

**EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG SCHOOL-GOING MOTHERS IN
HIGH SCHOOLS AT LERIBE DISTRICT OF LESOTHO**

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DECLARATION

I wish to declare that this is my own work. The conclusions and opinions reached here do not reflect anybody's views or ideas. All the work that does not derive from my own work has been explained in such a way that they reflect their sources in all chapters.

Signature
C.M. MOLAPO

DATE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my eldest son, Mojela David Molapo and his younger brother, Tlomoko Joseph Molapo for their compassion and love for their sisters, Mamphaphathi Merriam Molapo and Maliselo Florence Molapo. May GOD bless you all.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to how their teachers, classmates/peers and the community view them. A qualitative research design was deemed an appropriate approach for this study. The sample comprised of 10 young school-going mothers from 5 high schools in Leribe district of Lesotho. Interviews were used to collect data individually and in focus groups. Data were analyzed qualitatively using the process of content analysis. Information emanating from the interviewees were transcribed and coded into themes pertaining to the school-going mothers' experiences in high schools. The findings suggest that the young mothers were not supported by some of their teachers; they were rejected by their peers and classmates and, labeled by the community they live in. Sample comprised 10 young mothers from 5 high schools in Leribe district of Lesotho. On the basis of the findings, both curative and preventative strategies were recommended for dealing with young school going mothers.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many well-intentioned people blame the pregnancy of young school-going girls on their risky behavior to engage in sexual activities prematurely because commonsense and social conventions tell them that it should not have happened. Indeed, being a school-going mother has numerous consequences in the lives of such mothers and their children as they, inter alia, get ostracized and relegated to the margins of society by both their peers and teachers. Such experiences could be quite upsetting and undoubtedly have a lasting impact on these mothers. However, notwithstanding the demeaning treatment visited upon these school-going mothers, these experiences teach them lessons that they will find valuable as adults navigating a world predicated on prejudicial social conventions towards school-going mothers. Notably, therefore, the toxic stigma that accompanies childbearing whilst one is still at school exemplifies not only the onslaught of social conventions on childbearing by school-going mothers but also the social-powerlessness of women in general.

It is against this background that this study probed the experiences of young school going mothers in the high schools of Leribe district of Lesotho. In this study, the researcher argues that those in education, who have social justice as a goal, can play a crucial role in advocating the educational rights of school-going mothers instead of castigating and relegating them to the margins of society. As argued by Anyon (2008:518) a supportive and trusting environment provides ‘identity security’ to learners who are then emotionally more ready to challenge the stereotypical myths which define them as ‘others’. Thus, it is argued in this study that a healthy educational environment which nullifies the politics of difference should urge school-going mothers towards a stance of entitlement, regarding the responsibility of teachers and administrators to provide equal opportunities irrespective of their individual social standing, such as being school-going mothers. This would encourage them to

hold the school system accountable for the experiences that they are subjected to as a result of being stigmatized by social conventions. Hence, a politically energizing education for school-going mothers which takes seriously issues of entitlement with regard to the right to learn must explicitly recognize and acknowledge that school-going mothers are presently not free and that social change is necessary. As observed by Anyon (2008:518) this is one reason a history of both oppression and resistance is so important in raising the consciousness of school-going mothers, regarding their predicament as a social group, which is subjected to prejudicial treatment, and is informed by biased and discriminatory social conventions.

In this study, the researcher argues that raising the consciousness of school-going mothers regarding their being unfairly prejudiced, given that their male counter-parts are not subjected to the same treatment, is empowering. Thus, it is hoped that once school-going mothers are knowledgeable about dominant forms of power and how this power affects them, then they can better move from self-blame to informed efforts at change. Teachers and administrators in schools who would assist school-going mothers in this development could begin by working with the community of which the school-going mothers are a vital part. The rationale for co-opting teachers and administrators to help school-going mothers deal with their predicament of being ostracized is that, more often than not, as argued by Anyon (2008:537), what happens in schools both mirrors and reinforces existing social patterns in society. This is so since schools do not exist in a vacuum and education systems respond to many external conditions, in addition to internal factors, in shaping how we educate young people (Anyon, 2008:537).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has observed that, throughout history, societies have dealt with the problem of premarital sex and illegitimacy by strictly supervising young girls so that sexual activity does not begin until marriage. This has manifested in ensuring that young girls marry at the onset of puberty, or by physical violence towards, and ostracism of, unmarried pregnant girls and mothers. Notably, this differential treatment of unmarried pregnant girls and young mothers, to the exclusion of those with whom they were sexually active, deprives them of an affirming social identity which could be equated to the one enjoyed by men in general. Morrel and Moletsane (in Kallaway, 2002) express their concern regarding

this practice as they indicate that girls are not allowed to attend school after falling pregnant, but boys are allowed to remain at school and continue with their studies even if they are known to have impregnated a girl. Again, this differential treatment of pregnant girls is symptomatic of the gendered identity ascribed to women in general and the inherent social-powerlessness which is a consequence thereof.

In South Africa, “the 1996 Schools Act no. 84, ruled against the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools” (Masuku, 1998:37). Chelisa (2002) regards this policy as ‘girl friendly’ by allowing teenage girls who have given birth to still go to school. However, Masuku (1998) argues that regardless of this new policy of inclusion of teenage pregnant girls in schools, the rate at which they dropout is still alarming. Different researchers from different contexts offer different factors as contributing to the dropout phenomenon. Writing from a South African perspective, Masuku (1998) indicates peer perceptions and attitudes as contributing factors to the decisions to dropout. In Lesotho, the Education Act 10 of 1995 ruled that pregnant girls should be temporarily expelled from school. In a further development, however, the Lesotho Act of 2000 states that there should be continuation, meaning that pregnant girls and school going mothers should continue with their education.

As already stated above, being a school going mother carries numerous negative consequences in the lives of many school going mothers and their children. Christensen and Rosen (1996) regard the following as some of the consequences of early childbearing: educational failure, poverty, unemployment and low self-esteem. In particular, the unemployment of the school-going mother, and isolation from her peers, are other factors (Greathead, Devinish & Funnel 1980). Some communities humiliate school going mothers and their children by labelling them. They give them bad names such as *Molahluoa* (outcast) and *Matlakala* (trash) (Mokobocho-Mohlakoana, 2005). Such names are an indication of how societies view teenage motherhood. In addition to this, the unmarried school-going mothers and their children are not given space within the family tree. In Sesotho culture, only married women and their children have space within the family tree (Makatjane, 2002).

The impact of the consequences of early childbearing hits hardest on those teenage girls who are expelled by some schools as they are stigmatized as the ‘Other’. In this

regard, the stigma remains a social problem among the Basotho nation and young mothers in high schools because they are also rejected by their teachers who believe in the tradition and culture of the Basotho nation, which advocates having children only in wed-lock.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The occurrence of a high rate of teenage pregnancy in high schools in the Leribe district, and thus the increase of school going mothers, motivated the researcher to find out the experiences of these school-going mothers. In most cases girls' academic careers stop with their pregnancies. Others, who are fortunate enough to continue with school, are faced with numerous problems. Very few studies have looked at the experiences of school-going mothers in the Leribe district of Lesotho. By exploring the experiences of school-going mothers in high schools in the Leribe district, the researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and difficulties experienced by these girls as a result of being school going mothers.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study gives insight into the problems experienced by school going mothers in the Leribe District in Lesotho. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will assist the Ministry of Education to include programmes such as life skills and sexuality education in the school curriculum. It was envisaged that such programmes would enable these school going mothers to adapt and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. This would also improve the relationship between young mothers, on one hand, and teachers, classmates and members of the community, on another.

The contribution of the study will be enormous. Among other things, it will:

1. Make the government aware of the presence of the young mothers in schools and assist them with their needs.
2. Make sure that social welfare creates care centers for young mothers' babies, so that the young mothers would be able to learn.
3. Schools should be aware that young mothers have special needs and should be treated like learners with special needs.

4. Expose the issue to the government and the public that the education act of inclusion is not effective and needs to be implemented.
5. It will sensitize the government planning unit to plan for all types of learners including young mothers so that learning could be maximised.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teen pregnancy and motherhood has increased at a fast and alarming rate in schools in Lesotho, for this reason the number of young mothers has increased. Most of these mothers return to school after giving birth. As a teacher, the researcher has observed that most of these girls performed better and would cope better with their studies before becoming mothers. Most of these young mothers, on returning to school after giving birth face a lot of challenges. The challenges involve difficulties and are despised by educators, other learners and friends. They also face challenges such as being stigmatized, thereby destroying their self-esteem in society and seriously prejudging future prospects. The type of treatment these learners were exposed to was seen as cause for concern. The researcher wondered how these school-going mothers viewed their situation. It was against this background that the researcher sought to undertake a focused study on the experiences of school-going mothers at school. The observation then triggered the researcher to want to find out what the experiences of these young school-going mothers are so that the plight of these young mothers would be known.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study were to explore the experiences of young school-going mothers, and to establish the challenges and difficulties these school-going mothers faced. The objectives of this study are to: identify and investigate the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to teachers, classmates/peers and community.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

More specifically, the study sought to find answers to the following Research Questions.

- 1.6.1** What are school-going young mothers' experiences with regard to their interactions with teachers?
- 1.6.2** What are school-going young mothers' experiences with regard to their interaction with classmates/ peers?
- 1.6.3** What are school-going young mothers' experiences in their communities?

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A research design is a plan of how one intends to conduct the research process to solve the research problem (Babbie, 2002; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002). This study adopted qualitative, a descriptive research approach, using a case study research design, since the study required in-depth information about the experiences of school-going mothers. One of the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher attempts to understand people in terms of their definition of the world (Cohen, et al., 2002). The same research design was employed by Masuku (1998); SighN (2002); as well as Chigona & Chetty (2008) in their studies of teenage pregnancy and motherhood. The researcher opted for a qualitative approach as opposed to quantitative due to the exploratory nature of the research.

Information for this study was gathered from both secondary and primary sources. With regard to secondary sources useful information was obtained from various publications such as textbooks and previous studies on the subject. Concerning primary sources, specific information that attached weight to the experiences of school-going mothers was obtained through interviewing the school going mothers themselves.

This section describes methods that were used to address the research questions of the study. The section also provides the rationale for using these methods.

1.7.1 Sampling and Design

The researcher used purposive sampling in this study. Purposive sampling is defined as a type of non probability sampling in which the participating units are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2002). Masuku (1998) as well as Chigona and Chetty (2007)

used purposive sampling to gather information from school going mothers. The researcher aligned herself with these researchers in her choice of purposive sampling. In this regard, purposive sampling was employed as a feature of qualitative research in order to enable the researcher to select knowledgeable participants.

1.7.2 Sample

School-going mothers were characterized as holders of data that were needed for the study (Cohen, et al., 2007). It was the researcher's intention to gather data about the difficulties and challenges that school going mothers experienced in their school life. School going mothers who have returned to schools after giving birth to their babies were the main respondents.

