

The Role of Traditional Methods and Case Management Approach in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy in Tanzania: A Case of Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region

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Abstract

This article presents an empirical evidence-based analysis of traditional methods that include initiation ceremonies and a modern approach called case management approach in preventing teenage pregnancy in Tanzania. It is based on a qualitative study with a sample size of 20 participants. The first objective was niched around the premises of assessing traditional methods of preventing teenage pregnancy, premised on cultural norms and values, which have been weakened. The second objective was focused on a case management approach (introduced by the researcher) as a child protection mechanism and behavioral control that filled the gap left by traditional methods. The findings indicate that, through symbolic interactionism, traditional values and norms that held the community together are on the wane. Therefore, case management approach has proven to help in controlling early pregnancy to teenage girls. This study recommends that by combining traditional methods and a case management approach, pregnant teenagers will be actively involved in decision making and being part of the solution and change agents for community's attitudes and perceptions. The study concludes that case management is increasingly becoming important as the social fabric on which traditional methods are anchored in preventing teenage pregnancy.

Keywords: Traditional methods, Initiation ceremony, Case management approach, teenage pregnancy

Introduction and Background

Teenage girls become pregnant or mothers at their adolescent age and start childbearing at the age of between 15 and 19 years (UNFPA, 2019; WHO, 2020). Teenage pregnancy has raised an alarm in the world, and Africa in particular where approximately 95 per cent of cases have been reported. In developing countries, 36.4 million girls have experienced teenage

motherhood before the age of 18 (UNFPA, 2017). Statistics from the Reproductive Health Journal (2018) indicates that about 18.8 per cent of early pregnancy cases are noted in Africa. Out of these, about 19.3 per cent were reported in Sub-Saharan countries and 21.5 per cent in East Africa which was higher than Northern Africa whose cases were 9.2 per cent (UNFPA, 2019). About 25.7 per cent pregnancies were mostly a result of abuse, rape, sexual molestation by trusted relatives and neighbors (WB, 2017). International and national policy frameworks stipulate the need to address issues related to the subject in question. For instance, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women of 1993, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1993, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) of 1994, the Convention on the Rights of Children of 1989 and 1990, as well as the revised edition of the Tanzania Law of the Child Act number 21 of 2019 that established the Police Gender desk at the ward, district and national levels are among the agents that set initiatives to deal with the problem of teenage pregnancy. All these initiatives aimed at protecting and empowering the girl child and promoting gender equality as per the contextual living conditions of a particular country. This has compelled different local and international organizations to make interventions to alleviate the problem. Traditional methods have been taken as initiatives by many African communities as a means of reducing the problem of teenage pregnancies in their areas.² Case Management approach has been considered as additional knowledge that can be used alongside the traditional methods in preventing teenage pregnancies. Case Management approach is a process to plan, seek, advocate for, and monitor services from different social services or health care organizations and staff on behalf of a client (Global Alliance, 2018). Case Management approach does not replace what has been used by traditional methods, but rather is used as an additional approach that could lay foundation of problem solving to teenage girls and pregnant teenagers in Africa, including Tanzania.

Situating Teenage Pregnancy in Tanzania

Tanzania has been cited as one of the countries with the highest number of child pregnancies. This can be evidenced through school drop-outs. For example, in 2009 school drop-out increased from 11,264 to 69,000 girls in 2015 (Robi, 2012 and HAKIELIMU, 2015). In Mtwara alone 461 girls have dropped out of school and mostly engaged in cashew nut harvesting (Kinisa,

² Case Management Approach is a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet the client's health and human services needs.

