not even able to trade for long. Some even borrow the items they sell from people, so if they do not get money to pay back, they cannot go back to the person and restock their goods. I can give you examples, for instance, one of them went to borrow eggs from someone in Ho market, and came and sold it here. She could not gather the money and as such she cannot go back for the eggs again, so it is not sustainable [A-70-Year-Old Queen mother].

Hmmm, since here is a farming community, sometimes access to money becomes a problem. In view of that, people do not buy the products you will even sell. Throughout the day, you can sell just 5 Ghana cedi worth of product. You need to eat at the end of the day too, so you will use the small money you got out of what you sold to buy something to eat. When same situation happens continuously, then you may have to close the shop because you will spend the money bit by bit. [A-17-year old teenage mother].

People don't patronize our items because they think it is expensive and it will be cheaper if they go to Ho and buy it themselves. They forget that we paid for transportation before we brought the items to the village [18-year-old teenage mother].

Combination of On-Farm and Off-Farm Activities (Diversification)

The findings of the study also indicated how some teenage mothers combine both on-farm and off-farm activities because they want to make a lot of money. To them they do not want to rely on just one livelihood activity. For them to be safer and have secured livelihood, it was better for them to combine two or more jobs. Combination of both off farm and on-farm activities reduces their risk as well as making enough money to cater for themselves and their children.

This is what one teenage mother said:

I farm, fetch water for people, plant for others and many more. In fact, any job I get hold of, I do it for the money involved [19-year-old teenage mother].

I don't do just one job. Every season presents its kind of job. I do not have anyone to help me so I do any job I come across [19-year old teenage mother.]

When people want anyone to help them in any kind of job, they will just call me. It can either be planting of maize, peeling of cassava, selling at the market, fetching of water for construction works or washing for the government workers [18-year old teenage mother].

These group of teenage mothers were better off than those venturing only one activity. They were able to feed their babies. Together with their children, they looked healthy. When you compare them to those who depend on just one kind of job, you realize that they were aspiring for greater things in the

near future because of the money they were getting from the combined activities. Some of the teenage mothers said:

Because I do a lot of jobs, I don't really lack. It appears at any point in time I have something doing that will fetch me money. When my farming activities do not yield much, I can de-shell groundnut or sell petty items [19-year-old teenage mother].

I have been able to save much because of the various livelihood activities I undertake. Am planning to go back to school next year [19-year old teenage mother].

Because of the additional jobs I do to support my mother, I have been able to complete Junior High School. I want to learn a trade so my mother has been saving from the farming and trading activities I undertake [19-year-old teenage mother]

Migration as a livelihood Strategy

Apart from on-farm and off-farm activities, there are others who also sought to migrating to the Regional capital and other bigger towns around to seek for greener pastures. Some of them went into petty trading, hairdressing, selling of food because they felt like there were more opportunities in the city than the rural areas they found themselves. Migration as an adaptation strategy was found among just some handful of the teenage mothers interviewed. This was how one fortunate teenage mother narrated her story:

Things were very tough at the village when I gave birth. My aunty knew a woman who sells at Ho and was desperately looking for someone to stay with. I went to stay with her at Ho. Now, she has opened another shop that I manage for her. I just

came to visit my mother because it is Easter season [19-year-old teenage mother]

Teenagers who had the opportunity to migrate were the fortunate ones who had some relations in the city that were willing to accommodate them. Although most of the teenage mothers interviewed wished they could travel out of their communities, there were no known relatives that could provide support. Migrating without any known relative in the destination was too risky and prevented them from embarking on such option.

Sustainable livelihoods

It is generally agreed that the livelihood of the poor is demanding as they find themselves in a state of poverty and lack basic necessities. Therefore, to address the issue of poverty and its eradication, the concept of “sustainable livelihood” was introduced by the researcher. Here, the researcher wanted to find out the kind of livelihood which the teenage mothers think was sustainable and how to improve that kind of livelihood.

Some of the teenage mothers interviewed in fact admitted that farming was the most sustainable job for them since it was something they learned from childhood days. It will be helpful if they combine some other activities so that in case the farming season does not go on well with them, there will be other options for them. Some of them said acquiring training skills like soap making, hairdressing, tailoring and others could be given to some of the teenage mothers.

These activities will supplement the already agricultural activities like farming. Also, those into farming admitted that they are not familiar with good agricultural practices like mechanised agriculture, so proper agricultural practices training could be given to them in order to make their crops yield much

and stand the test of unfavourable weather conditions. On the job training was not just suggested by the teenage mothers but opinion leaders interviewed were in much support. This is what one other female opinion leader and another teenage mother said:

Every job has its limitation, because, if they had attended school, or learnt a trade, it would be something they would be engaged in, unless they changed your mind to do a different occupation, but fetching of water and gari processing, I don't see it as an occupation that can be sustainable [34-year old unit committee member].

Apart from the queen mother, some other teenage mothers explained by saying this:

You will not always get the chance to wash clothes for people, because is not an everyday job. The person sometimes will wash his or her clothes [17-year-old teenage mother].

It is better we get some employable skills that can sustain us throughout the season (18-year-old teenage mother, focused group discussions).

We want a sustainable job, that is the more reason why we want to start learning some skills. With that we can get money everyday to cater for our children and ourselves [17-year-old teenage mother].

Apart from the training requested by both teenage mothers and opinion leaders, there were others who think the best solution for a sustainable livelihood is making sure that all the teenage mothers go back to school. That

way, they will be assured of quality education which goes hand in hand with better job opportunities. Almost all the teenagers interviewed were in support of this suggestion. When they were asked what they wanted to be in future, 25 out of the 30 teenage mothers indicated they were aspiring to be nurses but some of them became drop out either before or after giving birth. This issue of quality education will be dealt with in details in the next two chapters.

Discussion

From the results, teenage mothers in Adaklu district of Ghana, engage in livelihood strategies. These are: Agricultural (on-farm) activities, non-agricultural (off-farm) activities, combination of both agricultural and non-agricultural activities (diversification) and migration as an adaptation strategy. This finding was also confirmed in a study by Carney (1998) that livelihood strategies that are available to rural folks in developing countries are: both agricultural and non- agricultural activities, diversification and migration.

From the three strategies mentioned earlier on, on-farm activities (farming) emerged as the commonest activities of the teenage mothers. This means that the teenage mothers were mainly involved in agricultural activities as their source of livelihood. Similarly, a study by Ellis & Freeman (2004) also revealed that rural communities are generally believed to involve much in agricultural related activities. Since most of the teenage mothers did not feel secure about their agricultural related activities, some of them diversified their agricultural activities. This was done by combining one or two livelihood activities in order to sustain their livelihoods.

Consequently, studies of rural livelihoods generally converge that rural incomes are also generated from engagement in non-farm activities (Bryceson

& Jamal, 1997). Also, Serge (2007) showed that rural households derive a larger portion of their income from the farming, trade or combine their livelihoods from different sources. The reason for this non-farm activities by rural people was to reduce the risk of livelihood failure or unsustainability (Gill, 1991). This reason for diversification is the same with the current findings of this study that teenage mothers diversify their activities because of the insecurity relating to agricultural activities. Likewise, a study done in India and Sub-Sahara Africa proved that agricultural based activities by rural people is unsustainable and cannot support families for their food hence the need for agricultural diversification or off-farm activities (Ellis, 1998).

The current study also revealed that teenage mothers who combined both off-farm and on-farm activities were financially better off than those who were sticking to either off-farm or on-farm activity. Different study has also found that when a rural household has diverse sources of income earning activities, its chances of surviving financially are better than people with just one source of income (Ellis, 1998). The same study by Ellis (1998) continued to prove common patterns in most developing countries where the poor tend to have more diverse livelihood than middle range income earners. His finding was similar to my study because most of the teenage mothers interviewed were poor and they involved in diverse forms of livelihoods as discussed earlier.

It was also revealed in this study that most of the teenage mothers who diversify are into petty trading. They sell things like tin tomatoes, second hand clothing, food, toffees, biscuits and many more. Nyberg et al (2002) and Ellis (1998) in their studies also confirm that there is a rise in small scale businesses like petty trading and hawking when it comes to diversification.

Consequently, there were some of the few teenage mothers who resorted to migration as their form of livelihood adaptation strategy. This was common among teenagers who had any of their relatives outside the district and were ready to host the teenage mothers when the need arose. The teenagers mostly migrated to the bigger cities like Ho, and Accra to seek for employment because they were not getting better job offers in their rural communities. This was another way to reduce their insecurities of their livelihoods.

Likewise, other studies have showed that migration plays crucial roles in diminishing vulnerability and lessen poverty in developing countries (De Haan, 1999). Another study also revealed that a lot of teenagers and youth migrate from rural areas to urban areas for attractive employment opportunities, which lure the rural teenager/youth out of the farming profession (Balodi, Vati, Bisht & Ghatak, 2015).

In sum, this chapter is about main livelihood activities of teenage mothers namely: on-farm, off-farm, diversification and migration as an adaptation strategy.

CHAPTER NINE

SUPPORTING SYSTEMS AVAILABLE FOR TEENAGE MOTHERS

Introduction

Teenage mothers go through a lot of hardships in order to put food on the table for themselves and their children. Despite these hardships, some young mothers go on to live a productive life and facilitate their own children's development. In view of that, it became necessary for the researcher to evaluate the kind of support these teenage mothers received in attempt to overcome some of the challenges and difficulties they encountered in pursuing their livelihoods or even throughout the journey of being a teenage mother. Support systems in this thesis means any kind of support the teenage mother received throughout the process of being a teenage mother.

The researcher was interested in supports available to be accessed by the individual, and challenges they encounter when accessing these support systems. Teenage mothers in the Adaklu district of Ghana receive some support from their family (both extended and nuclear), their boyfriends (their children's fathers), their communities, health care systems, Non-governmental organisations, the churches, social welfare departments, the schools and the government as a whole. These support systems have helped to provide some successful adaptation for the teenage mothers and their children. These supports are in the form of financial and social (scholarships, counselling, educating the teenage mothers on how to access family planning and many more) systems.