1.7.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through individual interviews. An interview allows for greater scope of asking questions and using probing questions in order to get clarifications on ambiguous questions, or for seeking more elaborations of incomplete answers (Neuman, 2006); it also allows the researcher to minimize misunderstandings on the part of both the interviewer and interviewees. The researcher opted for semi-structured interviews. This allowed face to face interaction between the researcher and the respondents so as to facilitate access to the participants (Cohen, et al., 2002). The use of interview questions helped the researcher to explore and collect contextual and in-depth information (Bertram, 2004) from girls who became mothers while still at school. The purpose of using these questions was to have participants to reconstruct their experiences within the context of teenage motherhood. SighN (2002) and Masuku (1998) used interview schedules as their tools to collect data in their studies on teenage pregnancy and motherhood. This study also used an interview schedule as a tool to collect data

1.7.4 Data analysis

Data were analyzed qualitatively. The information emanating from the interviewees was transcribed into themes pertaining to the school-going mothers' experiences in high schools.

1.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics are the rules and morals that need to be followed by the researcher (Neuman, 2006). Before conducting the interviews, the participants were informed about the nature of the interview, what type of questions to expect the purpose of the study, and the use of a tape recorder during the interview process. Furthermore, the participants were also informed that data collected from the interview would not be for public use. Thus, the researcher created a good relationship with the participants and made sure that there was no harm to the participants throughout the study physically, emotionally and socially (Durrheim & Wassemaar, in Bertram, 2004). Accordingly, informed consent was obtained from the participants, with a full view of their rights to withdraw from the data collection process if they felt that they were being inconvenienced in any way. Confidentiality prevailed between the researcher and respondents (Bertram, 2004).

1.9 OPERATIONAL DEFINATION OF TERMS

For clarification and understanding of the study, the following terms are defined operationally.

1.9.1 Teenage Motherhood

Phoenix (1991:6) defines teenage mothers as women who become pregnant before they are twenty and further states that they are young and have children early in their reproductive cycles. Implicit in this definition is the understanding that teen mothers are not yet ready to have children. They are socially, psychologically and emotionally immature and really young to be mothers. Young mothers who returned to school after delivery of their babies have been adopted as definition for teenage motherhood in this study.

1.9.2 Experiences

The term was used to show the processes that have an effect on the minds and feelings of school-going mothers at school. Chigona and Chetty (2008) indicate that

to continue with school for teen mothers may prove to be an unyielding burden, especially those living in unstable home environments. Teen mothers find themselves locked in unstable situations which are not conducive to learning. The researcher defines experiences as undue processes that prevail in the minds of young school-going mothers.

1.9.3 Young School-going mothers

The term referred to a learner who has a child while still at school and whose experience of the phenomenon is not more than three years. The term young school - going mothers was used interchangeably with the term school-going teenage mothers.

1.9.4 Community

In this study community refers to parents, guardians, the fathers of the teen mothers, babies, and community members generally.

1.10 Plan of the study

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter 1 is concerned with the orientation of the study, and provides the following: Introduction, motivation of the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, operational definition of terms, research methodology, and the plan of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

In chapter 2 literature review on experiences of school going mothers is discussed. This includes literature on difficulties they faced and models of supporting teenage mothers at school.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter 3 presents methods employed to achieve the objectives of the study and the rationale for their use.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter 4 deals with the analysis and presentation of the results of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter 5 presents the discussion of collected and analyzed data. In this regard, it focuses on the major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature reviewed hereunder highlights the debate around teenage pregnancy and motherhood. The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on the experiences of young school-going mothers, how the young mothers cope with the demands of parenting and learning. The chapter is divided into three sections/ namely: first, the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to their interactions with teachers; secondly their experiences with their classmates/peers; and, thirdly the community they live in. For Macleod (1999) teenage pregnancy has emerged as a social issue, but one regarded as a taboo to the extent that in most countries schools' policies require pregnant students to be expelled from school. However, according to Chelisa (2002) re-entry policies are practised in those countries that have signed up with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Freeman & Rickels (1993); Musick (1993) on the other hand indicate that the problems that surround teenage motherhood have changed dramatically in the past two decades. In the countries which have signed the CEDAW, the policies stipulate that once the expectant girl is identified as pregnant she is temporarily expelled. Nonetheless, Musick (1993) opines that realities make teenage motherhood more problematic today than it was in the past. Musick's (1993) argument is that motherhood is not a new phenomenon or a critical issue, but his main concern is the issue of being a mother at the age of 15, 16 or 17. It is for this reason that the researcher is interested in these young school-going mothers' experiences.

This study focused on factors contributing to challenges and difficulties, consequences and experiences of teen mothers in school. So, in this chapter the researcher discusses the current literature on motherhood from international and local scholars. It starts by reflecting on factors that contribute to teen pregnancy.

2.2 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

Before discussing the literature's of school-going mothers with teachers, peers and the community, it is important to reflect on the factors. The burdens of early childbearing on disadvantaged teens are undeniable, and in trying to untangle the factors which contribute to teenage pregnancy and early motherhood from its consequences, however, leads to "which came first, the chicken or the egg?" dilemma (Christensen & Rosen 1996). Poverty, educational failure, unemployment and low-self-esteem are considered to be negative outcomes of early childbearing, yet these are also regarded to be factors contributing to teen pregnancy (Christensen & Rosen, 1996). In this sub-heading the researcher will discuss them as factors leading to teen motherhood.

South African researchers have highlighted that the following factors contribute to teenage pregnancy and early mothering: the earlier occurrence of menarche; risk taking behaviour; psychological problems; peer influence; coercive sexual relations; dysfunctional family patterns; poor health services; socio-economic status; the breakdown of cultural traditions; reproductive ignorance; and the cultural value placed on children (Lillah, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Macleod, 1999; Masuku, 1998; Ngwezi, 1996; Ramalebana & Le Roux, 1998; Mkhize, 1995; Chilman, 1983 in Kimmel and Weiner, 1995). Preston-Whyte, Eleanor and Zondi (1993) raise the argument that early pregnancy may represent a rational life choice for certain adolescent women. Chilman (1983, cited in Kimmel & Weiner, 1995) argue that some factors that contribute to teenage pregnancy alone are not as significant, in general, as the complex social and situational deficits imposed by poverty, sexism and racism experienced by most of the young mothers. Other factors related to adolescent motherhood include: low income, racial/ethnic discrimination, and other situational deficits (Fennelly, 1993).

In Lesotho most girls engage themselves in sexual activities to avoid being called *mafetoa* (unmarried women). In Basotho culture, girls who are not married by the age of 20 years are called *mafetoa* (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). It is also regarded as a disgrace for girls to have babies before marriage and be called mothers. As Preston-

Whyte and Zondi (1998) early marriage as a norm in different cultures contributes to the increase of early child bearing because some of the girls engage in sex and fall pregnant in the hope that the fathers of their children will marry them.

Makatjane (2002) indicates that boys are not afraid of impregnating girls because they no longer pay compensation of six heads of cattle, unlike their parents who used to pay for impregnating unmarried girls (Makatjane, 2002). In the United States, there are determinants that accompany high rates of teenage pregnancy and motherhood such as: youth unemployment, poverty, poor education, single-parent families, television content and others (Freeman & Rickels, 1993).

An overview of some of the factors that contribute to teen pregnancies and, thus, early childbearing are discussed below.

2.2.1 Ignorance.

Reproductive Ignorance, risk taking behaviour and also psychological problems which lead to insanity are challenges young mothers face (Macleod, 1999). Lack of knowledge about sex can play a major role in the high incidence of teenage pregnancy and mothering in schools (Eggleston *et. al.*1999). The reluctance of parents to talk about sexual issues with their children is very common in most cases. Insufficient knowledge about contraceptives also increases the high rate of teenage pregnancy and mothering. Masuku (2004) also avers that lack of sex education in schools also takes its toll on teenage pregnancy.

It is good to include sex education and life skills in schools to equip learners. Moya (2002) argues that such measures are important, for they enable individuals to adapt to, and deal effectively with the demands and challenges of life. Samuel (2002) adds that mothers and daughters know very little about each other to the extent that daughters do not even know their mothers' wedding dates, favourite colours and hobbies, and many mothers are just as ignorant of their daughters' interests. Most girls do not perceive their parents as their friends, to whom they can speak their problems and hopes, but only take their parents as superiors.

In the past, in Lesotho, there were places where girls would come together to discuss their problems with the chosen aunts and grandmothers. These girls were taught

about good manners and very little on sex and how to prevent or avoid pregnancy out of wedlock. These girls used to sleep together with one grandmother or auntie chosen by girls' parents. The grandmothers and aunties equipped the girls with different techniques like raising families and how to care for their husbands and children. Today, things have changed; there are no more places like that. People are raising their own children in different places. For this reason, some girls have not been educated about the right and wrong birth control methods. Talking about sex, particularly between sexual partners is still a great taboo in many societies. Lack of confidence to talk about sex and contraception is common across generations and nations (Hirst & Eleanor, 2006). Young people need to hear very strong and consistent messages about responsible sexual behaviour from their parents through discussions and guidance (Christensen & Rosen, 1996), failing which, the problem of teen-motherhood will continue to escalate at an alarming rate.

2.2.2 Poverty

Teenage childbearing is associated with adverse circumstances in relation to young mothers and their children. Some of these consequences can be attributed to economic and socially disadvantaged environments in which most adolescent mothers live before getting pregnant (O'Halloran, 1998). In most cases the disadvantaged background of young mothers contributes to poor social skills and increases the possibility of teenagers being engaged in early childbearing. Teenage childbearing tends to exacerbate the problems of poverty and family instability many teens face. Early childbearing is of concern as it promotes lower levels of educational attainment for the adolescent mother and her child (O' Halloran, 1998). Also, high rates of single parentage and larger family sizes increase reliance on public assistance. A number of national and international studies have found that teenage mothers are more likely than any other group to fall into cycles of long term poverty and welfare dependency (Macdonald, 2007).

Poverty perpetuates itself from generation to generations in that attitudes are passed on to the children rendering them incapable of taking advantage of changing conditions and increased opportunities that may occur in their life time

(Mkhize,1995). Poverty has been highlighted as a causal factor for teenage early childbearing.

Teenagers get caught up in heterosexual relationships because they want to benefit from the relationship. Teenagers sell sex to older men such as migrant labourers who live in hostels (Ngema, 1985; Craig, 1983 in Mkhize, 1995). Teenagers however, fail to realize the consequences of these heterosexual relationships. They find themselves in bargain roles with males as long as the males can provide them with material needs. In many instances teenagers who fall into this trap are mostly from disadvantaged families with many siblings and have experienced early pregnancy (Mkhize, 1995).

Some researchers have highlighted that high poverty rates in the United States account for the fact that US teen birth rates are the highest of any industrialized nation (MacFarlane, 1997; Males, 1994). Poverty is the factor that is strongly related to teen pregnancy and early childbearing. Comparisons indicate that States with higher poverty rates also have higher proportions of non-marital births to adolescents (Moore, 1995).

Teens residing in very poor communities with high rates of poverty, welfare use, and single-mother households are at higher risk of early pregnancy. Maynard (1996) indicates that teen parents are concentrated in poor communities characterized by inferior housing; high crime rates poor schools and limited health services. In Lesotho, most teenage mothers are from poor families. However, others come from wealthy families. Young mothers were fulfilling their personal needs in engaging themselves in sexual activities for money because of their friends who were getting money from their boyfriends. Welfare use is mostly for orphans and not for young mothers in schools. Sixty percent of teenagers who become pregnant were living in poverty at the time of their babies' births (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994). In addition to this, more than 40% of teenage mothers report living in poverty by age 27 (Moore, 1995).