2019). In Dar es Salaam, Tabora, Mara and Iringa, among others, educators have decided to equip school girls with necessary knowledge and skills such as family planning education including decision about when and how to have sex³. Initially, this education was less emphasized because it was not accepted by parents and guardians but, incidences of rape or forced sex while socializing appeared to be happening at a tender age (UNICEF, 2015). In addition, it has been noted that teenage girls are not taught sex education at the right time. Therefore, most of them seek information about sex, family planning and pregnancy in general elsewhere to satisfy their needs. For instance, Tanzania has accelerated sex education programs in primary schools (from grade 5 to 7) and secondary schools on how to use condoms and contraceptives appropriately, but this does not seem to have the desired impact as the incidents of teenage pregnancy is increasing (Manyama, 2018). Tanzania is known for efforts in controlling teenage pregnancy using traditional methods and case management approach since the two methods have shown positive impact to teenage girls who are still schooling(ibid). In some situations, there are some schools which have introduced extracurricular lessons in which teenage girls are taught how to prevent pregnancies at their earliest stage (WHO, 2014). However, traditional methods including initiation rites, are also considered useful methods in controlling pregnancies. This is normally done when the girl reaches puberty. These methods, among others, include how to please men, how to avoid them, but also give girls necessary information on how to handle men when they get married. These methods are used by young and older women (TDHS, 2010). Initiation rites such as *Jando* and *Unyago* were much essential in controlling teenage behaviors and protecting children when they are in school and within their communities. The initiation rites can involve structured teaching. on matters such as abstaining, not having sex with someone who is not been known by family members. Traditional methods have been recognized as useful methods in preventing pregnancies for teenage girls especially those who are still in primary and secondary schools.

Efforts to prevent teenage pregnancies were developed in Tanzania to entrench traditional methods which exist in the community. UMATI⁴ was introduced and it involved various programs, including family planning programs, which increase awareness on how to control behavior and prevent early pregnancies among teenage girls. The activities on the program

³ Part of a chapter in a PhD thesis, titled “Teenage pregnancy and girls’ prospect in urban Tanzania: Lived experiences of teenage mothers in Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam region.”

⁴UMATI means Uzazi Na Malezi Bora Tanzania (Tanzanian family planning association)

include strengthening outreach services at all levels, engaging policy which mostly involved social welfare officers in raising the awareness of teenage girls and their family. The newly introduced programs improved traditional methods and challenged traditional norms which were harmful. Social welfare officers were highly on demand in helping teenage girls prevent pregnancies. Days passed and traditional methods became weak and interpreted wrongly by teenage girls. Therefore, Case Management approach was introduced to facilitate prevention and protection of teenage girls and the former became ineffective in addressing the problem of teenage pregnancies. A training manual was prepared and tested for the first time in Tanzania in Temeke Municipal Council in 2010. Case management approach helped teenage girls to manage their pregnancies, and social welfare officers were there to help them. The symbolic meaning of pregnant teenagers was identified and understood from the perspective of pregnant teenagers. Traditional methods depict informal education that introduces teenage girls to real world; how they can manage their life as they become adults, and also not to practice sexual intercourse at early stage. (Bah, 2016). Teenage pregnancy for unmarried girls was not accepted in the family and community. It was considered a burden to family members.

The Government of Tanzania has also facilitated the introduction of sophisticated infrastructure in effort to prevent teenage pregnancy at various levels. These measures include assessment policies, introduction of the Law of the Child Act Number 21 of 2009 which emphasized sections 5(1) and (2) and 9 (1)⁵. This law has helped some teenage girls⁶ to continue with their studies since no pregnancies were allowed while in school. Different NGOs and some government organizations are also empowering teenage girls with various skills, including enhancing their reasoning capacity on how to control and manage pregnancies while in school (e.g. Assey, 2012; Malisa, 2015; Brown, 2016; Makoye, 2016). At the community level, teenage pregnancy⁷ had slowly reduced qualified human resource growth for young girls and young human resources, but the approach helped communities to reduce rates of unintended pregnancies. Other efforts by the Government are Sexual Offences Special Provision (SOSPA) of 1998 revised in 2002⁸, the establishment of gender desk and sector specific actions both of which aim at curbing actions that may lead to teenage pregnancy. What is important to note here is that, social values, norms and customs have been left behind and mostly teenage girls have

⁵ Law of the Child number 21 of 2009: Section 5(1), (2) and (9).

⁶ Teenage girls: Those girls who are prone to become pregnant teenagers.

⁷ Teenage pregnancy: Those adolescence girls who are pregnant.

⁸ Sexual Offences Special Provision (SOSPA) of 2002.

engaged in negative behaviors such as taking alcohol, smoking and sometimes they forgot to use traditional and modern preventive measure against unwanted pregnancies (Assey, 2012; Mmassy, 2013).

This study has realized that by using case management teenage girls can understand more and ensure that they access appropriate and effective support services which are built from the family and at community levels. Instead of being attempted with taxi drivers and motorcycle riders (popularly known as *bodaboda*⁹) the case management approach supports teenage girls to plan and help them to reach their goals which is education.