Financial Support

Teenage mothers had their sources of financial support from family members (especially parents and grandparents) and the fathers of their babies, their churches and the government of Ghana. Their financial support helps the teenage mothers cope with the day-to-day hardship associated with being teenage mothers. The family provided financial support by partaking in sharing their basic needs responsibility. These are money to buy food, find shelter, buy clothing or payment of school fees for those who are back at school.

The family forms part of the microsystem and they give primary means of support to the teenage mothers. The first financial support that the teenage mothers admitted was the family. Although family is undergoing major changes but its role in the society is still important. Family has become a social institution in the district which care for the strength and the future care of the teenage mother. In the Adaklu District, both the nuclear and the extended family play their roles in taking care of the teenage mothers' financial issues. The residents still believe in the role the extended family plays in an individual's life. The extended family include siblings, uncles, aunties, grandparents, cousins and nephews. The structure of their extended family is a very wide circle of people who are related by blood and marriage. These are some of the quotations from the teenage mothers:

My father pays my school fees for me. He also gives me money to buy food when I go to school. I am in the boarding house now [18-year-old teenage mother].

I will say our parents support us. They do help, they just don't leave us to rot or be the burden of the man

that impregnated us. Our mothers especially stay and take care of us, when they stay with us throughout our experiences. They provide us with financial support in every aspect of our lives. They sustain us and we work together as united family members. The extended family members are part [17-year old teenage mother, focused group discussions].

It could be deduced from the narration that the family do not leave them as they experience being teenage mothers but they cater for them financially in all aspects of their endeavour.

Some of the baby fathers were irresponsible because majority of the baby fathers abandoned their children and they did not accept their responsibilities as fathers. Despite most of the men being irresponsible, there were other men who embraced the situation and stood with their baby mothers to cater or share responsibilities in taking care of their child. Baby fathers provided their baby mothers with financial support. This was what some teenage mothers said:

The father of the child sends me money every two weeks. That is the benefit that I get from him [19-year-old teenage mother, Focused Group Discussions].

Anytime her father sends us money, I save 50Gh and that is what I used to start my small business [18-year-old teenage mother, Focused Group Discussions].

When my parents sacked me from the house, my baby father comforted me and he promised me that he will make sure

that I go back to school when he gets money. He provided all my needs financially [17-year-old teenage mother]

Reasons why some of the men took care of their responsibilities were because of the notion of gender stereotype that the man is supposed to be the bread winner of the family. Though almost all the teenage mothers interviewed had men who were not well to do, they strived to support each other. Their occupations were traced from their girlfriends which included: drivers, barbers, DJ's, road contractor casual workers, shop attendants, masons, farmers and kente weavers. Examples are listed below:

My baby's father is a DJ usually works during funerals and festivals [19-year-old teenage mother].

My baby's father is an apprentice. He is now learning masonry [19-year-old teenage mother].

Surprisingly, Adaklu is purely a farming community but the baby fathers of the teenage mothers mostly were drivers. The research revealed that teenage mothers closer to the Regional Capital, Ho were the one whose boyfriends were the drivers. It appears these drivers were more responsible than their counterparts who were in the interior. These responsible men give their baby mothers 50 to 200 Ghana Cedis monthly. Although these monies were not enough for the teenage mothers, they managed it for their day-to-day activities.

Apart from the family and baby fathers, the church was also providing some financial support especially for the teenage mothers. Although the church is basically an institution that deals with religious belief system of the individuals in the society, the churches in the Adaklu District support teenage mothers in so many ways. The church normally takes contributions from its

church members to support teenage mothers. These monies are given to the teenage mothers when the church pays them a visit or when the church organises naming ceremony for the teenage mothers. Teenage mothers use the churches' financial support to buy some basic needs for themselves and their children. Some of the financial support teenage mothers get from the church are narrated below:

At times when you give birth, the church members fetch water for you, give you some little amount of money and soap [19-year-old teenage mother, focused group discussion].

My baby's father belongs to Global Evangelical Church, so when we were outdooring the child, they gave the baby some soaps and money [17-year-old teenage mother].

Yes, they gathered firewood for me, bought soap and added money for me as well [17-year-old teenage mother].

Yes, my church (Pentecost) gave me money (200ghs) and named my child. I am the church secretary [18-year-old teenage mother]

Generally, the church does not give helping hands to just any member of the church, unless you are a very active member. However, a non -active member, may get support but that support may not be as good as the one given to active members. This is what one religious leader said:

That one also depends on how well you relate with the church. If you were not an active member and you do not help in any of the activities of the church, then I don't think they will give you any financial support. Or they may give you something little

but the active teenage mothers may be given higher than non - active teenage mothers. You can't just be a member and absent yourself from church, you have to be an active member who goes to church every Sunday, when it is time for singing you should be there, when it is time for working you should be there. The financial support for that active member will never be the same as a non-active member [42-year-old assemblyman]

But the church also indicated that if the teenager continues giving birth without turning over a new leaf, then they would rethink about giving a helping hand. This was confirmed by one teenage mother that has given birth to two children.

I was in Church of Pentecost and when I gave birth, some of the members gave money to the baby. But when I gave birth to my second child, they didn't do anything [17-year-old teenage mother].

Social Support

There are other formal institutions that provided social support for some teenage mothers at the time of the research. These institutions provided social supports such as helping the teenage mothers deal with issues of denial, training them in some vocational activities, helping them to save money in order to start up their own small business, policies that will help the teenage mothers go back to school, provision of healthcare services and many more.

First and foremost, the Social Welfare Department in the district provided the teenage mothers with some social supports. Mainly this

institution serves as a place where teenage mothers can go and seek refuge concerning issues like denial, if you have a child who is disabled, wanting to learn a trade or going back to school. Some of their services provided are:

Actually, what we do for teenage mothers is to help them deal with cases like denial. That is when the man responsible for the child does not take care of his responsibilities. That is what they bring in here for us to just handle for them [35-Year Old Social Worker].

After settling the cases of denial, we do not just stop there, but we follow up to see if the men are indeed taking care of their responsibilities. If the people involved are not forth coming, they come and report so we call them again and ask for reasons why they are not forth coming. We scare them by bringing them near to the court since the court is very close. They start taking up their responsibility when they see the court because they don't want to go to jail [35-year-old social worker].

With the disabled children, especially those in critical conditions, we have a fund for them. This fund is for their checkups at the hospital. The institution has realized that we cannot be providing this fund like that so now we give out funds to their guardians to start a venture in which they can use the profit for their daily checkups and feeding [35-year-old social worker].

Well, we also organize some skills training and the rest. We have vocational schools so we ask the teenage mothers who are interested to join [35-year-old social worker].

The researcher was also interested in how they handled these denial cases. Her concerns were on who takes care of the child and the mothers. This was how the social worker explained to the researcher:

Over here when you impregnate someone, you have to perform a rite (knocking and other things). Immediately the man accepts the child, we will make sure that he performs all these rites traditionally. The man and the family pay for all hospital expenses and all travelling up and down because of the baby. As for the feeding, it becomes the responsibility of both families because for a child to grow and be a responsible citizen, the child takes things from so many people so the girls family can also feed the child, the boy's family can feed the child. One family won't take responsibility of everything because actually if they are to do so, then it means they have paid the bride price of the girl [35-year-old female social worker]

Most of the time, it is one thing that an institution provides services and another thing that the teenage mother in need could access these services. When asked how one can access any of their services provided to teenage mothers, this was the answer she gave:

With the disabled children, we take a picture of them. But if your child has not taken the picture, you will write a letter,

take a picture and add your particulars for us to start the processing. So mostly they write letters to the District Chief Executive [35-year-old Social Worker].

For those who want to go back to school, they bring their admission letter or form attached with a letter. Then the District will take it from there [35-year-social worker]

We have social support for teenage mothers who are disabled. Teenage mothers who have children who are disabled are asked to choose between farming or learning a trade. Mothers who choose farming are given a plot, the plot will be ploughed for you, we will buy cutlass and whatever and give you seedlings so that you start the farming activities. Those who want to learn a trade are also given the necessary things needed to learn the trade. This will depend on the kind of trade the mother chooses. Our main aim is to establish the mothers so that they can get regular source of income. [35-year old social worker].

Most of the time, institutions which provide these services are faced with some challenges when it comes to performing their duties. When she was asked about the major challenges, she narrated her challenge as:

The road has been a challenge for getting to the various communities especially getting to the hinterlands. We have to sit on the motor bikes for a very longer period of time. We can't travel with car because of the bad nature of the roads [35-year-old Social Worker].

Furthermore, educational institutions also provided social support to the teenage mothers. As most of the teenage mothers were still within the school going age and some of them still in school, the roles of the Ghana Education Service, the school and the teachers in providing social support for the teenage mothers were revealed. First and foremost, there were some policies of Ghana Education Service which helped teenage mothers not to be drop outs because they became pregnant. This policy was explained by one educationist as:

So now it is allowed in education that teenage mothers can come to school if only they are not ashamed of their situation. When they stop, we the teachers and housemistress are supposed to advise them to come back; that is why the girl child unit is there. So if there is a girl of that sort in the school, they come and take care of her, talk to her and monitor her till she gives birth. One student got pregnant, she was here till the night that she gave birth. I sent her to the clinic and I was there when she gave birth. She then became a day student, but she was in form 3, preparing to write WASSCE [42-year-old female housemistress].