Brindis, (1997) discloses that young mothers with low academic skills coming from families with low incomes are five times more likely to become teenage mothers than those with solid skills and are from above average family incomes. Alan Guttmacher

Institute (1994) declares that one's poverty status is one of the strongest predictors of low birth weight mostly among teenage mothers. In most cases, young mothers have babies with low birth weight. Among all unwed teenage mothers, less than one third receive any financial support from the non-resident fathers of their children (Congressional Budget Office, 1990). Although the incomes of teen mothers are lower during their first 13 years of parenthood compared to those who delay childbearing up until age 20 or 21, teen mothers make up for this through increased employment and earnings by the time they reach their mid to late 20s (Hotz, 1997). Among whites, one-fourth of teenage mothers had family incomes below the poverty level compared to less than 1 in 10 of those who delayed childbearing (Brown & Eisenberg, 1995). Three-fourths of white teenage mothers were above the poverty level.

Mohlakoana-Mokobocho (2005) states that families that are generally poor, and have low education and low income, contribute to exposing teenagers to early sexual activities. Most teenagers from poor families have personal needs and love of money. They tend to look for people like sugar daddies and boyfriends who can give them money to fulfill their personal needs because their families cannot afford to provide them with all their needs. In addition to this, sexual activities and pregnancy have been considered to be linked with poverty, low educational levels and social context, leading to early childbearing (Eggleston, et al., 1999). Both poor and rich people do engage themselves in sexual activities, but the literature reviewed in this study states that locally and internationally, in most cases teenage pregnancy and mothering occur mostly among poor people. Chelisa (2002) argues that poverty and lack of employment for the youth contribute to premature pregnancy (Fisher, in Jones, 2007). There is also a romantic stereotype that motherhood is honoured and given special status in cultures and that women are given special care after the birth of a child, but generally the poorer a woman the less likely this is to be provided (Jones, 2007). Similarly, in western nations the poorest women with the least access to health services are the most likely to have mental health problems after the birth of a child. Adolescent childbearing is heavily concentrated among poor and low-income teenagers, most of who are not married (Jones, 2007).

While low-income teenagers may not intend to have babies, they may not be sufficiently motivated to avoid pregnancy (Christensen & Rosen, 1996). Without a prize beckoning the future such as a good job, financial independence and marriage, young people from low-income backgrounds may have little incentive to delay childbearing. Young mothers who are poor, or are from low-income families need the same opportunities as their more advantaged peers to terminate a pregnancy, should they decide that they are not ready to raise the child. Mkhize (1995) suggests that social structural conditions, to which the poor are exposed, give rise to distinctive patterns of community and family disorganization. Freeman and Rickels (1993) rap this up by mentioning that poverty and lack of job skills are strongly associated with early childbearing. It is important to understand the relationship between issues like poverty and welfare reliance options in the life of an adolescent parent.

2.2.3 Peer Pressure

Peer pressure forms part of the debate on teenage pregnancy and mothering. Masuku (1998) argues that regardless of existing policy of including pregnant girls in schools, especially in the context of South Africa, it does not succeed because of the negative attitudes and stigma attached to young mothers by some of their teachers, friends and the community they live in. Macleod (1999) states that peer pressure is one of the major contributing factors to teenage pregnancy in that other girls fall pregnant just because of the influence of their friends.

Samuel (2002) adds to this by stating that peer pressure plays a large role in teen pregnancy and mothering. Samuel (2002) further indicates that some parents have complained that their daughters have been influenced by their daughters' friends, and goes on to relate an example of a girl who got pregnant by a boy who lived a few houses away from the girl's home. The girl's parents disclosed that their daughter felt left out because everyone in her social circle had a boyfriend, except for her. To fit into the group, the daughter then had a boyfriend and was taken away on her first date and became pregnant. This phenomenon is common in the schools of Lesotho and in South Africa; some parents accept this while others reject it.

2.24 Socio-economic status

In the United States, there are determinants that accompany high rates of teenage pregnancy and motherhood such as: youth unemployment, poverty, poor education, single-parent families, television content and others (Freeman & Rickels, 1993). In addition to this, the economic costs of too early childbearing imply that teenage pregnancy causes the effects that lead to teenage births and mostly teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds. Where poverty and lack of job skills are strongly associated with early childbearing, there is a vicious circle of teen mothering and poverty. Often-times, teenage mothers lack support of their boyfriends after the birth of their babies. Freeman and Rickels(1993) attest to this by giving an example of teenage mothers who revealed that after two years they were no longer in the relationship with their boyfriends (fathers of their children). Some teenage mothers disclosed that they got support from their parents, while others did not.

Makatjane (2002) reveals that there is a strong belief among the Basotho that formal education is positively associated with premarital sexual experience. It is mostly believed that formal education has caused the erosion of certain practices that were traditionally meant to discourage premarital sex which would lead to the avoidance of premarital childbearing. In relation to the above statement, Makatjane (2002) argues that encouraged balanced diet promotes early childbearing as it stimulates sex desire.

2.2.5 Family structure

Teenagers living in a large or father-absent family may get less parental guidance and supervision. They may also be at the risk of combination of less restricted dating practices and little sexuality education (Mkhize, 1995). A study by Robinsons, et al., (1985), in Mkhize (1995), states that in a family where there is no father, and a lot of siblings, shortages of basic necessities of life become an economic problem that creates a push for one to leave home. This increases the number of teen mothers. Single parents and large families have fewer resources to provide educational and career opportunities for their children. Chigona and Chetty (2008) indicate that to continue with school for teen mothers may prove to be an unyielding burden,

especially those living in unstable home environments. Teen mothers find themselves locked in unstable situations which are not conducive to learning.

Most teen mothers depend on their mothers for everything from pregnancy up until delivery. The mother takes care in order to keep the teen healthy and strong. Sometimes the working mother may quit her job to look after the grandchild (Samuel, 2002). Most families have great hopes in their daughter's future, especially those who do well in school. The family hopes that one day, the girl will go to college and come back to make a good living. When the girl gets pregnant, all the family's dreams and hopes for her future are shattered and the investment in her education appears to have gone down the drain (Samuel, 2002). O'Halloran (1998) adds to this by stating that teenage childbearing tends to exacerbate the problem of poverty and family instability many young women already face.

Samuel (2002) indicates that parents are generally busier today than they were in the past and no longer have time to supervise their children; the support they use to get from their extended family members to raise their children is no more available. Consequently, Samuel (2002) suggests that parents and grandparents need time to talk to their daughters and also listen to them so as to build a strong relationship between mothers and daughters, to protect and teach them to make good decisions.

2.2.6 Culture

Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1998) indicate that early marriage as a norm in different cultures contributes to increasing early child bearing because some of the girls engage in sex and fall pregnant in the hope that the fathers of their children will marry them. Makatjane (2002) also indicates that boys in Lesotho are not afraid of impregnating girls because they no longer pay compensation of six heads of cattle, unlike their parents who used to pay for impregnating unmarried girls.

In this case, culture contributes a lot to frustrations that already surround teen mothers. Samuel (2002) attest to this by showing that because of the cultural taboos, it is a big disgrace for Micronesian families to have unwed daughters who have babies or have fallen pregnant. In Chuuk, many families feel ashamed and embarrassed when

a teen relative gets pregnant and becomes a single parent. From this disposition on it is clear that causes of this phenomenon are numerous. Of concern is what literature argues about, what literature has documented about the experiences of the young school-going mothers. The specific focus will be on teachers, peers and classmates, and the community.

2.3 EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG SCHOOL-GOING MOTHERS WITH REGARD TO TEACHERS

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood have negative consequences such as the disruption of schooling, socio-economic disadvantage, inadequate mothering, neglect and abuse, relationship difficulties and other demographic concerns. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood affect academic performance, health development, social development and career plans, as well as the personal development of the teenage mother (Mc Whirter & Hawley, 1993). Teenage pregnancy often has numerous challenges in the life of young mothers and their children, such as poor performance and drop out from the system of education, unemployment and isolation from their age group (Greathead, *et al.*, 1998). To put the study into proper perspective, experiences of being a teen mother are discussed in detail under the sub-heading that will follow.

Failure to complete high school prevents young mothers from going on to post-secondary education and from participating in many vocational training programmes (Stevens-Simon, 1995). Education for teenage mothers is vital as they continue to learn and move towards more adequate functioning; most teenage mothers are deprived of returning to school by their parents. Teenage mothers are obliged to look after their own children in rural areas (Mkhize, 1995).

The consequence of teenage pregnancy and motherhood, among many, is a high dropout rate. Adolescent childbearing is a developmental and psychological problem, and also a societal one (Musick, 1993). These teen mothers leave school as soon as they realize that they are pregnant. As such, young mothers become dropouts even before their babies are born. In the U.S.A., Hispanics dropout of school much more frequently than whites and blacks, and among the major reasons cited are pregnancy,

getting married and home responsibilities. London (2008) reports that at ages 19-22, the dropout rate for whites is 6.9% while is 14.7% for blacks, and 19.6% Hispanics.

In modern times, it has become harder and harder for people who lack good educational background to make a living. This manifests in teen mothers dropping out of school before graduating or completing their studies. It is not easy for a teenage mother without an adequate education to find a decent job and make a decent living. Stanley (2007) states that teenage births are associated with lower annual incomes for the mother, 80% of whom eventually rely on welfare.

Dropping out of school is of concern because it typically results in a host of negative consequences which include increased likelihood of living in poverty (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007). Teenage mothers with learning disabilities (LD) dropout of schools due to the following factors: - lacking support at home, including lack of child care assistance, lack of encouragement related to school, and maternal interference with their school enrolment, and refusals to sign school enrolment forms (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007). The young mothers are not able to sign themselves with school enrolment forms because they are always absent from school and also come late. Teen mothers also lack support at school such as teacher support, significant challenges with peers and challenging enrolment and attendance policies such as limits on periods of absence. Teen mothers with LD lacked support at home and at school and this erodes and results in a lack of motivation for school (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007).

Teenage childbearing is surrounded by consequences that disrupt their education since teenage mothers are more likely to have dropped out of school than their non pregnant peers (Freeman & Rickels, 1993). Grant and Hallman (2006) attest to this by showing that in most cases, the birth of a baby signals the end of schooling for the teenage mothers. It is very difficult for teenage mothers to complete or succeed with their schooling.

In South Africa, “The 1996 schools act no.84, ruled against the expulsion of pregnant girls from school” (Masuku, 1998,:37). This implies that before this act was implemented South Africa, like most other Sub-Saharan countries, had an expulsion

policy. According to Chelisa (2002) this new South African policy may be referred to as continuation policy and therefore 'girl friendly'. Teenage girls who have given birth still go to school at Kwazulu-Natal. Lesotho has the same policy of inclusion of pregnant girls in schools. However, Masuku (1998) laments that regardless of this new policy of inclusion of teenage pregnant girls in school, the rate at which they dropout of school still continues at an alarming rate.

Different researchers (London, 2008; Mkhize, 1995; Masuku, 1998; Taylor-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007; Singh, 2002) offer different reasons for dropping out. Young mothers are prevented from going on to post-secondary education and from participating in many vocational training programmes by failure to complete high school (Stevens-Simon, 1995). Limited educational achievement combined with low basic skills and limited job experience means fewer employment opportunities and lower wages for teenage mothers (Maynard, 1996). Teen mothers tend to end up having had more children, on average and are less likely to be married, than women who delay childbearing. As a result, they must stretch their limited incomes to support more children (The national Campaign to prevent teen pregnancy, 1997). The US economy has lost most of its low-skill, high-paying manufacturing jobs, restricting career opportunities for low-income youths, the population likely to be involved in early pregnancies and mothering (Wilson, 1996; Males 1994). As the qualifications for good jobs rise, teenage mothers who fail to complete school have more difficulties finding gainful employment (The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994).