Methodology

This study applied a qualitative research approach and case study design. Case study design was preferred in this study because it defines the contemporary phenomenon and the reality; in this case, the real situation of pregnant teenagers and lived experiences (Bryman, 2012). The approach was used in this study because it helped the researcher to get a symbolic meaning and deeper understanding of the underlying reasons, opinions and motivations for causes and consequences of teenage pregnancies. Issues related to life experiences were uncovered and remained with the researcher in observance of anonymity.

This study involved 20 informants who were parents of pregnant teenagers, pregnant teenagers, social welfare officers, community elders and other community members. The informants were selected purposively from Tuangoma and Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally wards in Dar es Salaam region. They were selected because they had relevant knowledge and experiences. Social welfare officers were selected because the challenges faced by pregnant teenagers were reported to their offices, but also, they had the knowledge and skills on how to apply the case management approach on pregnant teenagers and teenage girls. Pregnant teenagers who were the key informants, were selected through Ward Executive Officers because of their familiarity with the informants and the location where the study took place. The categories of informants were six parents: four adult women and two adult men six pregnant teenagers; five male elders, three women elders, two men, and three community members. Parents were picked because they were living with the pregnant teenagers. Pregnant teenagers were raped and dropped out of school and community members were representing the majority and they were able to express how the community members felt about teenage pregnancy. The study used thematic data analysis to analyze

⁹ *Bodaboda* is a colloquial Swahili name for motorcycle.

the qualitative data collected through interviews. For the purpose of this study, interviews were used to discover underlying motives of using traditional methods and case management approach in Temeke Municipality. This method was important in collecting data one by one from the informants and mostly was through discussion to give relevant information about teenage pregnancy (Bryman, 2012).

Effectiveness of Traditional Methods in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy

The study found that the teenage girls grew where their lived experience was mostly experienced around traditional initiation ceremony. Traditional initiation methods used *jando*¹⁰ for boys and *unyago*¹¹ for girls to prepare boys and girls into adulthood. *Jando* and *unyago* were a community-based practices which were very strong and were used in controlling and moulding the behaviors of teenagers. Informants explained that the lived experience of teenage girls in *unyago* inculcated to them societal norms and values that are acceptable in the society. The symbolic meanings of *unyago* were learned through social interaction, practical and interactive relation with the environment where teenage girls were living. The teachings that were brought into *unyago* enabled the researcher to understand the symbolic meaning, how *unyago* initiated girls into sexual relationships and how the girls could abstain from getting early pregnancies hence depicting traditional methods and the reality of teenage girls' life. *Unyago* was a form of training that prepared teenagers to graduate into adulthood, that is, how they could live as youth and wives. It was emphasized that parents ensured that their children do not miss the training that was periodically arranged within the society. The training was a requisite to getting married as it also taught them how to live, take care of one's family and also do their part in the community. The informants reported that these days *unyago* is no longer practiced as it used to be in the past. Instead, teenage girls are living a different reality moderated by technological advancement. There is nothing that has taken its role of moulding teenagers into upholding societal norms and values. This vacuum has been replaced by radio, television and mobile phones which expose teenagers to unregulated behavior and norms independent of the local realities.

The findings indicated that despite the fact that Temeke Municipality is a metropolitan area, the place was influenced by traditions, customs, norms and values which came from Lindi and Mtwara Regions. The Temeke

¹⁰ *Jando* means initiation rite for boys. Mostly used in African societies when the boys reach puberty stage. It is also used as a training to prepare boys to become responsible future husbands

¹¹ *Unyango* means initiation rite for women. Also, used for African girls when they reach puberty. Sometimes, it is used as training to prepare a girl for marriage.

Municipal council is an area which mostly showed characteristics of a matrilineally dominant structure, and most of their socio-economic activities and decision-making on how to use and produce followed the female side of the family. The findings indicate further that elders from Tuangoma Ward were using *unyago* trainings to teach their teenage girls how they could prevent their teenage pregnancies and continue with their education. The methods were taught at the earliest age when the teenage girls reached puberty. This assertion was supported by one parent from Tuangoma Ward who had the following to say:

Since we had unyago as a traditional method, teenagers were not left behind in solving problems on their own. The misbehaving being observed these days, and have different unacceptable behaviors were not there. (Parent-female), age 47 years, Tuangoma Ward, 2018).