This was a very good policy that was helping a lot of the teenage mothers to continue their education in spite of their pregnancies. In fact, one of the teenage mothers attested to this fact. This is what she said:

When I was pregnant I was going to school throughout. I even used it to go and march during Independence Day. I did that till I couldn't go any longer. Even that, my teachers came

home to find out why I couldn't come to school anymore [17-year-old teenage mother]

Although this was a very good policy but there was a clause to the policy which was somehow not very conducive for some of the teenage mothers especially after you have given birth. This is what the clause was about:

I am a teacher myself, and from Ghana Education Service policy, you are allowed to come to a school with pregnancy but you are not allowed to come with a kid. So if you don't mind or you don't feel shy nobody cares provided you can feel comfortable and learn. You can be coming to school until the last day before you go home or hospital and give birth but you are not allowed to come to school with a baby [46-year-old assembly man]

If they were not allowed to come to school with their child, then that is when the support of the family becomes very important. But because of such a clause, most of the teenage mothers have to stay home till the time that they can get someone to support them with their babies before they can go back to school. This situation in one way or another delayed those who wanted to go back to school.

It was also reported that some of the educationists were not in support of this policy hence making it very difficult for them to enforce it in some of the schools. The reason why they were not in support was that:

If it is left with me alone, teenage mothers shouldn't be encouraged to be in schools because some naïve students may see them as models and may do same. They will be like aahh she

is pregnant or a teenage mother but she is still coming to school then why can't I also do same. I think letting them come to school is causing more harm than good [46-year-old assemblyman].

Another policy is the scholarship from the government in conjunction with Ghana Education service for the needy students. Although the scholarship is for needy students Ghana Education Service gives major preference to girl child education hence the teenage mother.

Formally, every week you take 50 Ghana Cedis as a beneficiary of the scholarship. But now it is given to them in bulk, you can even give some to your parents to keep for you. When the money is given in bulk, they pay their school fees and use the remaining to buy textbooks [42-year-old female housemistress].

After she explained the whole package for the scholarship, the researcher then asked about how a teenage mother can access such a scholarship and the reply was:

Students who qualify pick a form at the district assembly or at the school office. Interviews are scheduled for them at both the Assembly and District levels. After that, those who qualify are given the scholarship. Most of the time, preference is given to teenage mothers. [42-year-old teenage mother].

In addition to what Ghana Education Service has been doing, the school too have their own policies which are ways of supporting the teenage mothers in the communities. Some of the things that the school has done and have benefited some of the teenage mothers were outlined as:

We have managed to organize a club for the whole community. We have the school based club and then the community based club. We try to give hope to some of the teenage mothers who have given up in life. We tell them giving birth to one is a mistake but you can still go back to school or learn a trade. [26-year-old female teacher].

With the issue of talking to some of the teenage mothers to come back to school, the researcher was interested in some of their success stories and this was what one headmaster said about the situation:

Currently, we have three teenage mothers that currently we have been able to convince to return to school. Others are in the town and promise to return. They promise to come next academic year when their children grown [54-year-old headmaster].

Some of the teachers in my community told me that, I am good academically so I should come back to school. I went and I am in my final year now. [19-year-old teenage mother].

Although the successes were not that much, we have deduced from the interview that the schools were making some sort of headways in their dealings. Surprisingly, some of the teachers in the various schools were also helping some of the teenage mothers in their schools. They just do not leave them when they are able to convince them to come back to school but they take up some of their responsibilities like getting prescribed uniforms, provision of food and many more. One teacher interviewed explained some of the things they do to support some of the teenage mothers as:

What I do as a teacher for the teenage mothers who have returned to school are when I realize that a girl is not in a school uniform I try to sew one for her. I buy school bags, shoes and food for those who are hungry [26-year-old female teacher]

We call some of the teenage mothers after school to come and eat because the child has been hungry since morning and the possibility that when she gets home food is on the table is very low so you have to invite that child over and make sure she eats at least that particular minute before she goes home. With their school uniforms, some of them wear different uniforms because of financial constraints. Normally when they feel different from each other you realize that it does not build their confidence so I try to get some for them. I think just last month I sewed uniform for two people [52-year-old male teacher].

Again, better access to Health Care Services is needed as well as alternative programs set aside to provide knowledge and information for the teenage mother. These health care services are numerous but programs and services aimed at teenage mothers in the Adaklu District typically included: making health care centres in the district very accessible, community nurses routine of bringing health care services to the doorstep of the people, educating the teenage mothers on personal hygiene and cleanliness, guidance and counselling services.

Although Adaklu district does not have larger health facilities, the district health directorate has positioned the health facilities in such a way that almost every community will not have much difficulty when attending any of

the facilities. At the facilities, they have provided some equipment and materials especially for maternity care. The nurses at the facilities are trained nurses who know how to go about their duties. One health worker explained how they have tried to make health care accessible in the District as:

Our health facilities are accessible because we have 15 health facilities in the District. We have positioned them in such a way that every electoral area will have access to a health facility. We have also formed Adolescent Reproductive Clubs in which education is ongoing at their meetings. The message is about good health practices among these young mothers. If there is the need for them to go to any of the facilities for care, they refer them to the facility [33-year-old health worker].

If the District Health Directorate has tried to make health care services accessible, then the researcher was interested in some of the services they provide to support these teenage mothers. Some of the services are: home visits, counselling services, educating teenage mothers on issues of hygiene and many more. Their services provided were explained as:

When you are pregnant, nurses will visit you or come to your mother and tell her that you didn't impregnate yourself so they shouldn't be shouting at you otherwise you will be scared. But if they don't shout at you, you will be relaxed and be able to give birth with ease [17-year-old teenage mother].

“The nurses have been teaching us about hygiene and cleanliness [17-year-old teenage mother].

The first time I went to the hospital, the midwife told me that I am pregnant at a young age so I should make sure I attend the hospital regularly as that will help me to give birth easily. The midwife and some nurses have also been telling me that I should try and go back to school after delivery [17-year-old teenage mother].

The teenage mothers also confirmed that once you are pregnant, there was a policy that will make you access some free health care. They were not really able to explain what that free health care service was all about. In view of that, the study tried to find answers to some of the questions that the teenage mothers were not able to answer. This explanation was given by one of the health workers interviewed. This is what she said:

Once someone is pregnant, irrespective of your age, all you need is to register with the midwives and you will be given a chit that will make you access health care services freely. We also support them in their various clubs to go through this successfully [33-year old health worker].

In their line of duty, one of their major challenges they shared was that:

We tried to make health care less expensive for these teenage mothers but because they are shy, majority of them don't come to seek for health care at early stages; some of them even give birth at home without attending even one antenatal care. In such situations, some of them come in with complications at the later stage which makes our work difficult. Although we tried to fish out the teenage mothers when we go for our routine

community servicesif the nurses themselves are not discovering them in the community they will rather come may be at a time that they are almost close to delivery [33-year old health worker].

The District Health Directorate together with its workers were providing a lot of services for these teenage mothers but most of their programs were geared towards reduction of teenage motherhood which was not really the aim of this research. It was also revealed that because of how the nurses went about their duties and advices they were giving to the teenage mothers, almost all the teenage mothers especially those who have been able to go back to school were aspiring to be health workers (precisely a nurse). Hence, nurses were serving as mentors for the teenage mothers. These are some examples from the teenage mothers:

I want to be a nurse in the future. I admire the kind of services they provide for us. [17-year-old teenage mother]

I will go back to school. That is why I have started trading. I want to be like the nurse who takes care of my daughter [16-year-old teenage mother].

One other formal institution that was providing social support for the teenage mothers were Non-Governmental Organizations in the district. Some of these organisations were supporting teenage mothers in various ways which was really impacting their lives positively. Some of the services provided were organizing teenage mothers to come together and save money towards their future. Some of the NGOs were: Plan Ghana, Health caters network and Future Home International.

Plan Ghana was an International Non-Governmental Organisation that was supporting community members to come together in different groups to save money which can be given as revolving fund to individual members to start a business. Within these different groups, there was a group for teenage mothers. The activities of Plan Ghana for the teenage mothers was explained by one opinion leader as:

Plan Ghana only brings teenage mothers together and gives them money box with locks and group members contribute whatever they have agreed to pay at the end of every month. The saved money is then given out as loan to one of the group members at a very low interest to start a trade. The said member then pays off the loan little by little. When that loan is paid off, then another person can also access the paid loan [40-year-old-male-health worker.]

This means that they do not give them money but they teach them how to save and counsel them on the need to plan for your future. Because their interest is on the future of the teenage mother, they work hand in hand with another NGO called Health Cater Network.

Plan Ghana refers teenage mothers who do not want to give birth again but would want to learn a trade and save more to Health Cater Network for them to access free family Planning services [36-year old health worker]

These are the services Health Cater Network provides:

We have Health Caters Network which is a club and that members of the club serve as peer educators to their peers in the

community. This club is on sharing information on family planning services. Within this club there are teenage mothers especially those who are still depending on a man for their needs. The peer members link you to some of the health facilities and free family planning services will be offered to you [35-year-old health worker].

Free family planning and counselling will set the teenage mother think about their future then in supporting the teenage mothers to find a helping hand, they are linked to Plan Ghana. With this, the teenage mother is able to meet other teenagers who are in her situation, come together, save money and support themselves. This counselling coupled with saving towards your future help some of them to learn trade or go back to school.

After giving birth to one child, I decided to learn a trade. My baby's father was the one who was willing to support me. I was afraid to get pregnant again because I was still having sex with him. I confided in one of the nurses who referred me to Health Caters Network. I was given a friend who educated me on some family planning measures. Later I chose one service and they did it for me without charging any money [19-year-old year teenage mother].

Now the question was on how sustainable the activities of this Plan Ghana and the Health Caters Network were. Information gathered from the field indicated that most of the opinion leaders were positive about the activities of the two NGO's because of the reason shared below:

Yes, I think its sustainable because they are not giving out the money themselves but they are teaching them the habit of saving themselves. If they are giving out the money, then we may say that once they are out they won't continue the support but teaching the teenage mothers themselves will help sustain it for long. Because they are only helping bring them together so once you are contributing your own money even if the NGO no longer exists, you will still do the contribution [40-year-old health worker].