From 1960 to 1990, the percentage on teen births out of marriage increased from 15% to 68% of which young mothers assume primary responsibility of financial support for their families (Maynard, 1996). Higher levels of income and employment for women are connected to lower rates of non-marital childbearing (Moore, 1995). Child support awards are given to fifteen to twenty percent of never married teens. Although incomes of teen mothers are lower during their first 13 years of parenthood compared to those who delayed parenthood until age 20-21, they make up for this through increased employment and earnings when they had family incomes below the poverty level, compared with less than 1 in 10. Nearly 30% of children born to adolescent mothers are neither working nor looking for employment and earnings

when they reach their mid to late 20s (Hotz, 1997). From 1960 to 1990, the percentage of children born to adolescent mothers who reach their mid to late 20s (Hotz, 1997).

Nearly 30% of children born to adolescent mothers are neither working nor looking for jobs, nor attending school by the time they are 24 years old in contrast to mothers who have delayed childbearing (Maynard, 1996). Among whites one-fourth of teenage mothers had family incomes below the poverty level, compared with less than 1 in 10 of those who delayed childbearing (Brown & Eisenberg, 1995). In the 1950s men with little education could find well paid jobs, therefore young people would marry if pregnancy occurred, but the loss of those jobs would mean an end to those marriages or appeared to be less attractive (Christensen & Rosen, 1996). Social welfare is loaded with more burdens of financial support and child support awards to these young mothers. This is in most cases when the fathers of the babies with little education lose their well paid jobs

Research highlights that there are factors that determine whether or not the teenage mothers continue with schooling after the birth of their children. In regard to the above statement, the factors depend on the girl's ability to tackle logistics and finances associated with schooling and mothering (Kaufman, Wet & Stadler, 2001). Teenage mothers who get back to school after the birth of their babies face challenges as learners. This makes it very difficult for teenage mothers to complete or succeed with their schooling. The experiences of these young school-going mothers are discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Stigma and discriminations

Arlington Public School (2004) reports that these young mothers experience undue pressure from teachers, peers/ classmates and the community they live in. This situation is worsened by the fathers of their children who take no part in the upbringing of the children (Arlington Public school, 2004). They also suffer discrimination and exclusion at school and from society largely because of what Pillow (2004) describes as the discourse of contamination. The "discourse of contamination" is associated with the perception that the immorality of teenage mothers would teach other students this bad behaviour and contaminate these fellow

innocent girls. Young mothers are, thus, marginalized and excluded from peers. For this reason some girls decide to leave school.

Wolpe, Quinlan, Martinez (1997) share the same sentiments with Pillow (2004) when they argue that some school committees in South Africa were very reluctant to allow pregnant girls to attend classes, with the fear that they will encourage other girls to become pregnant. When some of these girls do come back to school after delivery, they are discriminated against and stigmatized by teachers and peers. They are also isolated by school mates.

2.3.2 Labeling

Some communities humiliate teenage mothers and their children by labeling them. They give them bad names such as '*Molahluoa*' (outcast) and *Moramang* (who is your father). Such names are an indication of how societies view teenage motherhood. Teenage mothers experience this humiliation at home and also at school (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). In addition to this, the unmarried teenage mothers and their children are not given space within the family tree. In the Sesotho culture only married women and their children have space within the family tree (Makatjane, 2002).

2.3.3 Disruption of the academic schedule

Teenage pregnancy and mothering often bring a halt to the teenager's education. Teenagers who leave school to deliver their babies always have to struggle to catch up in their classes. They have to split their time between their classes and their babies. They may try very hard not to fall behind in their class work, but they always miss some examinations, which is very hard to recover from (Samuel, 2002).

Stensen and Rosen, (1996) indicate that girls who do well in school, participate in non-academic activities and plan for their future, are less likely to become pregnant or bear a child during their teenage years. Teen mothers are isolated from their peers and lack positive adult role models or experience few successes. Stensen and Rosen (1996) state that those young mothers who experience more hardships are those who

do not receive help from their parents. Costin (1972), in Mkhize (1995), feels that young mothers encounter less support, or much-needed help, when resuming their student roles. This is regarded as the main reason why teen mothers fail to perform well in school after delivery of their babies. This makes it very difficult for teen mothers to continue their education.

Poor School Performance is experienced mostly by teen mothers due to the isolation they encounter from their friends (Chigona & Chetty 2008). Less than 4 in 10 teen mothers, who begin their families before age 18, never complete high school and children of teen mothers are 50% more likely to repeat a grade and less likely to complete high school (Maynard, 1996). In 2002, 98% of births to 10-14 year olds, 94% of births to 15-17 year old, and 77% of births to 18-19 year olds were supported by the South Carolina Medicaid system. South Carolina Data shows that every 55 minutes a South Carolina teen gets pregnant and each baby born to a South Carolina teen costs taxpayers almost \$22,000 per year (Maynard, 1996).

Research shows that teenage pregnancy and mothering affect level of educational attainment. It has been found that young men and women often drop out of high schools in the process of becoming parents. School attendance and achievement before conception seems to be the best predictors of school attendance and achievement after the delivery of the baby (Stevens-Simon, 1995).

In terms of educational achievement, dropping out have a baby appears to be the key factor that sets young mothers behind their peers. Adolescent mothers who stay at school are most likely to graduate (73%) as women who do not become mothers while in high school (77%) (The Alan Guttmacher institute 1994). Maynard (1996) states that 32% of teenage mothers complete high school by the time they reach their late 20s, as compared to nearly 73% of women who delay childbearing until after age 20 or 21, and about 40% of all adolescent mothers who drop out of high school, attain a General Education Diploma (GED) by the age of 30 (Maynard 1996).

Among whites, African Americans and Latinos childbearing before the age 20 significantly reduces schooling attained by almost three years and also young women who engage in childbearing after the age of 20 are much more likely than teenage

mothers to attend college (Klepinger, 1995). The more years of education a mother completes, the older her daughter is likely to be at first sexual intercourse. By the same token, teens with high educational expectations are less likely, than their peers with lower expectations, to initiate sexual intercourse. (Postrado, 1997).

Maynard (1996) indicates that children of teen parents perform worse in school than children of older parents, and are 50% more likely to repeat a grade, perform significantly worse on developmental tests, and also more likely to drop out of school.

Teenage mothers also experience less encouragement from teachers at school. Zachary (2005) argues that research reveals that pregnant girls do not necessarily drop out due to pregnancy as such, but due to their lack of involvement in their academic work prior to their pregnancy. Zachary's argument leads to the interpretation that the decision of a pregnant girl either to drop out or continue with schooling will be determined by her academic achievement. Teen mothers who saw little value in school after their pregnancy had academic problems prior to their pregnancy. Leadbeater (1996) shares a similar perspective in the sense that he views academic performance as the determining factor for the decision either to drop out of school or to continue.

School influences in underachievement of young mothers contributes to teenage mothers' decision to leave school. Able adolescents whose experiences have been motivated at their homes to achieve well in school, may be prevented by lack of facilities and teachers in their schools. Eggleston, et al (1999) also state that unintended pregnancy is influenced by the education system in that most schools are engaged in dealing with youth who perform well in school, but these number represents a very low percentage of students. The students who fail examinations stand a little chance to continue with their studies. Some of the young mothers have to look after their children and raise them because they stay with their grandmothers who are unemployed (Eggleston *et al.*, 1999; Chelisa, 2002). It is this situation which adversely influences the performance of pregnant girls and mothers in the schools.

2.3.4 Lack of support

Teenage mothers who dropped out of school reported that they lacked support at school and at home (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar 2007). The support that they lacked at home included lack of child care assistance, for example, no family members, friends or boyfriends were willing to provide child care. Teen mothers lacked encouragement which is related to school; maternal interference with their school enrolment and refusals to sign school enrolment forms. Dench and Bellis (2007) disclose that other barriers to further learning for teen mothers includes paying for and accessing childcare, and a need to keep teen mothers motivated and to address issues that arise once they enter mainstream learning. London (2008) suggests that the student-mothers must survive a very stressful time after their babies are born, torn between demands of family and home, school and the world outside.

Teen mothers lacked support at school because teachers did not provide caring relationships and a lack of academic support, significant challenges with peers such as threats of violence and ridicule. Challenging enrolment and attendance policies like limits on periods of absence, lack of ability to sign themselves in and out of school and to attend their own or their children's appointments (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007). Some families are too poor to assist young mothers financially, and as a result children are abandoned. Rowntree Foundation (2007) indicates that the situation is intensified by a lack of support from young fathers who simply neglect their paternity responsibilities.

Teenage mothers lack support from their boyfriends after the birth of their children. Freeman and Rickels (1993) add to this by giving an example of teenage mothers who revealed that after two years they were no longer in a relationship with their boyfriends (fathers of their children). However, Macleod (2001) points out that many negative social factors are implicated in teenagers' mothering abilities.

Eggleston, Jackson and Hardee (1999) state that sexual activities among adolescents begin at an early age in Jamaica with no application of contraceptives. This indicates that the rate of pregnancy will multiply or go up among the adolescents. On the other hand, Garenne, Tollman and Kahn (2000) argue that sexual intercourse among

adolescents increased due to pre-marital fertility, because adolescents lack access to family planning services. These services are mostly used by women. Garenne *et al.* (2000) attest that family planning programmes failed to address the contraceptive needs of teenagers before getting pregnant

2.4 WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG SCHOOL-GOING MOTHERS WITH REGARD TO PEERS/CLASSMATES

Writing from a South African perspective, Masuku (1998) investigated pregnant school girls at Kwamgaga High school in Umlazi. She indicates peer perceptions and attitudes as contributing factors to the decision to dropout. Girls in the same study were also in favour of other girls' expulsion. In disregard of policy, many schools in South Africa expel pregnant girls as soon as they are identified (Masuku, 1998; Taylor-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007).

Oyaro (2008) declares that stigma and discrimination by teachers and classmates are two major reasons that contribute to teen mothers and pregnant girls' decision to leave school. The author further states that teachers and classmates tend to treat pregnant girls badly in school once their pregnancy is visible or identified, and this is another way of saying "quit" to girls, which is nothing but expulsion. Oyaro (2008) relates the story of a girl who disclosed that her classmates drew cartoons to illustrate her condition on the blackboard to ridicule her. The teachers who were very much engaged with culture were very reluctant to intervene, and this was very stressful to the girl. The father also reminded the girl about the money she owed him (e.g. fees, etc.). Unfortunately, parents are unaware of the law or ignore it for their own reasons, which include culture and social standards, but this ends up in the girl's failure to resume her education (Oyaro, 2008).

Teenage mothers' reasons for leaving schools are mostly based on the pressures that surround them, and mostly pressure from school, family and dropping out at own accord (Mkhize, 1995). Puerto Rican young mothers marry as soon as they realize that they are pregnant or are suspected to be pregnant or feared to have lost their virginity, and drop out of school immediately (London, 2008). Some of the teen mothers who persist on schooling are the motivated ones; they are high achievers

academically. They attend right up to the time of delivery. The researcher has observed that most teenage mother are ridiculed and labeled by their peers.