The findings indicated that things started to change when teenage girls interfaced with modernization and new technologies¹² which allowed more opportunities to meet boys and mingle at various places, especially when they were coming from school. This made teenage girls to use more frequently with mobile phones, and pornography which motivated them the more and oriented them into practicing teenage sex which eventually led them to get pregnancies. What they had learnt during traditional ceremonies was undone with new technologies and modernization, which changed their behavior and made them to think differently about relationships and accountability of their lives. The social reality of teenage girls lost control over their bodies and mostly decided to engage in relationships which were not reported anywhere and their parents as well as families did not know anything about these changes which completely changed their lives.

It was also found that other teenage girls no longer consult their aunts or grandmothers for advice; instead, they consult their peers or seek solutions on the internet. One key informant had this to share:

I have now decided to meet my friends after school. My friends can help me with many things, including issues related to sex and relationships.

¹² Modernization and new technologies a finding in part of a chapter in a PhD thesis, titled “Teenage pregnancy and girls’ prospect in urban Tanzania: Lived experiences of teenage mothers in Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region.”

So, I will meet them in the evening and I might report back to my parents if they are available. My parents are very busy so I cannot wait for them to come back and help me with the questions I have. My friends will help me solve my problems (Teenage girl, 17 years, Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally Ward, 2018).

The study revealed that teenage girls were free to decide and do what they want without consulting their parents. This affected their decision making since parents and elders of the community weredid not support their actions.

Community activities and socialization process

This study noted that traditionally a child was brought up to believe that sex life could start when they are grown up, that is, after they have reached puberty and got married. The introduction of sexual relationships is being done only when a teenage girl has reached the age of 12 years. The study shows that aunts were the ones at the forefront in the socialization process of girls in the family. There was a strict control and monitoring of girls' behavior to guard them against early sex debut, and this helped to curb teenage pregnancies. The aunts or grandmothers were also available to answer questions when the parents were not available. This helped teenage girls to have control of their behavior, and slow down any increase in teenage pregnancy. By this age, teenage girls were taught various issues on how to take care of themselves when they were grown up especially during the menstrual period. Teenage girls were assigned responsibilities such as taking care of their young ones, doing some of the domestic chores, cooking, washing clothes and helping their mothers with any kind of job which is allowed by community members. Teenage girls indicated that this kind of socialization was useful and important to their lives because it moulds them into an important part of the community as future mothers¹³. This was expressed by one informant when she said that:

...I feel useful and important to the family. I'm able to understand various issues related to the family, but also, I have an opportunity to contribute to the family as I feel that I'm grown up. I have been participating actively in my family issues, I have participated in various events which

¹³ Part of a section of a chapter in a PhD thesis, titled “Teenage pregnancy and girls’ prospect in urban Tanzania: Lived experiences of teenage mothers in Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam Region.”

before I was unable to participate and give suggestions as an adult. My aunt has taught me how to keep myself clean, and I'm going to teach my younger sisters how to keep themselves clean as well (Teenage girls, 17 years, Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally Ward, 2018).

The community members found the socialization process¹⁴ to be very effective in controlling teenage pregnancy. This is because it begins at the earliest adolescence stage, and girls grow to respect the norms and values that are passed on to them. They come to strongly believe that pregnancy and childbearing were only appropriate when they got married, not any other time.

When it comes to service provision¹⁵, initiation ceremonies were used to regulate services provided to teenagers. Services included teachings, preparation for puberty and adulthood as well as domestic chores. Initiation ceremonies were performed twice a year, and were timed to coincide with harvest seasons. Parents with children (boys and girls) who have become of age would inform their family members, and when they received a go ahead, they would then consult community initiators for the service. The community initiators then made the necessary arrangement for the ceremony. The informants insisted that the ceremony was strict about who was allowed to participate. Only women were allowed to attend *unyago* which was for girls. Likewise, only men were allowed into the *jando* ceremonies. Normally, there could be a number of initiates that ranged from elders to parents-fathers' themselves. This was explained by one parent who said:

... as a parent, I think this is the best way to handle our children. We think that if we teach teenage girls and boys in this kind of ceremonies, we can have a positive result which will help to

¹⁴ Socialization is the process of socialization that the new born individual is moulded into a social being and men find their fulfilment within the society. For teenage mothers it is their duty to socialize their babies while still young. However, since the teenage mothers are themselves still young, they fail to properly teach and learn appropriately for their babies. Thus, the babies receive bad or improper norms and ideologies which their parents-teenage mothers have and have grown with.