Unfortunately, most of the teenage mothers were feeling reluctant to say whether their services are sustainable or not. It was one who said that she will not depend on that savings forever. She will try to work hard for other greater opportunities. This was how she explained herself:

Don't know if our savings will continue growing like this. But I have decided to keep different money somewhere so in-case people stop saving as a group, I can rely on the little I am hiding for my daily activities. It is a matter of working hard and getting more money to save [19-year-old teenage mother]

There was also another NGO called Future Home International which was more into disability rights. They give wheel chairs and clutches to the District Assembly to give to children with disabilities. Out of these children are babies of teenage mothers. This was just to support them with some movement in their respective communities.

Although the study found about three Non-governmental organisations in the Districts it appears most of the teenage mothers interviewed did not have

a lot of information about them. It was just a handful of teenage mothers that had one way or another benefitted from their activities. When teenage mothers were asked about activities of any NGO, most of them said no NGO had come to their aid. For example, during the focus group discussion, this was what one teenage mother said:

I have not heard of anything like that [18-year-old teenage mother, focused grouped discussion).

One woman talked about some NGO services but she has not linked me to them. [17-year-old teenage mother]

This means that a lot of education has not been done about the activities of these NGO in the district. Moreover, the Ngo's were not spreading their tentacles enough.

Discussion

It was realized that some baby fathers were providing social support to their baby mothers and their children. This finding corresponds to other findings done elsewhere. For example, research done by Lead-Beater and Bishop (1994) agreed that baby fathers of teenage mothers provide support system which helps to mitigate adjustment difficulties. Mostly, this support is done hand in hand with the family. It was explained earlier on that the family was the primary support system for the teenage mothers in the District. These revelations have been confirmed by a lot of studies. For instance, Betance (2004) revealed that primary support usually comes from family, particularly the teenager's own birth mother (Rezek, 2010) and the child's father. Other support persons mentioned in Betance's study were grandmothers, the mothers of the child's father, aunts, sisters and friends (Betance, 2004). Another study by Stevenson

(1999) found that parents and boyfriends' supports were important to the psychological well-being of teenage mothers. Meanwhile there were other studies that did not confirm boyfriends as supporters for their teenage girlfriends who became mothers. Rather, they molested and denied fatherhood right away. For example, Southorn (2016) revealed that some baby fathers denied their responsibilities as fathers to teenage mothers which even continued to break family ties. He continued that some of the fathers went to the extent of asking for paternity test. This means that some baby fathers of teenage mothers could or will not be of support to their baby mama.

The study also revealed that the Social Welfare Department in the District provided support such as addressing denial cases, providing skills training and education to the teenage mothers and many more. Social Welfare Services have been reviewed in literature as one supporting agent for teenage mothers. This finding corresponds to other studies by researchers. For example, Jason and Wolfe (2009) found that being a teenage mother generally reduced annual income compared to other young adults. Teenage mothers were therefore more likely to receive cash assistance. In view of this, most teenage mothers depended on welfare services to support themselves.

The school also provided some form of support like allowing the teenagers to go through the school system while pregnant, encouraging teenage mothers to come back to school and educating them and many more. However, it was interesting to know that some other educationists were not in support of these services provided to teenage mothers because they felt like it will motivate other teenagers to also do the same (Khalil, 2000). For example, in South Africa, at places where there is higher teenage motherhood, educators play an important

role in terms of helping, caring, guiding and motivating academic achievement (Khalil, 2000). Another argument holds that, most teenage mothers who drop out of school are not encouraged by schools or educators to go back to studying; because teenage mothers are hopeless bodies (they are bodies whose lives are not regarded as “lives”) and whose materiality is seen as “unimportant” by schools (Butler, 2015).

Activities of the various Health Workers and Health Centers within the District contributed positively to the well-being of teenage mothers. The study saw the enormous supports they were giving to the teenage mothers. They brought healthcare services to the doorsteps of the people and also served as mentees for the teenage mothers. This revelation corresponds with another finding by Lander (2010), who indicated that nurses also played a significant role in the life world of teenage mothers because they served as mentors for the teenage mothers.

Lastly, teenage mothers received gifts and counselling sessions from their various religious groups in the District. For example, Green (2009) confirmed that although religious bodies were supposed to look at the spiritual aspects of their members, they also provided physical needs for teenage mothers in their church.

All the findings discussed in this chapter were in line with The ecological theory which draws heavily on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecology of human development, which looks at the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors. These individual relationships help provide support to the individual (in this case, teenage mothers) when trouble arises.

CHAPTER TEN

ASPIRATIONS OF TEENAGE MOTHERS

Introduction

There are challenges associated with teenage motherhood, which may limit their education and employment opportunities. As a result of the challenges, some of the teenage mothers were disadvantaged (Amorim et al., 2009). Although teenage mothers were disadvantaged, they had different aspirations in life. Aspirations play a powerful role in shaping the future of teenage mothers as well as their adaptation strategies.

In this chapter, teenage mothers were asked to take pictures of any object or anything that they could use to summarise their experiences. They then backed these pictures with some narratives explaining why they used such images to represent their experience. Two main themes emerged in this chapter. These were: teenage mothers who were hopeful about the future (those with support and without support) and teenage mothers who were not hopeful about the future.

Aspirations of Hopeful Teenage Mothers with Support

Teenage mothers interviewed in the Adaklu district of Ghana for this study made a picture of their own life aspirations and future prospects. The experience of motherhood appeared to have affected and transformed the teenagers. This change in behavior led to aspiring for positive things in life. For example, teenage mothers reported rapid and striking changes in their outlook and associated behavior. Most of them took charge of their lives and swore to live positive lives (which is discussed in chapter six). Hence, most of the teenage

mothers aspired to return to school or learn a trade in order to achieve that positive lifestyle.

They were of the view that, going back to school or learning a trade would help them to be economically independent. The study found that a number of the teenage mothers aspiring great feet's from had the support from their family members. They expressed their aspirations by using different pictures including a building, electrical socket and a chair.

This is how a 17-year-old teenage mother narrated her story by using a building in her community (Figure 8):



Figure 8: A picture of a building

Source: Prisca, 2018

This building represents my life. When I was young, I was living a very bad life-style but now that I am growing up, I have started living a good life. I used this building because this structure has been well built but when there is a heavy storm, the wind can take the roofing off. But the roofing can be rebuilt and be more beautiful than how it was before. I have changed my lifestyle now and am still rebuilding my life. Hopefully I will be of good use to my family [17-year old teenage mother].

This 17-year old teenage mother was very troublesome. She used to run from school and visit her boyfriend. She could even stay for three days before going home. The parents would scorn her but still she went back to the boyfriend. She was the type that did not listen to advice from her parents when she was growing up. No matter how much the family members tried to stop her from visiting the boyfriend, she would still sneak out to him. To her, she was in love with this man. She never wanted to be in school but things have changed now that she has become a mother. She has started trading in charcoal. For her, the whole experience of being a teenage mother set her thinking about her life and now she is hoping for a better life in the near future with the little job she has started. She is aspiring to be economically independent.

For her experience, her child's father and her family have been very supportive throughout her journey as a teenage mother. The child's father took care of her throughout her pregnancy till she gave birth. After six months, the child's father gave her money to start her charcoal business. From the family side, the mother and siblings help take care of the child when the need arises.

Similarly, an 18-year old teenage mother shared her own story about change in behavior and aspiring for better things because of the love she has for her child. She used an electrical socket (Figure 9) to explain her story:

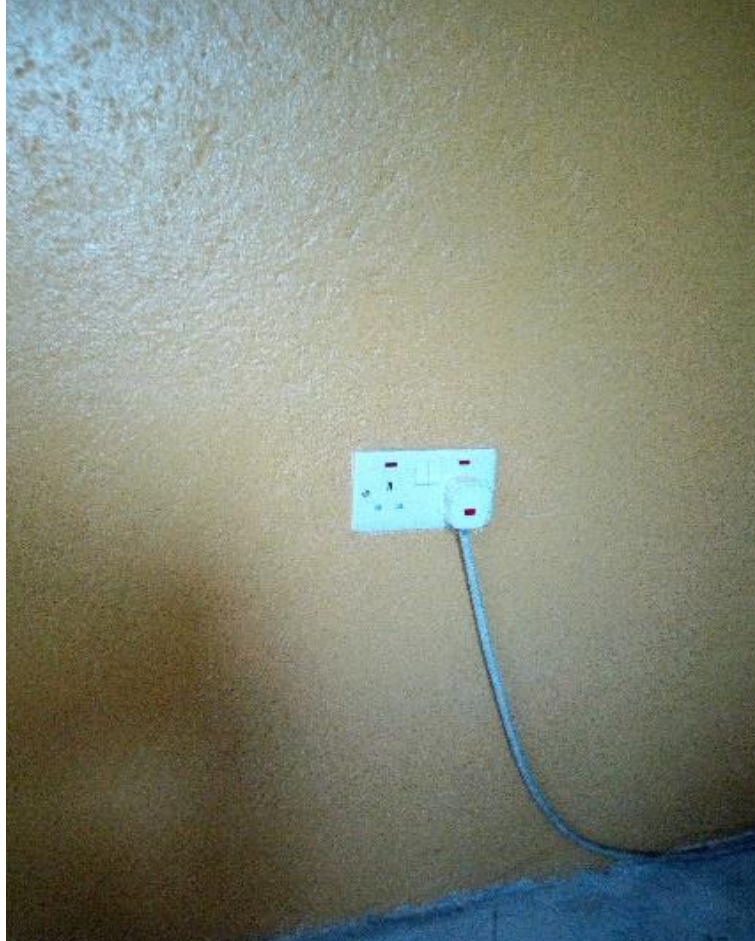


Figure 9: A picture of a socket

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

First, I was in white (very good girl) before I got into this temptation and I became dark (all hope was lost). So now that I am back at school I have become white again. Like this socket that powers any electrical product plugged into, so is my life now. I am ready to take advantage of any support that will come my way. I have tasted life and I am ready to move on to be better in future [18-year-old teenage mother].