2.5 EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG SCHOOL- GOING MOTHERS WITH REGARD TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Teenage pregnancy is problematic because in most cases some of the girls' families are very poor and as a result teenage mothers' children are abandoned after their births. Makatjane (2002) also states that maternal mortality is high in developing countries, in relation to early pregnancy and mothering, and this leads to unnecessary deaths of young mothers and their children. Rowntree Foundation (2007) states that teenage pregnancy is not a problem on local communities alone but the problem is worsened by the boyfriends of the young mothers who deny paternal responsibilities. Some of the young mothers have to look after their children and raise them because they stay with their grandmothers who are unemployed (Eggleston *et al.*, 1999; Chelisa, 2002). These circumstances affect not only teen mothers but their babies too. Limited educational achievement is combined with low basic skills and limited job experiences. This implies that there are few job opportunities and lower wages for teenage mothers (Maynard, 1996; Zill & Nord, 1994).

Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are associated with an increased rate of delinquent behaviors in relation to the fathers of the young mother's children. Such behavior includes alcohol and substance abuse, lower educational levels, and reduced earning potential. Stanley (2007) raps this up by showing that in the United States, the annual cost of teen pregnancy and mothering from lost tax revenues, public assistance, child health care, foster care and involvement with the criminal justice system is estimated to be about \$ 7 billion.

Dropping out of school is a multi-generational problem (National Women's Law Centre, 2007). Dropouts do not only suffer lower life time income and worse overall health, but are also more likely to see their own children dropout of schools and suffer the same consequences. The educational level of mothers may cause a greater difference in families. A Study of female students found that while the daughters of

men who graduated from high school are 15% less likely to dropout of school than daughters whose fathers dropped out of school; daughters of women who graduated from high school were one-third less likely to dropout of schools than daughters of women who dropped out of school (National Women's Law Centre, 2007).

2.5.1 Psychosocial problems

McWhirter and Hawley (1993) opine that closely linked to teenage pregnancy and motherhood is the increasing incidence of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. In these situations, the nation may be plagued by social problems such as: dropout rate in schools and increase in unemployment and a greater dependency on social welfare. Teenage pregnancy is problematic because in most cases some of the girls' families are very poor and as a result teenage mothers' children are abandoned after their births (Makatjane, 2002). Teen mothers have numerous problems in relation to their lives which may affect other people like their babies, their aunties and grandmothers, who may wish to help them. HIV and AIDS can affect the baby if the mother is not well informed about the epidemic, especially when the mother does not attend pre-natal clinics. In most cases, young mothers die young and increase the number of orphans thereby give a burden to social welfare. Sometimes, young mothers pass HIV and AIDS to aunties and grandmothers who help them when they are very sick.

Macleod (2001) argues that teen mothers experience consequences of early child bearing alone, yet mothering is about fathering (Children are born through their parents, fathers and mothers). Nzama (2004) states that girls experience psychological problems such as stress and insanity. Young mothers experience psychological problems but their boyfriends are free from all that because of culture and social conventions.

2.5.2 Socio-economic problems

In many situations teenage mothers are associated with greater risks of socio-economic disadvantages throughout their lives (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). The return of the teenage mothers to school and their participation in the labour market may be an efficient way of getting out of their long term consequences. The Ministry of

Education in South Africa received several complaints laid by teenage mothers in 2000, with regard to stigma and discrimination against them thereby disposing these young mothers to be marginalized in education (National Women's Law Centre, 2007). Teenage mothers are subjected to the risk of socio-economic disadvantage throughout their lives than those who delayed childbearing until their twenties, as they are generally less educated and tend to have bigger families and also have higher levels of unwanted births (McDowell, 2003). Teenage parenting is a serious problem in African community and most children born to teenage mothers have little chance to live or survive due to poverty they are born to (Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Christensen (1996) indicates that communities should make sure that children have access not only to nurturing adults, but also have a broad spectrum of programmes, activities, service opportunities that can build self-confidence, bolster self-esteem and forge positive connections (Christensen, 1996). Currently, the policies in Lesotho and South Africa have changed to the policy of inclusion, meaning equal education for all, but teenage mothers and pregnant girls still drop out of schools in numbers because communities seem not be aware of these developments

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to teachers and classmates/peers at school and the community they live in. The chapter also included a reflection on the factors contributing towards teenage pregnancy and motherhood, and consequences of being young mothers in schools. In the next chapter the information on research method used in the study will be discussed. The researcher also discussed research design, sampling design, method of data collection , data analysis ,and procedures for conducting the empirical study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study intended to find out the experiences of young, school-going mothers in rural and urban high schools, with a view particularly, to documenting the challenges and difficulties they experienced. In addition, the research focused on support these young mothers received from their schools. More specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions: What are young school-going mothers' experiences with regard to their interactions with their teachers? What are young school-going mothers' experiences with regard to classmates /peers? What are young school-going mothers' experiences in their communities?

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Bless and Acholla (1988: 54), in Mkhize (1995), a research design is a plan of any scientific investigation from the first to the last step. Gilbert (1993) suggests that a theory is often an answer to the question why? He also regards: - the construction of theory, the collection of data and, the design of methods for gathering data as three major ingredients in social research.

Durrheim (2002:29) defines design as a plan of how the researcher collected and analyzed the data that were needed to answer the research questions, systematically. He further states that it is the designed and planned nature of observation that distinguishes research from other forms of observation. In this study, the researcher's purpose was to investigate the experiences of young mothers in high schools. The case study was used as it allowed young mothers to describe the phenomena adequately from their own points of view (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002).

Myers (1997) explicates that qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people, as well as the social and the cultural contexts within

which they live. In this study, the researcher attempted to understand how young mothers coped with being students in high schools. Researchers like Chigona & Chetty (2008) Masuku (1996) SighN (2002), as well as Tayler-Ritzler and Balcazar (2007) have also used this approach in their studies of teenage mothers.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Methodology refers to research techniques employed in particular type of research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002). Bailey (1987), in Mkhize (1995), explains this as the philosophy of the research process, such as assumptions, and the values that serve as the rationale for this study. Hall and Hall (1996) define methodology as an overall approach to studying the research topic and constraints, dilemmas and ethical choices involved, and the success or otherwise of those choices. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the researcher planned and implemented the entire project. Therefore, the researcher will discuss the research design that was used; sampling procedures; instrumentation and the field work.

3.3.1 Sampling design

Purposive sampling design was considered a suitable choice for this study. Purposive sampling procedure involves the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Babbie (2002) defines purposive sampling as type of non probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones will be most useful or representative.

Researchers (Sighn, 2002; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Masuku, 1998; Mkhize, 1995) have also used this sampling design in their studies of young school-going mothers and teenage pregnancy. For this study, the research sample comprised 10 young mothers from 5 high schools in the Leribe District of Lesotho. The participants were met in their respective high schools. These were young mothers who had returned to school after giving birth to their babies.

3.3.2 Sample

School-going mothers were characterized as holders of data that were needed for the study (Cohen, et al., 2007). It was the researcher's intention to gather data about the difficulties and challenges that school going mothers experienced in their school life. School going mothers who have returned to schools after giving birth to their babies were the main respondents.

3.3.3 The method of data collection

Young school-going mothers were identified as sources of data needed for this study. The researcher opted for interview as the most appropriate approach for the required data. According to Campbell, McNamara and Gilroy (2004) an interview is a conversation between the researcher and the participants. These researchers aver that there are many types of interviews, ranging from highly structured, formal interviews to informal conversations. Out of these, Campbell, et al., opine that the researcher may choose one suitable for the study, as they allow for probing and collecting in-depth data. Picciano (2004) defines interview as a tool for data collection, and mentions that there are different types of interviews but states that they are all appropriate depending on the nature of one's study.

The researcher's choice of interview was made on the basis that interviews eliminate unknown answers and ascertain that all questions are answered to the satisfaction of the researcher as she gets an opportunity to probe for answers and show sensitivity to verbal communication with non-verbal cues. The researcher may use other interviewing skills like linking and reflecting throughout the interview to ensure the correctness of answers (Mkhize, 1995). Different researchers have used interviews in their studies on teenage pregnancy and mothering (Mkhize, 1995; Singh, 2002; Masuku, 1996; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Macleod, 1999; Taylor-Ritzler & Balcazar 2007). The Interview was appropriate for this study, not only due to its flexibility in collecting data, but more importantly because of the type and nature of the information needed to answer the research questions.

3.3.3.1 The interview schedule

The researcher developed an interview schedule which comprised open-ended questions, and this was regarded as a standard instrument. The interview schedule was divided into four sections as follows: Section A: Biographical information; Section B: Experiences of young school-going mothers in interaction with teachers; Section C: School-going mothers' experiences with classmates/peers Section D: Experiences of young school-going mothers with community. Challenges and difficulties young mothers face at school, need to be measured and also find out what support the schools offered to young mothers. Grinnell (1993; 203, in Mkhize 1995) states that categories may provide some notion of magnitude of variable being measured for an individual participants.

3.3 Validity

Neuman (2006:188) defines validity as “truthfulness and believable result”. Bertram (2004:70) further describes validity as “a sound justifiable or trustworthy research”. According to Bischoff and Koebe (2005), validity refers to “the extent to which the research measures what the researcher is supposed to measure”. Reliability is the consistency of the results. Namely, credibility, applicability, consistency, neutrality and ethical measures. Bertram (2004) states that validity can be achieved from interviews in two ways: internal validity and concept validity.

In this study validity was attained by asking the interviewee to listen to the tape recorder after data collection to verify what they said during the interview process. In addition, the researcher also allowed the interviewees to read interview transcript to check whether what had been written reflected what they said, and also comment and give some clarifications. The researcher also ensured validity by not fabricating responses. Regarding reliability, Brown and Dowling (in Bertram, 2004) as well as Neuman (2006) opine that one must compare the results of this study with those of other studies. To achieve this, the researcher compared the results with those of other researchers (Singh 2002; Masuku, 1998; Chigona & Chetty (2008), Mkhize 1995; Beesham, 2000; & Macleod 1999).

3.3.4 Proposed method of data analysis

Data were analyzed qualitatively. The information emanating from the interviewees was transcribed into themes pertaining to the school-going mothers' experiences in high schools. In order to analyze the information gathered easily; the researcher coded data by using the process content analysis. Themes were identified by counting how frequently each theme has occurred.

3.4 PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING EMPIRICAL STUDY

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education. The District Secretary and Senior Education Officer in the Leribe District of Lesotho were approached for access to high schools. Contact persons in participating high schools (principals) were also approached. Prior to collecting data, (interviewing) informed consent was obtained from the participating young mothers with regard to whether or not to participate in the research. Attempts were made to provide an explanation to the young mothers as to how they should behave during the interview process. The purpose of study was explained and the interview schedule was disclosed to the young mothers. Interviews were conducted individually and in focus groups in different high schools in the district

3.5 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics are the rules and morals that need to be followed by the researcher (Neuman, 2006). In this regard, the researcher needs to create a good relationship with the participants and make sure that there will be no harm done to the participants throughout the study, physically, emotionally and socially (Durrheim & Wassemaar, in Bertram, 2004). Confidentiality prevailed between the researcher and respondents (Bertram, 2004). Participants were given freedom to withdraw if they were not comfortable with answering any questions.