¹⁵ Service provision can be social welfare services delivered purposely for helping people who are in need including pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers. These services are provided to these people if they are assessed and the need identified and recognized by Social Welfare officers. The services can also be social services such as education, health, infrastructure(building), bedding, food, shelter and welfare services in general.

*mould the behaviours of the teenage girls and boys
What is important is to give relevant teachings to
each group and then come up with a better
solution to reduce teenage pregnancy within our
communities. Community members should be part
of this process through initiation ceremony (A
parent- male 50 years, Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally
Ward, 2018).*

Usefulness of Initiation Ceremony as Traditional Method in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy

This study has revealed that traditional methods focused on traditional ways of family planning and contraceptives to teenage girls. The methods were also used to prevent risks of sexual behavior that accelerated early pregnancies. The cultural practices which depended on customs, beliefs, norms and values formed a regulatory system to control the deviant behaviors which included engaging in sex before marriage that could lead to teenage pregnancy. This was made possible through initiation ceremonies where teenagers were taught traditional reproductive health education and how to prepare themselves for adulthood. This was a system that was adhered to by all members of the community, and there were elders who specialized in initiating teenagers. It was also noted that boys and girls were initiated separately. For this case, the findings indicated that family and community members made sure that their children were initiated, familiarized, exposed, and adhered to cultures, norms and values which were available at the community. Indeed, as Odetola, *et al.* (1983) argued, children spent more of their time with their parents thus learned their future adult roles through actual performance of many of their roles from an earliest stage of their age.

The usefulness of initiation ceremonies, in this case *Unyago* as part of the traditional methods in reducing teenage pregnancy in Tanzania, has been underscored above. Its importance is because it taught teenage girls about themselves and their roles as girls and future wives and mothers. This means that through such teaching's girls knew their responsibilities as teenagers and when to become mothers. During this ceremony, girls were checked for their virginity which was very important for the girls to get a respectable marriage. The initiation ceremony was celebrated by parents and families as part of upholding norms and societal values (Odetola, *et al.*, 1983; Msegeya, 2018; Mwananchi, 2018). Traditionally, it is well known that puberty girls and boys are taught various issues on how to take care of themselves. Therefore, sexual matters were usually addressed openly through

educational talks which were traditionally made; folk-ways, songs and dances which eventually teenage girls understood that they could satisfy their sexual needs without engaging in penetrative sex. This study has considered this action as a way of teaching both teenage girls and boys by using simulation messages, and this will obviously remain and stick into their heads before they take any action of being married.

The informants, however, pointed out that there were some aspects of traditional methods that can be taken on board by the Case Management approach. Furthermore, the informants who were elders supported traditional methods since for them it looked much more effective and relevant in controlling teenage behaviors. The informants showed concern that while traditional methods have been very effective in child upbringing, they now have been abandoned, and where they are performed; they are not authoritatively organized through the community. This is to be expected because, according to the informants, the traditional norms, customs and values on which the initiation was based have themselves been diluted by the church, the school and media¹⁶ (print and electronic) taking a huge space in the socialization of the teenagers. The parents, the family and the community no longer have control over the character and behavior of their teenage children. Informants reported that teenage girls turned to the modern ways of solving problems. They develop new behaviors which, among other things, lead to unprotected sex debut. Mostly, trainings have focused on modernization and emphasis on sexual practices.