The 18-year-old teenage mother's individual in-depth interview was traced. The researcher was interested in linking the teenage mother's positive aspirations to what she was doing now to achieve that aspiration. The study revealed that this 18-year-old teenage mother has gone back to school despite all her odd experiences. She was not just schooling but was also selling toffees after school to help her take care of herself and the child. To her, she wants to achieve higher level of education so that she can be the nurse she was aspiring to be. This is what she said:

My friends laugh at me when I go to school but I do not care about them. I just want to complete my school and be a nurse. I would love to be a nurse [18-year-old teenage mother]

In addition, another 18-year-old teenage mother who has similar experiences too describe her story using a picture of a chair (Figure 10). This is what she said about her picture:



Figure 10: Picture of a chair

Source: Prisca, 2018

This chair can be seen by different people in life. Someone can destroy this chair because it may seem useless for him or her. Meanwhile this same chair will be seen by another person and will be an asset for him or her. It will be an asset because the individual in question can re-create the chair into something that is of good use. I can relate my life to this chair because people think that being a teenage mother was the end of me, but I will prove to them that I can still be what I dream about. I can re-create my life with the little support I have and when people see me they would be envious [18-year-old teenage mother].

The researcher traced the history of this 18-year old teenage mother from interviews she had with her before she took her picture. From her story, she went through a lot of challenges during her pregnancy. She was almost all the time hungry and rushed to the clinic because she was neglected by her family and pushed out to stay with the man responsible for her pregnancy. This man lived in a destitute house. He has other mistresses and he had impregnated two ladies (including herself). This man abused her verbally, physically and emotionally. After delivery, the child couldn't walk. This is what she said about her own experience as a teenage mother:

For my experience as a teenage mother, I can say that being a teenage mother is painful to some people while others it brings happiness to them. I saw pain because if you give birth and your child is in good condition though people will not like it but you yourself you will be happy. You will forget whatever pains you went through. But my child is not in good shape. The scars still remain with me [18-year-old teenage mother]

For her, motherhood has taught her a lot of lessons in life. Now that she has been able to reunite with family and she is back at school, she will do everything possible because she is aspiring to be a nurse in the near future. She was rejected and stigmatized but now that they have found something good in her, she needs to utilize her opportunity.

From the discussions so far, it is realized that the teenage mothers had managed to aspire for greater opportunities. This important because it indicates that they are making efforts to have a positive change in their lives.

It was also deduced from teenage mothers' stories, that their aspirations evolved from the lives of people around them. It is clearly seen that parents were supporting them by giving them a helping hand when the need arose (as discussed in chapter nine) which have led to most of the teenage mothers aspiring for greater things in the near future. Support systems are therefore relevant to the teenage mother. They offer opportunities for the mother to hope again.

The study also revealed that aspirations between the different teenage mothers were influenced by opportunities they could access and their socialization process. Teenage mothers from homes that parents were supportive were very positive about their future aspirations and vice versa.

Aspirations of Hopeful Teenage Mothers without Support

While some of the participants had been supported to achieve their aspirations, there was another group that was motivated but had no support. They did not have support from neither families, friends or any group. To them they could not help themselves, but they were very positive about their future and willing to leave their setbacks in the past. However, they felt that when they got support, it would aid them in achieving their aspirations. Anyone who could come to their rescue could help them achieve their aspirations. A teenage mother used charcoal (Figure 11) to represent her aspiration.



Figure 11: A picture of Charcoal

Source: Prisca, 2018

The reason why I'm using charcoal is that first my life was white but now my life is no more like that. But there is a proverb in Ewe that one day, one-day charcoal sellers too would wear white dress and that's why I used charcoal [17-year-old teenage mother].

Linking her picture and narrative to her interview, it was realized that she is a migrant and has been abandoned by all her family members and the father of her child. It is her cousin who has given her accommodation and tries to help her and the baby. Access to land to farm has become difficult because of lack of funds to purchase or acquire land for farming. She washed or cleaned for people to survive. To her, she wants to go back to school but she has no support.

Similarly, there is the story of a 19-year-old teenage mother, who was staying with the mother at Accra but was asked to come and stay with the auntie in the village because there was no space for her and her baby at the mother's place in the city. She has been able to complete Senior High School because she

stayed in the city. To her, she is aspiring to be a nurse but there is nobody to finance her tertiary education. She couldn't farm because she is not used to that job and it was difficult for her to venture into it. She used a picture of a lantern (Figure 12) to explain her experience. This is what she said about the picture:

I was supposed and I still want to be the lantern of my family so that I can shine to everybody in the community. My dreams are a bit shattered but I would go back to school and become somebody great in the future so that I can shine to them. Like this lantern, I am filled with kerosene and I am just waiting for someone to help light it and I will be the light of the community [19-Year-old teenage mother].



Figure 12: A picture of lantern

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Likewise, the story of another 17-year old teenage mother. She used a picture of dry grass (Figure 13) to explain her aspiration. To her although she is back at school she cannot concentrate because the baby father's family are restricting her to see her own daughter because she forced herself back to school. Her daughter was her source of joy and she was the key reason why she went back to school so that she can get a good job after completion to take proper care of her. To her (teenage mother), she aspires to be a good working class lady and a mother as well. A helper coming to her rescue to achieve this aspiration was her desire. This is what she said:

During the dry season, the grasses dry up as if they die off. However, as the raining season sets in, the grasses become fresh (green) again and look very nice. Relating it to my life, I would say that for those of us who gave birth as teenagers and are just staying at home, this is not the end of our lives. We have to fight and progress in life again. My expectation is that the future would be brighter for me. If I am able to continue my education as I have started and I get a job afterwards, then it means I will be a better person. Support from family to help me relate to my child well will do me a lot of good [19-year-old teenage mother].



Figure 13: Picture of dry grasses

Source: Prisca, 2018

It is clearly revealed that this group of teenage mothers had a strong desire to achieve something positive in life but practical barriers like financial, family and community support were hindering them.

Aspirations of Teenage Mothers without Hope

While some mothers were aspiring for positive life in the near future, there were other teenage mothers who felt they have come to the end of their journey in life. To them, nothing positive can come out of them hence do not feel positive about life. They saw their children as stumbling blocks which have killed all hopes they had. A teenage mother used a picture with a stick (Figure 14) to explain her experiences. Their stories are shared below.



Figure 14: Picture of a stick

Source: Prisca, 2018

She explained the picture as follows:

The reason why I choose stick is that there is nobody to assist me and push me forward. Yeah... It means I won't grow again [19-year-old teenage mother].

To her, life has become stagnant and meaningless. She does not have any support so she does not aspire for anything positive. Tracing this back to her interview with the researcher, it was found that she was sacked from her parents' house to that of the father of her child. They were staying peacefully when the man decided to travel abroad. He left and she never heard from him. People think the man died but she is not sure about anything again. To her, at times she wishes she can end her life. Nothing good can come out of her even if she gets support.

Again, a 16-year-old teenage mother used packed block (Figure 15) to tell her story. To her she will never be a better person in the near future. There is no positive life after being a teenage mother. She explained it in just these few sentences as:

All the struggle that I have gone through is like the weight of those blocks packed. How can a little girl like me unpack all these blocks? It will just kill me one of these days [16-year-old teenage mother].



Figure 15: Picture of packed blocks

Source: Prisca, 2018

She got pregnant at the age of 14 when she was in class five. She was heavily stigmatized and the sad story was that before she realized that she was pregnant, the father of the child had already left the village. She could not trace his whereabouts. She is left with her baby alone at that age to struggle. She

cannot feed herself, talk less about feeding her baby. Positive aspiration cannot be found in her dictionary.

In addition, a 19-year-old teenage mother with two children used a heap of firewood (Figure 16) to depict her aspiration. To her, the children are loads which have blocked her to aspire for anything good in the near future. Although she was staying with her boyfriend, the man was abusive and not supportive. Her explanation of her picture is below:

The firewood packed here is a blockage to me. The firewood is a blockage in my life, because what I want to become in future, I can't attain it. I can't access this route unless the heap of firewood is taken off from here. So as a teenage mother, this is how my two kids are blocking my chances of going back to school and becoming a nurse [19-year-old teenage mother].



Figure 16: Picture of packed firewood

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

For this group of teenage mothers, life cannot offer them anything, that is envisioned the end of whatever they were aspiring for in life. They were also

not resilient but just waiting for the whole teenage motherhood experience to ruin their lives.

Discussion

The results show that the experiences of teenage motherhood have changed some of them to have direction. For example: mothers who were dropped out went back to school or learnt a trade. This change in behavior has influenced their aspirations for positive things in life. Similarly, in England, a study found that teenage motherhood has pushed most teenage mothers to change direction and pick a career because they had someone else for whom they were responsible (Seamark & Lings, 2004).

The study showed that some of the teenage mothers who were aspiring for positive things relied on personal strength and support from parents. These two resources made it easier for them to work towards their aspirations. This finding has been echoed in a study done by Garrett and Tidwell (1999) who indicated that teenage mothers draw on two main resources to achieve their positive aspirations. These two resources are families and personal capacities.

Again, Ray (2006), concluded that aspirations do not happen in a vacuum, but rather occur in a social context. He continued that individuals draw their aspirations from the lives of others around them. This means that individuals have some windows of aspiration through which they view the possibilities that exist between the social sphere. These windows of aspiration were their family members. The aspirations between the different teenage mothers were influenced by opportunities they could assess and their socialization process. Teenage mothers from homes that had supportive parents were very positive about their future aspirations and vice versa. A similar study

found that aspirations of teenage mothers were explained on the basis of different opportunities like family support (Schoon, 2001).

Drawing from the ecological theory which draws heavily on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecology of human development, which looks at the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors. These helped teenage mothers to achieve their positive aspirations when things become very tough for them.