Before conducting the interview, the participants were informed about the nature of the interview, what type of questions to expect the purpose of the study, as well as the use of a tape recorder during the interview process. The participants were also informed that data collected from the interview were not for public use.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has described the research methods used in the study. Sampling design was explained by the researcher and the data-collection tool that was used was described as well as the proposed method of data analysis. The next chapter presents the results and major findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents the data collected pertaining to the experiences of young school-going mothers in the Leribe district of Lesotho. This was a case study. Van Ransburg, Landman, and Bodenstein (1994) indicate that case studies are not set out with the idea of testing hypotheses about relationships but are carried out to establish the distribution of variables. In this analysis, the researcher employed the qualitative research method. The aim of the research was to gain insight into the situation, phenomenon, community or person (Bless & Higson-Smith 1995). The study objectives were to explore the experiences of young school going mothers with regard to teachers, classmates and the community. Challenges and difficulties these young mothers faced in school were a concern. The objective was also to establish whether there was support and assistance in schools for these young mothers to cope with the school demands.

In order to analyse the information gathered easily; the researcher coded data by using the process content analysis. Themes were identified by counting how frequently each theme has occurred. The following themes were identified: Rejection and victimization by teachers, peers, and the community. Humiliation of the teen mothers, labeling of the young mothers, discrimination and stigma attached to the young mothers, academic challenges, and lack of support from the school, home, and the community.

The themes were discussed according to the aims of the study. In order to understand the situation of the young mothers in the schools, a sample background of these young mothers is provided.

With regard to presentation of data, Mkhize (1995) and Samuel (2002) used themes and tables in their studies on teenage pregnancy and mothering. Samuel (2000) used a table form at showing percentages of total deliveries to teenagers. Mkhize (1995) used both statistical and tables of data presentation. The data presentation styles in Chigona and Chetty (2008) were found to be appropriate for this study, because the

categories and table formats, together with themes and quotes allowed and enabled the researcher to explore, describe, give explanation of experiences of young school-going mothers (Babbie, 2002).

4.2 TEEN MOTHERS' BACKGROUNDS

The study revealed that the young mothers came from diverse family backgrounds and status ranging from: working class, middle class and higher middle class. The family background also ranged from: single parents, divorced, separated, widowed, never married and deceased. The teen mothers' education varied from form A to E. Some of the young mothers were orphaned and lived as heads of their families with their young brothers and sisters.

4.3 EXPERIENCES WITH REGARD TO TEACHERS

4.3.1 Rejection and victimization by teachers

The teachers in Lesotho have programme that lead them into what they should teach in schools (Syllabuses) that are designed by the Ministry of Education. For this reason, the young mothers are treated like any other learners because the syllabus does not provide anything special for them. Some of the high schools in Lesotho reject young mothers completely on the basis that they do not teach young mothers in their schools. The attitudes of the educators towards the young mothers vary according to how the educators feel about culture. Some of the educators feel for these young mothers and try to help them, but other educators do not. The rationale behind this is that young mothers are suffering from the consequences of what they have done. In this way young mothers are rejected by not giving them enough time to do their work at school. Instate of this, they are sometimes referred to the other learners to help with what has been learned while they were not present due to their commitments as young mothers. Other learners may try to help but may not be able to clarify. The young mothers are also victimized by their teachers in times of tests and examinations, because there is no special provision for them. Examinations requirements and scores are the same and the amount of fees paid at school is equal.

The study revealed that young mothers were rejected by their teachers. In some of the schools, some of the teachers did not go back to explain the work that had been covered when the teen mothers were absent, but they did so for other learners. The reason behind this was that teen mothers were always absent from school, and it was like wasting time for other learners, as though teen mothers were not learners. What was amazing about the data was that the young mothers paid the very same amount of school fees like other learners, including sports fees and so on. In relation to this, one teenage mother revealed that:

*I was afraid to face my teachers because of my big tummy,
and after delivery, I was also afraid to meet with my teachers...*

Pillow (2004) highlights the “discourse of contamination” which is more associated with the perception that the immorality of young mothers would teach other students bad behaviour. It was quite clear that some of the teachers in high schools had the wrong mentality that the young mothers’ education was totally disrupted by their motherhood and would never recover. Therefore, it was like wasting time assisting these young mothers. One young mother revealed as follows:

*My teacher once told me that there was no use
of me coming to school, because I do not come to
school everyday. The teacher went further to tell
me that I was here to increase the number of failures.....*

According to this study, it is obvious that teachers focus only on covering the school syllabus and to increase the number of their school passes, whilst excluding young mothers in that process.

4.3.2 Academic challenges – Teachers

The results indicate that young mothers have academic difficulties and challenges in schools and at home. Accordingly, these findings concur with those reported by Tayler-Ritzler and Balcazar (2007), London (2008), Macleod (2001) Nzama (2004) McWhiter and Hawley (1993). The challenging enrolment and attendance policies

like limits on absences, lack of ability to sign themselves into and out of school to attend their own or their children's appointments, are factors that affect their school work (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007). Sometimes there are threats of violence and ridicule; this is done mostly in classrooms where learners are divided into groups to do certain tasks. One young mother asserted:

I keep on skipping days on coming to school because I have to look after the baby when my mother is committed to her appointments. Sometimes I have to take the baby to the clinic for check-ups. I also have no time for extra-mural studies because of the baby...

Sometimes I am reminded by my teachers that if I keep on skipping school days, I may be expelled from school because of the school policy. This policy stipulates that learners should not be absent from school for more than three weeks...

It is evident that young mothers have no time to do their school work at home because of their babies and house chores. Some of the parents do not give enough time to the young mothers to do their school work at home. Some of these teen mothers have problems which are caused by their family structures, such as living with so many siblings in a very small house and running short of basic necessities of life. For this reason, teen mothers find themselves locked in unstable situations which are not conducive to learning. The findings of the study by Robinsons, et al (1985), in Mkhize (1995), also concur with these findings. One young mother reported as follows:

At home I have no time to do my homework because I have to do cooking for the baby and the whole family and washing clothes for all. Sometimes I do not sleep well especially when the baby is sick. When I get to school I sleep in class and miss the lesson...

I live with many people at home. They make a lot of noise at night and we run short of candles to light the house...

At the end of the school terms I achieve very little and always fail tests.

I was very stressed and ashamed of failing...

4.3.3 Humiliation by teachers

It is evident that some of the teachers humiliate teen mothers in classrooms and they do not give them chance to learn, as they give to other learners. Teachers also say words that pass bad impression to young mothers at assemblies. Due to the fact that the teachers' attitudes are very negative towards young mothers, other learners avoid young mothers. In most cases learners do this to please their teachers because they have seen their attitudes. The following confessional remark is worth quoting at length:

I was embarrassed and humiliated by words

That was said at assemblies about young mothers.....

Teachers were no more calling me by my name. They

called me Motsoetse (mother).....

Because of the stigma attached to young mothers in my

school, I do not want to take trips to learning places

anymore. I just want to be in class and then go home

Immediately after school.....

I really don't know how long these misunderstandings will

go away from me and other young mothers.....

Masuku (1998) states that teen mothers get humiliated by teachers. It is clear that other learners humiliate teen mothers in that they do not want to play netball nor work in groups with them. They say they are bad and will make girls behave like them. Peers do not feel comfortable enough to be in the presence of pregnant girls and young mothers.

4.3.4 Lack of support from teachers

Due to their appointments for their babies, like for example taking the baby to hospitals or themselves (teen mothers). Teachers have no time to give to the young mothers due to their fixed tables. The results concur with the findings of various authors which reveal that young mothers lack support (Tayler-Ritzler & Balcazar, 2007; Dench & Bellis 2007; London, 2000; Rowntree Foundation, 2007; Freeman & Rickels, 1993)

The following assertion by one of the young mothers is also worth noting:

Trying to explain to us, it's up and down for us. The teachers will be busy with their work and saying that it is very difficult to deal with young mothers because they do not come to school everyday.....

When I came back to school, after delivery of the baby some of the teachers would ask me about the husband or father of my baby. I did not like such questions because I was no longer in love with the father of my baby.....

It is clear that pregnant girls and teen mothers lack support from the school and families regarding their health. Singh (2005) indicates that young mothers need health care. It is evident that some teen mothers have no one to look after their babies when they are at school. This is attested to by the following assertion:

Sometimes I had to be late or absent from school ...

I always had to look after the sick child and miss lessons or otherwise bring the baby to my relatives residing next to my school so that I can go and feed the baby at break time. After school I will collect the baby and go home.....

Bloem (2000) argues that schools need to have professionals who would inform young mothers about motherhood and their situations, and also have in-service training to provide young mothers with life skills to combat the stigma attached to them.

Nzama (2004) points out those young mothers have no support. It becomes clear that teen mothers have a burden of taking their children to clinics for check-ups and have to care for them when they get sick.

Teenage mothers experience less encouragement from teachers at school and this contributes to the teenage mothers' decision, most often, to leave school. The following confessional remark is worth quoting:

I struggled to cope with all the challenges, but it was of no use since there was no one to support me at school.....

I felt that I was losing and frustrating myself every day. I am really confused I need someone who can feel for me and understand what is in my heart.....

What can we do to convince our teachers and fellow Learners, so that they may take us as learners and nothing else? Are you also going to talk to our teachers now to change their negative attitudes towards us.....?

Taylor-Ritzler (2007) attests to this by showing that teen mothers lack caring relationships and academic support to accommodate their learning requirements at school. There are also significant challenges with peers such as threats of violence and ridicule and also challenging enrolment and attendance policies with limits on absences.

Nzama (2004) indicates that childbearing affects the teen mothers' work at school. Teen mothers have to rush home after school and they do not have time to go for study sessions like other learners. This situation is best exemplified by the assertion:

*After school I have to run home to see and feed the baby...
They know that we have babies to care for at home
they cannot compromise and bear with us.....*

*They also expect us to go on school trips and come ...
to school on weekends and holidays, failing...
which we are called mothers and marginalized...*

I do not have time for sports or extra-mural activities...

Mcwhiter and Hawley (1993) also argue that teen mothers have psychological problems such as stress. Teen mothers who get support and are motivated from their homes get frustrated when they are undermined by their teachers because the situation at school is a major determinant of success in the sense that learners get more motivated when their teachers respond positively to what they are doing. This is so, especially, considering that most learners trust and believe in their teachers more than anybody else, including their own parents. All the young mothers interviewed expressed their concern regarding their teachers' attention and their understanding of them. It is in this regard that two young mothers made the following remarks:

*We need the attention of our teachers and they must also
understand that we are like other learners.....*

*They should not associate our mistakes (motherhood) with our being
at school.....*

It is clear that the attitudes of teachers towards young mothers in schools are very negative. Even though the policies on pregnancy and motherhood are in favour of

young mothers, teachers still show hostility towards learners. One young mother illustrated this hostility as follows:

Teachers could not ask me any question.....

Here at school teachers expect us, young mothers to come to school very early to study like other learners and leave very late in the afternoon, if we fail to do so, they treat us very badly.....

At school, when the other girls have done bad things and I happened to be amongst them, even though I did not actually do the bad thing, the blame is put more on me as a young mother...

4.3.5 Supplementary information

On my arrival at some of the high schools in the District of Leribe I had some discussions with the teachers. Some of them were very positive and explained to the researcher that they did feel for these young mothers. They disclosed that it was very difficult to give young mothers enough time because of the school syllabus which did not provide for these young mothers.