Community members' views on Case management approach and traditional methods

Community members and key informants reported that the case management approach has greatly helped to improve reproductive health among the youth. The approach has made possible a new way of communication with parents, families and other members within their communities. Informants reported that there is evidence that the Case Management approach has resulted into decreasing the incidences of teenage pregnancy in the area. They also indicated that the approach allowed pregnant teenagers to express their feelings about their condition, including encouraging them to share the reasons that led to the actions that resulted into pregnancy. Although the informants showed concern that the traditional values and norms had lost their identity in the community, they

¹⁶ Media has replaced traditional methods/ways of caring for children. Parents have relied on media to teach their children. Media such as television, mobile phones especially in social media such as twitter, face book and Instagram has dominated teenage girls in their day to day life instead of keeping a close eye on the children in their development.

were no longer used in shaping the behavior of teenage girls, and the teenage girls indicated that there was no way one could resort to traditional methods without modifications. It has proved that social changes¹⁷ which have occurred within the families and communities, including the breaking up of the extended family, require a community structure that ensures norms and values are adhered to. Owing to the foregoing argument, the informants showed optimism that the Case Management approach was effective in the prevention of teenage pregnancies.

Relevance of Case Management Approach in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy

The introduction of the Case Management approach in our communities can help in managing what is already known as a modernized way of living and taking care of teenage pregnancy. In this study, it was observed that the approach has managed to change and improve the lives of pregnant teenagers who were being rejected by their parents, the school system and the community as outcasts. In Temeke Municipal Council, where Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally Ward is located, through child protection system, it has brought about positive outcomes among community members, and pregnant teenagers are now accepted to be part of the teaching within small groups of the community. Pregnant teenagers could now easily consult their family members such as parents who were closely involved in this process of Case Management approach. Cases of teenage pregnancy were reported to Local Government Authorities (LGA).¹⁸

Informants from Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally Ward were of the view that teenage girls were more constructive in terms of their ideas related to pregnancy, especially how to manage and prevent teenage pregnancy. The Case Management approach was able to bring the pregnant teenagers to love their families, and the parents to have time with their children. This is possible because parental acceptance, care and support to teenage pregnancy created hope for the pregnant girls. As girls become reunited with their families they no longer contemplate about abortion or committing suicide. It also helps to strengthen their family ties since at this particular time pregnant teenage girls were not living with their family members.

¹⁷ Social Change means a way through which human interactions and relationships transform cultural and social institutions over time, having a profound impact of society. Sociologists define social change as changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions. In this context changing behavior of teenage girls has failed due to the introduction of modernization and the coming of new technology.

¹⁸ LGA: Local Government Authority comprises administrative offices that are smaller than the Central Government and are in direct contact with the community. The term is used to contrast with offices at nation-state level, which are referred to as the central government or national government.

Case management approach intervention through Social welfare officers

In Tuangoma Ward, the Social Welfare Officer¹⁹ was interviewed and the result were positive about the case management approach. Social welfare officer agreed that case management approach helped to assessed the need of pregnant teenagers and evaluated their options on how they could manage their pregnancies and life. Before the use of case management approach pregnant teenagers' views were ignored and no one was able to listen to what they were saying. It was revealed in this study that the information about teenage pregnancy was confidential and was secured in the office of a social welfare officer in Temeke Municipality. In addition, all documents were kept in a safe place with clear instructions on who may access it and when, and also the duration the document could be shared. This process reduced the tendencies among pregnant teenagers to share their information with inappropriate people who could use the information to smear the girls. This practice ensured that the information about teenage pregnancy remained only with close relatives and few community members who were close to the pregnant teenagers. This approach created closer and targeted solution to the pregnant teenagers' families. This was confirmed by one informant who had the following to say:

Pregnant teenagers are young children; they don't know anything in terms of what they are supposed to do as adults. When they became pregnant, they are kicked out of the parent's houses, so that they could be helped by somebody else. However, with this new approach, pregnant teenage girls can be united with their parents. These girls cannot make decisions on their own but the parents can now help them to make wise decisions on issues relating to their lives. Parents have now become supportive to the pregnancies without any reservations. This has helped us to know how the teenage girls end up being pregnant and that was not intentional but rather by an accident as pregnant teenagers were very careful in what they were doing (Parent-female, 43 years, Tuangoma Ward, 2018).

¹⁹ A social welfare officer is a position in the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children which provides/delivers social welfare services to people in need. That person can be a social worker, sociologist or a community development officer.

The study sought to understand if the case management approach has helped teenage girls deal with their problems, given that the traditional systems have been compromised and are seen by the youth as irrelevant and old fashioned. Informants indicated that the introduction of case management approach has helped teenage mothers to understand their situations, their vulnerability and concerns as adolescents. As far as they were concerned, the approach has made teenage girls very conscious of life within their communities, especially when they are faced with challenges. In line with this argument, the Social Welfare Officer reported to have received many cases of abuse and the steps taken to solve the problem.