For one group of teenage mothers, it was realized that the teenage mothers had a strong desire to achieve something positive in life but practical barriers like financial, family and community were confronting them. The findings of the study is in line with Gutman (2008) observation that financial constraint limited teenage mothers in accessing their opportunities that help them in achieving their aspirations.

While others were aspiring for positive things in life, there were some teenage mothers who thought nothing good could come out of them. To them, being a teenage mother has brought all their aspirations to an end. These results differ from one other study done by Seamark and Lings (2004). The results indicated that being a teenage mother did not mean that their life and future were all over. They could still work towards what they want to achieve.

In sum, this chapter was about teenage mothers' aspirations through the use of the photo voices. The categories of teenage mothers and their aspirations were: mothers who are aspiring for something positive in the near future (those with support and those that do not have any support) and those who are not positive about life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings of the study, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations made. It also presents the contribution of the study to knowledge and some areas for further research.

The general objective of the study is to assess adaptation strategies associated with challenges of being a teenage mother in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate causes of teenage motherhood in the district
2. Explore how teenage mothers assess their motherhood status
3. Investigate assets available to teenage mothers in the district
4. Explore livelihood activities of the teenage mothers
5. Appraise the support systems available to the teenage mothers
6. Explore aspirations of the teenage mothers in bettering their life

The study used a qualitative research methodology (specifically phenomenological study design), 30 teenage mothers as participants in the study. A list of teenage mothers who visited any of the health facilities in the district was collected from the healthcare providers. The snowball sampling technique was used to recruit teenage mothers who did not visit any health facility. They were reached through their counterparts who visit any of the health facilities. Moreover, 17 opinion leaders were also purposively selected. The data collection methods used were narratives, focus group discussions, photo voices and in-depth interview.

Data collected included causes of teenage motherhood in the District, how teenage mothers envisaged motherhood, assets they were depending on, livelihood activities of the teenage mothers, support systems available for the teenage mothers and what the teenage mothers aspire to be in the near future. Data collected were analyzed using qualitative data miner lite and content analysis.

Summary of Key Findings

All the teenage mothers interviewed were within the ages of 15-19 years. Almost all of the teenage mothers had not attained Senior High Education. With the exception of one teenage mother who was a Muslim, the rest of the teenage mothers interviewed were all Christians (with mostly just one child).

The study identified three causes of teenage motherhood in Adaklu District. Teenage pregnancies were caused by transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangements. Transactional sex emerged as the major cause of teenage motherhood in the district. Transactional sex is exchange of sex for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and sexual drives. The quest for achieving these basic needs led the teenage mothers into transactional sex. The men in question could either be of the same age with the teenagers or older than them.

Cultural factors such as funeral and festival celebrations, taboos observed some years ago and type of marriage system practiced also emerged as causes of teenage motherhood. Apart from transactional sex and cultural factors as causes of teenage motherhood, sleeping arrangements in the various communities also emerged as a cause of teenage motherhood. There were two main dimensions of sleeping arrangements; That is, parents pushing children

away because of sleeping space or teenagers seeing what parents do and emulating.

Teenage mothers envisaged their motherhood situation from two main perspectives' from the position that teenage motherhood is a stepping- stone for greater heights or that the situation is stumbling blocks. Teenage mothers who saw the whole situation as stepping stone for greater heights used positive images such as riverside, white sheet, a germinating maize seed and a shooting mango tree to explain how motherhood has affected them positively. To them, because they have someone to cater for, they are either working or gone back to school. Others have learnt their lesson and have changed their irresponsible sexual behaviors. Teenage mothers who considered the situation as stumbling block were mostly those who were neglected by their families and did not have anybody to look up to.

Teenage mothers depended on both internal and external assets to adapt to being teenage mothers. Internal assets involved picking the positive aspects of their situations, encouraging themselves and working hard to achieve their goals in the near future.

External assets included physical, human, financial, social, cultural and natural assets. Physical assets included teenage mothers access to schools, health facilities and any developmental buildings in the communities. Human assets were measured looking at their skills, training, education and quality of health. The study saw that most of the teenage mothers did not have any formal skills in any job. Socially, the teenage mothers depended on family (especially parents), religious bodies and teachers.

Land, forest and rivers were the natural assets teenage mothers depended on. But it emerged from the findings of the study that land was the major natural asset that the teenage mothers depended on. Heads of families owned the land so it was not difficult for teenage mothers who were indigenes to access land for farming. Meanwhile, teenage mothers who were not indigenes found it difficult to access land. This is because they do not have enough money to pay for the rent for the farming land.

Two main livelihood activities emerged as sources of livelihood for the teenage mothers were agricultural activities and non-agricultural activities. Agricultural activities such as subsistence farming by the teenage mothers for themselves, planting and harvesting for other people and taking money or food stuffs in exchange were the major agricultural activities, although teenage mothers who have relatives at other cities migrated to search for greener pastures. Challenges such as unfavorable weather conditions, over-reliance on human strength and over grazing by cattle in the district affected their farming activities hence the need for diversification.

Support systems such as financial and social supports were provided by the family, non-governmental agencies, government, Ghana Education Service, health sector, religious bodies, teachers, social services and baby fathers. The family supported the teenage mothers by financially supporting their needs. These kind of supports helped the teenage mothers purchase their basic needs. Some baby fathers too were helping in the same way especially baby fathers closer to the regional capital.

Non-governmental agencies such as Plan Ghana, Health Caters Network and Future Home International provided some social services to the teenage

mothers. Plan Ghana helped them form groups that aided them in saving towards their future. Health Caters Network provided adolescent reproductive health services freely to the teenage mothers while Future Home International provided wheel chairs to disabled teenage mothers and teenage mothers with children who are disabled.

Also the Ghana Education Service in conjunction with the government of Ghana scholarship for the needy and the girl child facilitated smooth completion of some of the teenage mothers' education. Ghana Education Service policy of making the teenager who gets pregnant attend school till they give birth helped reduce some of the lessons the teenage mothers would have missed learning at school from the time of pregnancy to the time they gave birth. Teachers encouraged some of the teenage mothers to return to school after delivery. They also provided basic things such as food and uniforms to the needy ones. In addition, they had adolescent reproductive groups in which they taught the teenage mothers about the characteristics of adolescent stage of life.

The Health Services assisted in good health care delivery and most of the nurses served as role models for the teenage mothers. The social welfare department also assisted some of the teenage mothers who reported issues of denial from their baby fathers to solve their cases. Some of the teenage mothers received financial support from their churches. Apart from financial support they received from the church, items such as soaps and clothing were donated to them by the churches.

Challenges such as inadequate logistics and financial issues hindered organizations and individuals who were charged with the job of supporting teenage mothers especially that of the Social Welfare Department.

Three main themes were revealed on what teenage mothers aspired for in the near future. These were teenage mothers who were hopeful and had the necessary support, teenage mothers who were hopeful but did not have any support and teenage mothers who were hopeless.

Teenage mothers who were hopeful and had the support of their parents had either started school or had started some useful jobs that would help them to be prominent people in the near future. Teenage mothers who were hopeful and did not have any support were ready to change their lives. They had bigger dreams of returning to school or learning a trade. They were just waiting for their helper to come their way. Teenage mothers who were hopeless were not aspiring for anything in life; they wished they would even die.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Teenage motherhood in the district is caused mainly by transactional sex, cultural factors and sleeping arrangement. The quest for basic needs pushed teenage mothers into exchanging sex for either food, clothing, shelter and sexual drives. The men in question are either of the same age or older than them depending on the location of the teenage mother.
2. Teenage mothers envisaged teenage motherhood either as stepping stones for greater height in the near future because of the responsibilities associated with it or see it as very challenging because they are seen as disrespectful and have been abandoned by family and loved ones
3. Teenage mothers had both internal and external assets. Internal assets manifested in from being positive about their situation, encouraging themselves and working hard. This helped them to adapt positively to

being teenage mothers. In addition, natural, financial, cultural, physical, human and social also emerged as what teenage mothers were external assets available for these mothers. Among all these assets, land appears the most important asset depended on by teenage mothers. Moreover, none of the teenage mothers had any formal skills. Those who have God given skills such as hairdressing were not practicing because of superstitious beliefs.

4. Teenage mothers indulged in some kind of livelihood activities that help them to adapt to their situations. Livelihood strategies such as agricultural and non-agricultural were the major strategies that teenage mothers explored in pursuing their livelihoods. These activities ranged from farming, planting for others, firewood business, gari processing and many others. In both agricultural and non-agricultural activities, the mothers were faced with challenges of inadequate finances, over dependence on human strength and over dependence on rainfall. Also, those who were stranded migrated to their family members in the cities to look for greener pastures.
5. Teenage mothers had some available support systems that they could access when things became tough. These support systems were their own support, support from families, baby fathers and the government support, Ghana Education Service support, social services support, Non-governmental agencies, health services and religious organisations. Provision of these services to teenage mothers' help ease their challenges of being teenage mothers. However, those supporting

teenage mothers are faced with the challenges of inadequate logistics and bad roads.

6. Teenage mothers in Adaklu District aspired for either positive or negative things in the near future. Being positive about the future helps them to reorganise their lives towards success. This is easy for those with the necessary supports. There was another group who never aspire for anything because they thought their lives have come to an end.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The research revealed transactional sex as one of the key causes of teenage motherhood. In view of this, sensitization programs should be organized by the District Assemblies. This can be done through Non-Formal Education systems on the relevance of Parents/Guardian sternly providing basic needs for their teenagers. Even if parents do not have enough to provide for their wards, they should use appropriate channels to tell the teenagers on how they will both help in providing for one another. This awareness by these parents will minimize the situation of teenage girls readily falling prey to boys/men all in the name of money for basic needs provision.
2. Also, the district assemblies can organize and teach teenage girls within the district. Some employable skills like soap making, hairdressing, etc. These vocations can serve as a source of income for the teenage girls, so in situations where their guardian neglects their duties of providing for

their basic needs, they can fall on those sources of funds for support other than engaging with boys/men to provide their basic needs.