One teacher had this to say:

It is very difficult to deal with young mothers because their problems are continuous, especially those who lack support from their homes. Young mothers are always absent from school and for this reason they fail to catch up with other learners.

Teachers who feel for them and try to help get discouraged because the process continues from day to day...

Another teacher suggested as follows:

Young mothers need their own teachers who are ready for the inconvenience caused by the process of skipping school days to attend to their appointments...

One other teacher had the following to say:

Some teachers ignore young mothers' problems because they believe that young mothers suffer the consequences of their foolish decision. For this reason young mothers should not be supported, hence this would be regarded as motivation to other girls and the very same mother to get another baby out of wedlock and lower the good morals of Basotho...

Another teacher who seemed to be very negative towards teen mothers in schools stated that:

I agree with the parents who suggested that young mothers should stay out of school because they contaminate girls with their bad behaviour...

4.4 EXPERIENCES WITH PEERS AND CLASSMATES

4.4.1 Rejection and victimization by peers and classmates

The study revealed that the young mothers were rejected by their friends. This rejection was experienced fully in the school whereby the young mothers were victimized and marginalized. Peers did not feel free to play with the teen mothers and in class some learners did not feel comfortable to sit next to them. In relation to this, one of the teenage mothers from one of the participating schools reported as follows:

I was desperate and depressed to find that I was failing to achieve my goals. I had no one to console me both at school and at home. I nearly dropped out of school for good in winter holidays when I found that my school work was so poor I failed the term. My parents were reminding me of my motherhood. I thought of my teachers.....

The boys talked bad things about me, they were always talking about the size of my breasts and pointing fingers behind my back.....

At home my friends changed and told me that their parents said they must stop visiting me because I no longer belong to girls but to women.....

In support of this, Masuku (1998) explains that pregnant girls and teen mothers are discriminated against and stigmatized by their peer groups. Young mothers experience harsh times at school, because they are rejected by their peer groups. The attitudes of other learners change towards the young mothers as they think that they have done something very bad, and as a result of this they do not want to accept them in their social circles. So, the young mothers feel isolated and lonely. One teen mother had the following to say about this:

Other girls would tell me to go home since the school does not have space for me. They say I must go and feed my baby, others say I do not look like a girl any more.....

I always have to avoid quarrels with other learners because I will be reminded of my bad situation.....

In relation to this Masuku (1998) states that peer reject teenage mothers in classrooms and stigmatize them. It is clear that boys talk bad things about young mothers and insult them. They do not want teen mothers to pass near them and if they do, they label them and talk about the size of their breasts. The resentment visited upon the young mothers is best attested to by the following pronouncement made by one teenage mother;

I always fear to pass a group of boys on the way to school and home because I am afraid they may talk bad things about me.....

Nzama (2004) indicates that there are adverse consequences that are associated with teen pregnancy and childbearing in schools. It is clear that physical changes in the teen mothers attract the attention of other learners. These changes also affect and confuse young mothers who are still in the process of undergoing changes from childhood to adulthood. The shame felt by young mothers is vividly captured by the following confessional remark:

After delivery of the baby, I was afraid of walking in front of other learners; like doing something on the chalkboard or presenting the work. Sometimes they would shout out and say “mother”

It is clear that although peers contribute to teen pregnancy and mothering, they also reject it. To show that they do not accept it, one teenage mother confessed as follows:

Girls were writing bad things about me on schools walls and in toilets. The girls were always gossiping about me and other young mothers with boys.....

Peers do not feel comfortable to work with teen mothers in groups, while teachers are very reluctant to intervene and try to combat the stigma attached to young mothers. This situation is vividly captured by the following statement:

I had to work alone in classroom while other learners were working together in groups. My teacher was there but did not help me or even ask another group to work with me...

The other learner mentioned that I never come to school every day so their group will lose points. I knew what was in the mind of my teacher.....

Kaufman, Wet and Stadler (2001) indicate that young mothers who get back to school after the birth of their babies face challenges as learners and this makes it very difficult for the teen mothers to complete school. As discussed in chapter two,

education policies on the expulsion of pregnant girls from schools also contribute to the stigma and discrimination of these young mothers (Vilakazi-Tselane, in Chelisa, 2002). Unfortunately, when some of these girls come back to school after delivery, they are discriminated against and are stigmatized by other peers. One such teen mother reported as follows:

The other learners would keep on asking the very same question and further stated that I was no longer a girl but a mother, and mothers belong to their husbands and homes not school, this frustrated me a lot....

The discourses around teenage mothers impose pressure on them. Further, the effect that they have on their educational experiences makes it difficult for the young mothers to cope with their Education (Pillow, 2004)

4.5 EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY

Some communities humiliate young mothers and their children by labeling them. This was discussed in chapter two. The children of young mothers are given bad names such as *Molahluoa* (outcast) and *Moramang* (who is your father). The child is called *Matlakala* (trash) if it is a girl. Such names are an indication of how societies view teenage motherhood (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). In Lesotho, the unmarried teen mothers and their children are not given space within the family tree. The findings of this study are in line with Mohlakoana-Mokobocho's study, as the results revealed that there was labeling of the young mothers both at school and home. The following remark by one young mother is worth noting:

I was not very happy with the name given to my baby by my step-mother. This went as far as re-naming me. The bad name given to my son is attached to my own name...

and is destroying me and my future because it is following me to school where my stepmother has influence because she is a teacher.....

It is very clear that young mothers and their children are marginalized and are deprived of opportunities and rights. One young mother said;

*My brothers are not happy with me and my baby.
They say the baby is demanding too much and their
parents are no more buying things for them.....*

*This is hurting me because they are doing funny things
to the baby like when the baby is crying, they would ask me
to control the noise in the house, as though they did
not know that there was a baby at home...*

As discussed in chapter two, teenage mothers who get back to school after the birth of their babies face challenges as learners and this makes it very difficult for them to complete or succeed in their schooling. In Lesotho, teenage pregnancy and motherhood are very much attached to stigma and discrimination so much so that young mothers are associated with all those bad things. In this regard, one young mother disclosed as follows;

*People residing next to school where I attend,
always talk bad things about me when they see
me passing on the way.....*

*In the village, people are very jealous when they see me
going to school. They would ask questions like why do
teachers keep mothers in schools*

These findings agree with what has previously been reported by various authors (Pillow, 2004; Wolp, et al, 1997; Christensen, 1996; Masuku, 1998; Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Vilakazi-Tselane, in Chelisa, 2002). These findings support Arlington Public School's findings (2004) as it reports on adolescent mothers' difficulties and what these girls experience in school. On the other hand, Eggleston *et al.* (1999) argue

that unintended pregnancy is sometimes influenced by the education system in that schools are only engaged with few children who perform well.

Young mothers are not supported by the community they live in. This has a great impact on their studies and lives since education in Lesotho is like a three legged pot (community, teachers and government), and the learners are to be inside the pot. The people in their villages are not happy to see the young mothers going to school with other girls. They believe that the young mothers will teach their children bad things that they have done (pregnancy and motherhood).

Culturally, in Lesotho, it is a disgrace for a girl to have a child out of wedlock. This is the main reason why the teen mothers are ‘othered’. The worst part of this phenomenon is that most of the teachers in schools come from the very same community and share the same perspectives. According to the communities young mothers have to be discriminated against and stigmatized so as to improve morals. One of the young mothers said this with a touched heart:

I always avoid using public transport when coming to school, because the people will be talking about the school and their children, the uniform and bad manners that young mothers carry to schools.....

I never went back to the same school after delivering my baby.....

The findings of this study revealed that young mothers were rejected by the communities they lived in. They were not regarded as girls or proper mothers. They were “othered”. Teen mothers found themselves hanging between girls who could not accept them because they had babies and their own mothers who did not accept them because they were not married. Misunderstandings and pressure from the community were so high that only those young mothers with resilience and were highly motivated with support from their homes would survive and complete their studies.

4.5.1 Experiences with parents/guardian

In Lesotho, most families reject young mothers because of the country's dominant culture that puts more value on the children in the sense that most parents expect to get something like money or any kind of animals from their daughters' husbands as lobola. Teenage pregnancy and motherhood are regarded as a taboo in Lesotho to the extent that young mothers are rejected, mostly by their fathers. The data presented here show that teen mothers are rejected by their fathers. This is attested to by the following assertion:

We have become village talks everywhere we go. We are being gossiped by other learners and teachers, children in streets or villages, fathers and mothers...

As for the school meetings where parents are invited, the topic would be young mothers' through and through...

Mohlakoana-Mokobocho (2005) attests that it is a disgrace for girls to have babies before marriage and be called mothers in Lesotho.

I was expelled from home by my father for being a mother. I left home and I am now living with my grandmother.....

My father did not expel me from home, but rejected me and my baby in the house; He did not spend his money on me and my baby.....

My father did not give name to my baby. He was always reminding me of the money he spent at school on me.....

Nzama (2004) reveals that teenage pregnancy and motherhood causes tension in the girls' families. What is about the data is that the girls' boyfriend also rejects her and this disheartening situation is corroborated by the following assertion:

My boyfriend never came back to see me and the baby...

Makatjane (2002) reveals that there is a strong belief among the Basotho that formal education is positively associated with premarital sexual experience. It is mostly believed that formal education has eroded certain practices that were traditionally meant to discourage premarital sex. As one young mother remarked:

I was blamed by my grandmother for eating certain foods that I was not supposed to eat at school and at home (eggs and cheese) before I get married.

My father did not allow my mother to help me with the baby after school, I would carry the baby with me wherever I went.....

My mother was always complaining about the milk she was buying for my baby and warning me that one day, I will have to leave school and work for my baby. Sometimes my father quarreled with my mother about me and the baby, and I would feel guilty for that.....

My father would not talk to me for some days at home. This was very painful to me since I loved my father more than any other person in the family.....

If the baby gets sick I really don't know how to tell my parents. I will wait until they can see for themselves. If I run short of something, it's a problem of how to tell my parents because I may be reminded of what I have done just like in school.....

Most girls engage themselves in sexual activities to avoid being called mafetoa (unmarried women). In the Basotho culture, girls who are not married by the age of 20 years are called mafetoa (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). It is also regarded as a disgrace for girls to have babies before marriage and be called mothers. In this case, culture contributes a lot to the frustrations that already surround the young mothers. One young mother disclosed that;

I am not satisfied with the name given to my baby. It is discriminating and stigmatizing me. The name is humiliating me and my baby.....

I was once forced to go to my boy friend's home after the birth of my baby by my parents.....

Evidently, it's quite clear that teen mothers face very serious challenges, starting from their own homes all the way to school. The study found that the socio-economic status of the family was the main issue which determined whether support was available or not for the young mother. If the family's socio-economic status was sound, the young mother was supported, but if it was bad there was no support. Most of the young mothers interviewed had no fathers in their families and those who had fathers received less parental care from them because they worked in South Africa. A study by Robinson *et.al* (1985) in Mkhize (1995) indicate that in a family where there was no father figure, but many siblings, shortages of basic essentials of life became an economic problem that created a push for someone to leave home and this increased the number of young mothers. One young mother reported as follows:

I am always absent from school because of school uniform; lack of books; school fees and looking after the baby when my mother is going out for piece jobs so that we can survive.....

Mohlakoana-Mokobocho (2005) has argued that families that are generally poor and have low education, as well as low income, contributed to early sexual activities. This

is also associated with the fact that teenagers from poor families tend to have lower educational and occupational aspirations, and experience more problems in schools (Gullota, et al., 1993).