The case management approach provided an opportunity to discuss sexual relationships between boys and girls, especially when they were still schooling. As for pregnant girls, it was indicated that they felt more comfortable discussing their problems with their aunts as they saw them as being more aware of their problems compared to their parents. As far as the teenager girls were concerned with case management, it was now possible to discuss their pregnancy with their aunts and grandmothers. This was not the case in the past because girls who got pregnancy were expelled from school, and in many cases, they were abandoned by their parents. Since the case management approach involved parents, the information shared was more appropriate and useful to pregnant girls. The extract below comes from one of the key informants (a teenage girl) when she posited that:

...I was able to explain everything to my aunt, and even to my parents. My aunt was free and friendlier to me. I was not afraid at all since my parents were not around. I could ask my aunt different questions which I think were relevant to me. And the good thing about my aunt is that she knows and has knowledge about family planning
(Teenage girl, 16 years, Tuangoma Ward, 2018).

This was done by parents by receiving and passing their views and comments through aunts. This created more harmonious relationships between parents, aunts and pregnant teenagers. The girls reported that it greatly reduced misunderstanding and created comfortability among pregnant teenagers. This is made more illustrative by the following statement from a parent:

... it is very difficult to talk about sex and sexual intercourse to a teenage girl. The same has also

been difficult about teenage pregnancy with the parents. So, aunts usually known as “Shangazi²⁰” take the lead in discussing with them. All the issues related to pregnancy are left with the aunt. As a parent, I advise the teenage girls to talk to their aunts and express their feelings about pregnancy but also about how they can go about adolescence and issues related to relationships. What is shared with the pregnant teenager is good information which could protect the pregnant teenager against committing suicide. It brings comfort to pregnant teenage girls, and if anything happens, the aunt becomes responsible. And it is easier for us to deal with the pregnant teenagers and the issues that were shared with her aunt will be known and discussed well by family members and later with a social welfare officer (Mother-Female Adult, age 42 years, Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally ward, 2018).

This implies that the case management approach created unity between families and an opportunity for strengthening family ties. Getting pregnant did not mean the end of the world for girls as they can now come out and report their pregnancy without fearing that they will be castigated and thrown out of the house as it used to be in the past. With the introduction of the case management approach, pregnant teenager could now be controlled and attended to. It has increased self-esteem and self-actualization. Where a need arose, pregnant teenagers could also go to social welfare officers for consultation. One informant had the following to share:

...It is easy for parents to take stern methods against their pregnant teenager girls, but it is not easy for the aunt who discusses their issues clearly and comes up with solutions. Sometimes, teenage pregnant girls are referred to a social welfare officer who can now connect the pregnant teenager to Child Protection System, which uses the case management approach to resolve the matter with a pregnant teenager. It usually starts with the aunt and the parents at the family level then later reported to a social welfare officer who uses the

²⁰ Shangazi: Swahili word for Aunt, a fathers' sister

case management to resolve the pregnant teenager case. We make referral to a specialist, a social welfare officer, for further discussion for the case management process (A Social welfare officer, 42 years, Mbagala kwa Azizi Ally Ward, 2018).

The study also found that teenage girls, apart from being referred to the social welfare agency for the case management approach, still aunts and parents have to make a follow up in order to know what really happened in terms of decision making made at that particular time. All the irregularities such as misbehaving and attempts for abortions and suicide were discussed and resolved at the social welfare office with the presence of parents. The reality of the lived experiences that teenage girls have indicated suggest that social welfare officers were important. and the use of case management showed the important of child protection system in solving teenage pregnancy. The meaning of life was clearly understood by social welfare officers as the problem was handled appropriately.

The case management initiative for pregnant and for parents of the pregnant teenagers was introduced to them for the purpose of providing pregnant teenagers with a range of services based on their needs. It was revealed that such services included counseling and assistance in preparation for the coming of the baby. In addition, there were issues of who would take care of the baby and the teenage mother. Some of the parents were ready to support the teenage mothers to take care of their babies. It was also important for the social welfare officer and the parents to discuss and plan the future of the teenage mother who could have been expelled from school. For example, their discussion focused on engaging pregnant teenagers in vocational training or helping them start up income generation activities, and also creating networks among pregnant teenagers' family, friends, and neighbors as well as connecting them with health care or social services. It was observed that the social welfare officer was a good mediator between parents, pregnant teenagers and community members, especially when there was a need for coordination of various interventions and actions for the development of a teenage pregnant.