3. Cultural factor (Organized social events like funerals, festivals) was also one the causes of teenage motherhood. The social activities that extend to late hours of the day such as funeral wake-keeping and music jams had most of the teenage girls lured into sexual acts leading to Teenage motherhood. It is recommended that chiefs, opinion leaders, assembly members, unit committee members etc. of the area should engage in developing strict laws to check teenagers during events. These laws should subject guardians/parents of teenagers to punitive measures such as fine payment in the case of going contrary to the rules. Teenagers caught within stipulated and agreed upon banned period can be punished by local authorities to serve as a deterrent for others. Enforcing these suggestions could deter teenagers especially the girls from being lured into sexual activities as has been the case.
4. Sleeping arrangement of teenagers was also a cause of teenage motherhood according to the research. Teenagers who sleep in the same room with their parents steal glances of their (parents') sexual acts and get motivated to emulate. Although it might be a difficult task to keep all teenagers from their parents' bedroom due to economic hardship, parents can help eliminate the fact that their teenage children look at their sexual activities. This can be done when the locations of where parents sleep should be warded off from open viewing by teenagers who also sleep in the same room. Adhering to this suggestion, will go a long way to reduce teenagers that watch and practise what they see.

5. Some teenage mothers who had the opportunity to engage in agricultural activities as their source of livelihood complained about unfavourable rainfall conditions and cattle indiscriminately grazing on their farm land. Based on this, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) within the district should help with dam creations at vantage areas within such communities so that struggling farmers like teenage mothers will not always be at the mercy of the weather. Also chiefs, assembly members, opinion leaders can come together and put in punitive measures (such as payment of fines) against herdsmen who uncontrollably allow their livestock to attack people's farms. This will assist teenage mothers in their farming activities.

Although the Social Welfare Department is supporting in providing funds to some struggling teenage mothers, it was found that it was not enough. One of the challenges the department faces in administering support to the teenage mothers is the nature of bad roads to the communities within its jurisdiction. The institutions that are supposed to support teenage mothers should be adequately resourced. Government should provide adequate financial and technical support to these institutions. In particular, the district assembly in the study area should be adequately resourced with office equipment to make it more pro-active in executing their duties to the teenage mothers.

Contribution to Knowledge

Silverman (2000) asserts that a study's contribution to knowledge could be determined in four areas namely; developing a concept or methodology; building on an existing study; and changing existing knowledge. In line with the assertion above, the study's contribution to knowledge include:

1. The research was able to build on existing studies (such as Seamark & Lings, 2004 & Duncan et al., 2010) that focused on overcoming the challenges associated with being a teenage mother. This study reinforced the views of these researchers that some teenage mothers with the right adaptation strategies overcome the challenges associated with being teenage mothers.
2. The contribution to the vulnerability to resiliency framework by including assets, livelihoods, support systems and aspirations is another knowledge based significance of this study. These strategies influence the adaptation strategies of the teenage mothers which lead to particular outcomes (positive).
3. The contribution to knowledge is based on how teenage mothers in Adaklu District adapt to the challenges associated with being teenagers. Most of the literature specifically on Ghana focused on challenges associated with teenage motherhood (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013 & Keller, Hilton and Twumasi-Ankrah 1999). Thus, this study has contributed to the knowledge base on how teenage mothers in Adaklu District of Ghana adapt to the challenges associated with being a teenage mother.

Areas for further research

The study looked at adaptation strategies and challenges associated with being a teenage mother. As part of adaption strategies to the situation, teenage mothers are supposed to protect themselves so that they will not give birth to more children which will make them more vulnerable. But this research failed to explore what community members or teenage mothers mother in the Adaklu

District of Ghana are doing to ensure reduction in teenage motherhood. Research can be conducted to understand ways of reducing teenage motherhood in the district and ways teenage mothers are protecting themselves against giving birth to other children.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Narrative Guides for Teenage Mothers

Dear sir/Madam

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study on livelihood strategies for teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity in all the information that you provide. I am interested in learning from you about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. Your experiences, both positive and negative will be appreciated since there are no rights or wrong answers. Thank you once again for your time and participation.

1. **General Issues**

- A. Tell me about yourself? (probe for age, number of children, family, educational background, previous relationships with other males etc)
- B. How did you get pregnant? (Probe for marriage, rape, betrothal, accident)

2. **Factors promoting teenage motherhood in the district**

- A. How are you perceived in the community when you give birth notwithstanding your age? (A bad child, command respect etc)
- B. How will you describe cultural issues in your community (probe for specific customs, traditions, beliefs, values, festivals, etc. which support early marriage, betrothing, trokosi etc)
- C. How do you participate in these activities?
- C. How has these cultural activities in this community or ethnicity influence you in becoming a teenage mother?

- D. How will you describe your economic situation? (Probe for specific financial problems or issues from personal level, family and society, poor or rich etc)
 - E. How has these economic issues influence you in becoming a teenage mother?
 - F. How did activities like individual behavioural aspect, education, knowledge about contraceptive, lifestyle, peer pressure, family pressure play a role in you becoming a teenage mother?
 - G. Are there any other reasons beyond the above discussed which influenced you in becoming a teenage mother (Rape, defilement, spirituality, etc.)?
3. **Role of Socio-cultural practices in pre and post teenage motherhood**
- A. What have been the challenges from conception to motherhood
(*Prompt: present challenges in general and they will talk about their own* (Probe for financial support, stigmatisation, discrimination etc)
 - B. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in solving these challenges? (probe for practices like respect for mothers, mothers are given maximum attention, people are considered as grown –ups when we give birth etc)
 - C. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in worsening these challenges?
 - D. What have been the benefits from conception to motherhood (Probe for commanding respect, taking part in decision making etc)
 - E. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in realising these benefits

4. **Livelihood assets available to teenage mothers in the district**

A. Which assets do you have access to

a. *Natural* (Probe for Land, water bodies and forest, what do you use them for?etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

b. *Human* (Probe for educational qualifications, skilled training and good health etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

c. *Financial* (savings, loans, cash, remittances, food stock, livestock etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

d. *Social* (family, religious groups, associations, clubs, voluntary organizations etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

e. *Physical* (social facilities like schools, hospitals, housing etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

f. *Cultural* (values, customs, beliefs, traditions, cultural practices that they can participate etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

B. Does being a teenage mother limits the benefits you derived from these assets?

C. Which of these assets are very important to your livelihood? And why?

D. Which livelihood asset that you don't have and wish of getting?

E. How will getting this new asset improve your livelihood?

5. Livelihood activities of the teenage mothers

- A. Which occupations are you engaged in? (Probe for farming activities, trading activities, hairdressing etc) or what are you doing in order to survive?
- B. Why the choice of that/these occupations? (Probe: Did child bearing have a role in the choice of that/these occupations?)
- C. Are/Is the occupation/s selected sustainable? (Probe how it can survive in the near future)
- D. How does/did cultural practices affect sustainability of this occupation?
- E. Can you describe a typical daily occupational activity? (Probe: How does the child/children impedes or facilitates smooth daily occupational activity)
- F. How do you cope with the challenges you face as a teenage mother? (Probe for taking care of yourself and the child, Level of patience, tolerance towards the child) IF
 - a. Social (Probe: Returning to school, curtailing fertility, avoiding etc.....)
 - b. Financial (New/additional employment, organisational support, etc.....)
 - c. Cultural (Probe: Religion, spirituality, challenging norms, etc...)
- G. What will you highlight as your strengths that make you live with your child in the midst of this issues? (Probe: Internal and External like desire to making it in life, physical strength, motivation to work hard, hope for the future, the socio-economic backgrounds of my

family, Problem-solving ability, a strong goal orientation, interpersonally intelligent, independent action-oriented, determined to stand up for myself, I have a mentor who I go to for support and guidance in times I want to take an important decision)

6. Supporting systems available to teenage mothers

- A. Are you a member of any group? ((Probe for any Relatives, Friends, Traditional institutions, Religious group, NGO's, Government, Others and Why you are a member of the group)
 - B. Do you get any support from them (social group) or any other group?
 - C. What specific kind of support do you get from these social groups How have these supports been helpful in improving your current status?
 - D. Have these supports been consistent and sustainable? How? why?
 - E. How do you think support for teenage mothers could be improved?
- 7. Tell me what it is like being a teenage mother? What does it mean to you? (Probe for good and bad experiences)**
- Any other comments?**

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussions for Teenage Mothers

Dear sir/Madam

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study on livelihood strategies for teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity in all the information that you provide. I am interested in learning from you about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. Your experiences, both positive and negative will be appreciated since there are no rights or wrong answers. Thank you once again for your time and participation.

Section A: Socio-demographic Background of respondents

Age:

Religion:

Marital status:

Level of Education:

Child	Years	Etc

1. Factors promoting teenage motherhood in the district

- A. How do teenagers become teenage mothers in this community?
- B. How will you describe cultural issues in your community? (Probe for specific customs, traditions, beliefs, values, festivals, etc. which support early marriage, betrothing, trokosi etc)
- C. How did/does cultural issues in this community or ethnicity influence teenagers in becoming teenage mother (Probe for specific customs,

traditions, beliefs, values, festivals, etc. which support early marriage, betrothing, trokosi etc)

- D. How is the economic situation in this community like? (Probe for rich and poor, specific financial problems or issues from personal level, family and society, etc)
- E. Elaborate on how economic issues have influence teenagers in becoming teenage mothers in this community (Probe for specific financial problems or issues from personal level, family and society, etc)
- F. How did activities like behavioural aspect, education, knowledge about contraceptive, lifestyle, peer pressure, family pressure play a role in teenagers becoming a teenage mother in this community
- G. Are there any other reasons beyond the above discussed which influenced teenagers in becoming a teenage mother (probe for rape, defilement, spirituality, etc.)?

