

Chapter 14

Challenges and Strategies Towards Teenage Mother Re- Entry Policy Implementation in Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated challenges and strategies towards teenage mother re-entry policy (TMRP) implementation in public secondary schools in Bungoma County. Objectives were to examine extent of TMRP implementation, establish challenges faced, and assess strategies towards implementation. Data collection instruments were interviews, questionnaire, and document analysis. Convenience, snowball, and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 36 parents of TMs, 49 TMs, 19 principals, and sub county director of education, respectively. The study established that extent of implementation was low (AMR=2.40), on overall challenges were high (AMR=3.20) with fear, shame, and stigma (MR=3.73) strategies (AMR=3.40) with parental involvement (MR=4.15). The study concluded that implementation was low due to lack of commitment. Recommended to MOE to conduct seminars for school administrators and parents on TMRP alongside individual and national economic development benefits associated with TM re-entry.

INTRODUCTION

World over, education is recognized in several international, regional policy documents as a basic human right and phenomenal for country's growth. There are global organizations and declarations that seek to address gender disparities in education by stressing the values of education. Such include Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women of 1979, The Millennium Development Goals by United Nations 2000. Others are Education for All (EFA) Dakar Declaration and Beijing Plat-

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form for Action of 1995 which stress value of education. These documents serve as guidelines for state parties to provide substantive education to all on impartial basis.

According to Plan (2012), education was recognized as a basic human right 60 years ago in article 26 of Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948. This was acknowledged and approved by most governments globally that education and specifically girls' education masks a huge outlook towards industrial development. Girls going through complete school cycle are better placed in acquisition of quality education and skills related to healthy and productive life.

Similarly, UNESCO (2010) describes education as crucial in social and economic development of any country in enhancing quality of citizens' lives. Tabreek (2017) acquaints importance of educating girls for overall development of society. The study recorded benefits where 100% associated with achievement of girls' fundamental rights and improved gender parity. According to 90% of respondents, educated girls bring positive change and development in society while 77% said educated girls in adulthood bring better educated children. Additionally, 67% said girls' education enhances economic development and poverty reduction, 53% linked to better health and quality life while 43% associated with empowerment, leadership for active participation in decision making.

As Bhana, Morrel, Shefer and Sisa (2010) argue, allowing pregnant teenagers continue with studies after delivery delays subsequent pregnancies as re-entry gives TMs second chance to proceed with education and safeguard their economic levels. According to King and Winthrop (2015), girls from poor backgrounds with no family property or business to fall back to as source of wealth gain from education. Girls spending more years in schooling earn potential into competitive employment and better wages as re-entry positions them better for sustainable economic development.

Ozer, *et al* (2014) describes underage as individuals under age 18 as per the Convention on the rights of children. Citing 2008 Turkish Demographic Health Survey, 6% of females who started child bearing were adolescents out of which 7% were uneducated while 4% were high school graduates. Besides, 9% of teenage pregnancies were from rural and 5% urban areas. Teenage pregnancy was commonplace among uneducated and poor families hence negatively impacts on both TMs and their infants socially and economically. To Melterm (2011) education increases women's participation in labor force while lack debase their willingness and ability to participate, uplifts their power in formal employment and offers reference for job market.

Plan (2012) observes in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) girls are more likely to drop out of all levels of school and have minimal chances to transit to secondary due to pregnancy. On average, from every 1,000 females in African countries, 143 were reported pregnancy. This does not spell doom for pregnant teenagers and TMs as SSA countries Kenya included formulated and revised Teenage Mother Re-entry Policies (TMRPs). The GPE (2015) states that investing in girls' education boosts agricultural productivity by 25% and attainment of 35% higher gross domestic product per capital. Increased productivity which relates with an additional year of education, identifies a nexus between girls' education and food security locally and nationally.

According to Chulu (2016) in Zambia, prior to the development of re-entry policy, it was commonplace for government owned schools to expel pregnant girls. The effect was devastating as most pregnant teenagers and TMs ended in early marriage, infringed girls' basic rights to access impartial education and expanded gender inequality in participation and development. This saw women movement and civil society espouse re-entry policy, later ratified by government in 1997 to allow pregnant girls school re-entry after delivery. This portrayed positive trajectory in upholding girls' basic right to education, expansion of future job options and contribution towards the country's economic development. Despite

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