The findings indicated that the understanding of pregnant teenagers and teenage girls was made clearer after understanding the life realities that pregnant teenagers were going through. The symbolic meaning of their life made this study to understand the situations in which pregnant teenagers were living together with their family. The researcher went further to investigate how these girls were perceived by their families and

communities in general. The interpretations from the researcher helped to define pregnant teenagers' lives and their conditions and understand the reality that pregnant teenagers and teenage girls were facing.

The case management approach was important for the parents, elders and community members to know how their teenage girls behaved both in school and on their way to school and home. This is part of the implementation of the Child Protection system²¹ in Temeke Municipality. This method has proved to be more effective in controlling the behavior of teenage girls while they continue with their education. The importance of this method is that the girls have the opportunity to career development. The approach has introduced strong social controls from family members that enable the girls to have control over circumstances which they could not manage earlier on. With case management, pregnant girls are able to manage themselves and their children with the help of the social welfare officers and parents and family members as well.

Finally, the case management approach can be more effective if it takes on board some of the positive aspects of the traditional methods, such as taking up appropriate roles and functions that help them to develop into responsible adults. This, of course, calls for the involvement of parents, elders and community members to design and implement the approach in new and specialized needs, community willingness, i.e., changed attitudes and perceptions. These could be useful if generative community-based programs are introduced. Full participation on the community-based programs could help to understand well the whole concept of case management approach which was to be implemented first by parents and family members. This study followed up on the implementation of the approach and realized that pregnant teenagers and their parents came up with a plan which they could use after delivery. The plans were useful in organizing their materials especially their food, clothing and shelter but also, they had an opportunity to integrate and modify their resources available and set them aside for their future. This was important for parents, elders and community members to clearly understand the intensity of effort required to diagnose, treat, preserve or maintain teenage girls' physical or emotional statuses, and make sure that their emotional states remain intact for the future plans of their lives,

²¹ Child Protection System is a system that increases access to and use of services to prevent, report and respond to cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. This system was first introduced in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania to protect vulnerable children in Temeke Municipality. Temeke Municipality was taken as a case study for children with vulnerability and it was sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to address a wide range of issues for children at risk of or experiencing harm.

including engaging in small businesses since they do not have enough skills and knowledge.

Conclusion

Traditional methods have been useful during ancient times. They have been used by elders including parents and community members in controlling and correcting behaviors of teenage girls. However, traditional methods have become less useful due to the frequent use of modern equipment, including television and mobile phones. Furthermore, socialization based on traditional norms and values has been significantly weakened. The introduction of the case management approach has been very useful to teenage girls and their families. The approach has been applied to help pregnant teenagers to deal with challenges faced by teenage girls and their families and the community as a whole. In this case, it is important to use both traditional methods and the case management approaches. Using the two methods can help social welfare officers to be much close to the teenage girls and pregnant girls, hence much freedom of expression and confidence in the challenges they face.

Theoretically, this study concludes that the knowledge foundation of symbolic interactionism is important for studying the traditional methods and the case management approach. This study is singled out in a major framework of sociological theory that emphasizes the symbolic meanings that families and community members develop and use in the process of social interaction. Therefore, the use of this theory engaged people from the community to look at teenage pregnancy objectively and draw meanings of traditional methods and case management from pregnant teenagers themselves. Pregnant teenagers will portray meanings that symbolically will be understood by their family and community members in defining their lives. As far as this perspective is concerned, people behave based on what they believe in and not just on what is objectively true. This means that teenage girls participate in initiation ceremonies (*unyago*) as they are made to believe by their elders, including their parents and community members and not otherwise. It is relevant to consider subjective meanings when defining the life of teenage girls and pregnant teenagers. The social reality of pregnant teenagers and teenage girls explains the lived experiences faced. Therefore, it is important to consider symbolic interactionism and carry subjective meanings of what was considered negative by family and community members. It is important to note that this theory helped to unpack hidden experiences that family and community members could not know during normal conversations between pregnant teenagers and teenage girls.

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