2. Role of Socio-cultural practices in pre and post teenage motherhood

- F. How are teenage mothers perceived in this community when they give birth?
- G. What have been some of the challenges from conception to motherhood for teenage mothers in the community (*Prompt: present challenges in general and they will talk about their own*) (Probe for financial support, stigmatisation, discrimination etc)
- H. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in solving these challenges? (probe for practices like respect for mothers, mothers are given maximum attention, people are considered as grown –ups when we give birth etc)

- I. How did/do socio-cultural practices play a role in solving these challenges?
- J. How did/do socio-cultural practices play a role in worsening these challenges?
- K. What have been the benefits from conception to motherhood (Probe for commanding respect, taking part in decision making etc)
- L. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in realising these benefits

3. **Livelihood assets available to teenage mothers in the district**

A. Which assets do teenage mothers have access to

- a. **Natural** (Probe for Land, water bodies and forest, what do you use them for? etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

- b. **Human** (Probe for educational qualifications, skilled training and good health etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

- c. **Financial** (savings, loans, cash, remittances, food stock, livestock etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

- d. **Social** (family, religious groups, associations, clubs, voluntary organizations etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

- e. **Physical** (social facilities like schools, hospitals, housing etc)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,

- f. **Cultural** (values, customs, beliefs, traditions, cultural practices etc)

- g. How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage,
 - B. Does being a teenage mother limits the benefits derived from these assets?
 - C. Which of these assets are very crucial to livelihood? And why?
 - D. Which livelihood asset that teenage mothers don't have and wish of getting?
 - E. How will getting this new asset improve their livelihood?
4. **Livelihood activities of the teenage mothers**
- A. Which occupations do teenage mothers engage in? (Probe for farming activities, trading activities, hairdressing etc)
 - B. Why the choice of that/these occupations? (Probe: Did child bearing have a role in the choice of that/these occupations?)
 - C. Are the occupations selected sustainable? (Probe how it can stand the test of time etc)
 - D. How do/does cultural activities affect sustainability of these occupations?
 - E. How do teenage mothers cope with the challenges they face? **IF**
 - a. Social (Probe: Returning to school, curtailing fertility, avoiding etc.....)
 - b. Financial (New/additional employment, organisational support, etc.....)
 - c. Cultural (Probe: Religion, spirituality, challenging norms, etc...)
(Probe for taking care of yourself and the child, Level of patience, tolerance towards the child)

F. What will teenage mothers highlight as strengths that make them live with their children in the midst of issues? (Probe: Internal and External like desire to making it in life, Physical strength, Motivation to work hard, hope for the future, socio-economic backgrounds of my family, Problem-solving ability, a strong goal orientation, interpersonally intelligent, Independent action-oriented, determined to stand up for myself, I have a mentor who I go to for support and guidance in times I want to take an important decision)

5. Supporting systems available to teenage mothers

A. Are teenage mother's members of any social group (Probe for religious and social groups like relatives, Friends, Traditional institutions, Religious group, NGO's, Government, Others and why they join such groups)

B. Do teenage mothers get any support from these groups?

C. What are the specific kind of support that teenage mothers get from them? (Probe for financial support, human empowerment, educational support etc)

D. How have these supports been helpful in improving current status?

E. Have these supports been consistent and sustainable? How? why?

F. How can support for teenage mothers be improved?

6. What is it like to be a teenage mother in this community? What does it mean to us? (Probe for good and bad experiences)

Any other comments?

Appendix C: In-Depth Interview for Key Informants

Dear sir/Madam

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study on livelihood strategies for teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity in all the information that you provide. I am interested in learning from you about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. Your experiences, both positive and negative will be appreciated since there are no rights or wrong answers. Thank you once again for your time and participation.

Section A: Socio-demographic Background of respondents

Age:

Religion:

Marital status:

Level of Education:

1. Factors promoting teenage motherhood in the district

- A. How are cultural practices/ situations in this community like?
- B. How does culture in this community or ethnicity influence teenagers in becoming mothers (Probe for specific customs, traditions, beliefs, values, festivals, etc. which support early marriage, bethrowing, trokosi etc)
- C. How is the economic situation in this community like?
- D. How do economic issue influence teenagers in becoming mothers in this community (Probe for specific financial problems or issues from personal level, family and society, etc)?

- E. How do individual activities like knowledge about contraceptive, lifestyle, peer pressure, family pressure) play a role in teenagers becoming mothers in this community?
 - F. Are there any other reasons beyond the above discussed which influence teenagers in becoming mothers (Rape, defilement, spirituality, etc.)?
- 2. Role of socio cultural practices in pre and post teenage motherhood**
- A. What is the history, traditions and myths surrounding teenage motherhood in this area (Probe for cultural practices, out casting, fines etc)?
 - B. How are you perceived in the community when you give birth notwithstanding your age? (Probe for culture of giving birth to receive attention, viewing sex from the moral point of view)
 - C. What have been some challenges that teenage mothers face from conception to motherhood in the community (Probe stigmatisation, health disorders, financial issues etc)?
 - D. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in resolving these challenges?
 - E. How did/does socio-cultural practices play a role in resolving these challenges?
 - F. What have been the benefits from conception to teenage mothers (Probe for commanding respect, taking part in decision making etc)?
 - G. How did/does culture play a role in realising these benefits to teenage mothers?
- 3. Livelihood assets available to teenage mothers in the district**
- A. Which assets do teenage mothers have access to in this community

- a. Natural (Probe for Land, water bodies and forest, what do you use them for?)
- b. how they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....
- c. Human (Probe for educational qualifications, skilled training and good health)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....

- d. Financial (savings, loans, cash, remittances, food stock, livestock)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....

- e. Social (family, religious groups, associations, clubs, voluntary organizations)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....

- f. Physical (social facilities like schools, hospitals, housing)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....

- g. Cultural assets (values, customs, beliefs, traditions)

How they get or acquired it (ownership type), usage, etc.....

B. Does being a teenage mother limits the benefits they derived from these assets?

C. Which of these assets are very important to these teen mother's livelihood? And why?

4. Livelihood activities of the teenage mothers

A. Which occupations do teenage mothers in this community are engaged in? (Probe number of occupation)?

B. Why do you think they choose these occupations? (Probe: Did child bearing have a role in the choice of that/these occupations?)

- C. Are their occupations viable and sustainable? (Probe how viable and sustainable)
- D. How does culture affects sustainability and viability of the teenage mothers' livelihood?
- E. How do teenage mothers cope with the challenges they face in this community? (if)
 - a. Social (Probe: Returning to school, curtailing fertility, avoiding etc.....)
 - b. Financial (New/additional employment, organisational support, etc.....)
 - c. Cultural (Probe: Religion, spirituality, challenging norms, etc...)
(Probe for taking care of themselves and their children, Level of patience, tolerance towards the child)
- F. What will you highlight as teenage mother's strengths that make them live with their children in the midst of the challenges? (Probe for desire to making it in life, Physical strength, Motivation to work hard, hope for the future, socio-economic backgrounds of my family, Problem-solving ability, a strong goal orientation, interpersonally intelligent, Independent action-oriented, determined to stand up for myself, and they have a mentor who they go to for support and guidance in times of an important decision)

5. Supporting systems available to teenage mothers

- A. What are teenage mother's sources of support from this community?
(Probe for any Relatives, Friends, Traditional institutions, Religious group, NGO's, Government, Others, etc.)
- B. What specific kind of support do they get from these groups?

- C. How can teenage mothers access these supports?
- D. How have these supports been helpful in improving teenage mother's current status?
- E. Have these supports been consistent and sustainable?
- F. How do you think services for these teenage mothers can be improved?
- G. what are some of the challenges you encounter when supporting these teen mothers?

Any other comment

Appendix D: Guide for Photo Voices

Dear sir/Madam

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study on livelihood strategies for teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana. The study is primarily for academic work, and therefore you are assured of confidentiality and anonymity in all the information that you provide. I am interested in learning from you about all your experiences and opinions about this topic. Your experiences, both positive and negative will be appreciated since there are no rights or wrong answers. Thank you once again for your time and participation.

To finish off, if you had to pick some pictures of things around you that described your life situation, what would these pictures be? Tell me more about each picture. Give me some reasons why you took that picture. What picture best describe your life?

[Probe: Looking back over your life how do you feel about who you are today – as a person? A parent? Your achievements? Your hopes and aspirations? Your plans for the future]

**Appendix E: Introductory letter from the Department of Geography and
Regional Planning**

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY & REGIONAL PLANNING



Our Ref: GRP/G.4^A/18/Vol.2/58

Your Ref:

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA
WEST AFRICA

6th February, 2018.

The Director,
Adaklu District Assembly,
Social Welfare Department,
Adaklu, Ghana.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

The bearer of this letter, **Miss Prisca Ama Anima (SS/DGR/16/0001)**, is a PhD Student at the Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast. She is conducting a research on the topic: "*Livelihood strategies of teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana.*"

As part of her research, she is required to collect data from some Organizations.

The Department would therefore be very grateful if your Organization could assist her with the following data to facilitate the work:

1. Data on the settlements in the District and the rate of teenage mothers'/pregnancy between (2014 – 2017).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Kwabena B. Antwi.
HEAD

Appendix F: Ethical clearance letter from University of Cape Coast

Ethical Clearance Board

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309/ 0244207814

C/O Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy

E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh

OUR REF: UCC/IRB/A/2016/207

YOUR REF:

OMB NO: 0990-0279

IORG #: IORG0009096



16TH FEBRUARY, 2018

Ms. Prisca Ama Anima
Department of Geography and Regional Planning
University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms. Anima,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE –ID: (UCCIRB/CHLS/2017/30)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted **Provisional Approval** for the implementation of your research protocol titled *'Livelihood strategies of teenage mothers in the Adaklu District of Ghana'*. This approval requires that you submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research.

The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

Please note that any modification of the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Owusu'.

Samuel Asiedu Owusu (PhD)
UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
Date: 19/02/2018