Often-times, teen mothers have no one to look after their babies when they go to school. It is very clear that their parents may only help young mothers when they are not committed to their own appointments, such as going to work, church, functions and so on. When the parents get sick, young mothers have to stay at home for some days or weeks to attend to their babies. This is made evident in the following assertion:

My grandmother is looking after my baby when I go to school, but she is always sick and always busy with her societies.....

Eggleston, et al, (1999) and Chelisa, (2002) share the same view and indicate that some of the young mothers have to look after their babies and raise them because they stay with their grandmothers who are not employed.

Taylor-Ritzler (2007) reveals that young mothers lack child care assistance at home because no one is willing to help or provide professional care for the baby. They get no help from boyfriends, friends or family members. The young mothers sometimes have no one to help them look after the babies when they go to school. Furthermore, Young mothers get no encouragement at home in relation to school work. For this reason and many others, teen mothers lose interest and decide to leave school before they complete. Some of the teen mothers have no time to rest, when they get home as people at home feel relieved from the baby and house chores. There is no time for school work at home for a young mother. This is attested to, in the following words of one of the teen mothers in this study:

When I get home, I have to do a lot of work for the whole family and also cook for my baby.....

I do not have time to do homework because

the baby is always with me and crying all the time.....

I always have sleepless nights.....

Taylor-Ritzler (2007) states that the lack of support teen mothers experience at home and at school result in the lack of motivation for school.

4.4.2 Experiences with the fathers of the babies

Some of the young mothers when interviewed showed that they would be very happy if they were supported by their boyfriends (fathers of their children). Unfortunately, most of these fathers did not support the teen mothers. From this study, it is evident that the teen mothers did not get support from their boyfriends either socially or financially. This situation is attested to by the following testimony:

My boyfriend did not think of me and my baby...

I needed someone strong to look after me and my baby.....

I did not know whether my boyfriend abandoned me and the baby because of the pressure from his family or just because I left school earlier as soon as I realized that I was pregnant...

I never went back to the same school.....

London (2008) notes that the student-mothers must survive a very stressful time after their babies are born as they are torn between demands of family and home, school the fathers of their children, and the outside world.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation of the results and the analysis of data. In the chapter that follows (Chapter 5) discussion, conclusions and recommendations are indicated.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings that were presented in chapter four. The chapter also presents recommendations and conclusions drawn from the findings of this study. The discussion is organized according to three key research questions that were presented in chapter one.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to explore school-going young mothers' experiences with regard to their interactions with teachers, their classmates/peers and the community at large. More specifically, the study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

- (a) What are school-going young mothers' experiences with regard to their interactions with teachers?

- (b) What are school-going young mothers' experiences with regard to their interaction with classmates/peers?

- (b) What are school-going young mothers' experiences in their community?

5.2.1 Young Mothers' experiences with Teachers

This study has revealed that young mothers experience numerous problems at high schools which manifest in poor performance and high dropout rate. Macleod (1999) concurs with these findings by indicating that teenage pregnancy and motherhood have negative consequences such as the disruption of schooling; socio-economic disadvantage; adverse obstetric outcomes; inadequate mothering; neglect and abuse. These negative consequences were discussed in chapter two. The young mothers have a tough time at school because they experience negative attitudes from their teachers. Chigona and Chetty (2008) also established that young mothers drop out of school

due to the fact that they feel insecure. The impact of this rejection imposes stress and frustrations on the young mothers at school in the sense that the situation at school infringes on the young mothers' right to learning. Young mothers who lack resilience or cannot manage these frustrations simply leave school without achieving anything. In some of the schools, teachers do not go back to explain what was covered when the young mothers were absent, but for other learners they do so. It is like wasting time for other learners, as though young mothers were not learners, but they pay the same amount of school fees. Some of the teachers pass bad remarks concerning the young mothers in the presence of other learners and this has direct and indirect negative impact on the self-esteem of the teen mothers.

In some of the high schools, the learning systems are not in favour of young mothers in that they have awkward study times like very early in the mornings and very late in the afternoons. At these times young mothers have to be attending to their babies like feeding them or cooking for them.

Young school-going mothers experience rejection and victimization by teachers and the community they live in. This is mainly because teenage pregnancy and mothering are regarded as a taboo by some societies. Masuku (1998) agrees with these findings and explains that pregnant girls and teen mothers are discriminated against and stigmatized by their peer groups and society.

Another factor that contributes more to the stigma attached to these young mothers are the physical changes that attract the attention of other learners. On the other hand, these changes also confuse young mothers because they are still in the transition process, namely, childhood to adulthood. Findings by Nzama (2004) indicate that physical changes in pregnant girls and young mothers affect their lives. At school, teachers fail to understand the situation of young mothers and for this reason teachers fail to assist the young mothers academically. This is due to the fact that teachers were not trained to deal with young mothers. As such, young mothers are marginalized in classrooms by other girls who do not want to sit next to them or work in groups with them. At this point, the intervention from teachers is not very clear and the reason behind this is that teachers come from the same community that attaches stigma to young mothers.

In Lesotho most families reject young mothers due to the culture of the country that puts more value on children in that parents expect to get something out of their daughters' marriages or their success in education. This rejection is mostly done by their parents. This worsens the situation in that young mothers are left with the burden of raising their children alone with little help from their own families. Again, findings by Nzama (2004) reveal that teenage pregnancy and motherhood cause tension in the girls' families.

Rejection and victimization by the teachers is more frustrating to teen mothers in that young mothers are not accepted by the society as girls. They are "othered". Young mothers find themselves in a situation where they are not regarded as girls because they have babies and are also not accepted as mothers because they are not married. The findings of Chigona and Chetty (2008) in their study on teen mothers and schooling reveal that young mothers are "othered". In Lesotho, it is a disgrace for girls to have babies before they get married (Mohlakoana-Mokobocho, 2005). It is very difficult for young mothers to cope with school work demands, with all these misunderstandings and pressure around them. The impact of these misunderstandings is enormous in the classrooms and in public gatherings.

Some of the young mothers are oppressed and stressed by their teachers who have high expectations on the teen's future especially when the young mother was doing well at school before getting pregnant. Findings by Makatjane (2002) and Mokobocho-Mohlakoan (2005) concur with these findings by indicating that it is due to this reason, and many others, that most parents turn to humiliate their daughters by giving bad names to their babies, which pass bad impressions about the young mothers. What makes things worse is that teachers also have the same views like the parents about young mothers who did well before pregnancy and motherhood. For these reasons young mothers are given new bad names at schools which also convey bad impressions about them.

Teachers say words that convey bad impressions to young mothers at school assemblies. Other learners identify with their teachers' attitudes towards young mothers and avoid them. Young mothers' mistakes are associated with their

motherhood at school. It is very difficult and challenging for these young mothers to cope with their studies under this situation. Teachers and some of the parents do not understand the situation of these young mothers. The problem is that young mothers cannot be given time to explain themselves and their situation because teenage pregnancy and motherhood are regarded as a taboo topic for discussion in Lesotho. Young mother's education is disrupted by the stigma attached to them by the school.

In responding to this key research question, the researcher referred to McWhirter and Hawley (1993) who state that teenage pregnancy and motherhood often have numerous consequences in the life of young mothers. The study reveals that some high schools in Lesotho do not provide enough assistance and support to these young mothers to cope with the school demands. The little support or assistance given to the young mothers is only by giving them access into school yards and opening classroom doors for them.

Young mothers are given a chance to return to schools after delivery of their babies, but there is no plan for these young mothers's educational programme in that there is no information about young mothers in most of these schools. What is of concern is that the Ministry of Education does not give any guidance to schools about these young mothers. For example, the office in charge was not able to provide any information regarding young mothers. The only thing that was known by the office was that there are young mothers in schools. The information is in the form of statistics which indicate how many schools have teen mothers and what the number of young mothers is in each school.

It is clear that the schools and the Ministry of Education in Lesotho do not support these young mothers because the budget cannot be estimated without knowing the actual or estimated numbers of these young mothers. The researcher assumes that there is no school policy on how to assist young mothers because no one related to it in the interviews, either the young mothers or their teachers. It is very difficult for teachers to ask for funds for these young mothers from the Ministry of Education or from non-governmental organizations, as this may reflect encouragement towards early mothering in schools because of the culture and beliefs in Lesotho. This was alluded to by six teachers from different schools which participated in this study.

Teen mothers lack support from their teachers in the classrooms and outside the classrooms. According to this study, teachers do not support young mothers to cope with their school work. In some schools teen mothers who are very active in sports are not supported. A study by Chigona and Chetty (2008) reveals that many teenage mothers fail to succeed in school because they have no support to avoid numerous disruptions. Teachers' attitudes towards young mothers are not supportive in that teachers keep on reminding the young mothers about their status when they make mistakes or when the young mothers fail to do their homework.

In most cases teachers are reluctant to intervene. Nzama (2004) states that childbearing affects teen mothers' work at school. Some schools force young mothers to go for school trips, if they fail to go they have to pay money. This is another way of intimidation to young mothers as they are well known to be the busiest learners. In most cases young mothers are related to poverty. Olivier (2000) maintains that it may be assumed that teachers should help young mothers under such circumstances but unfortunately, some of the teachers consider the young mothers' situation as a private matter and none of their concern. This was discussed in chapter two.

Lack of professionals in schools like psychologists, counselors and trained teachers is part of the debate in this study. Young mothers in schools need counseling from their teachers, but unfortunately it is not provided. Misunderstandings between young mothers and teachers need someone with counseling skills to make it easy for all to understand the young mothers' situation and why young mothers need support. This study has revealed that there is a need for teachers to guide young mothers' parents on how to deal with young mothers and their school work.

The teen mothers are always absent from school due to their commitments with their babies and their own appointments as they both have to attend clinics. To combat the stigma that is attached to them, some of the young mothers resort to skipping school days. Chigona and Chetty (2005) attest to this by indicating that the girls manifest resistance by not coming to school every day and hiding their pregnancies. When these young mothers come to school, they find that other learners have gone through the lessons and they are left behind and no one is there to explain to them.

In relating to the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to their teachers, this study revealed that teachers' attitudes towards young mothers need to be scrutinized because some of the teachers are very negative and have biased ideas about teen mothers and schooling. Young mothers are attached to stigma and discriminated by some of their teachers who cannot support the young mothers to balance their mothering and schooling demands.

5.2.2 Young Mothers' experiences with regard to classmates/peers

The study reveals that young mothers have challenges and difficulties that they face at schools in trying to balance motherhood and the demands of schooling (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). The significant challenges appear to be with peer groups. Young mothers are stigmatized and discriminated against by peers. Young mothers are referred to other learners for the work done at school when they are absent or late to schools to attend to their babies. Some learners are not willing to do so and those who try to help may fail to pass the correct information because they did not understand during the lesson.

Even though some of the girls may get pregnant because of peer pressure, peers on the other hand do not support young mothers at school. The negative attitudes of teachers towards teen mothers contribute a lot to peers who want to identify with their teachers or impress them. Overall, young mothers lack support from peers because of the stigma attached to teen motherhood and the discrimination against them.

In sports, young mothers are discriminated against and not supported by their peers who are not willing to play with them. In most cases teachers are reluctant to intervene. Nzama (2004) states that childbearing affects teen mothers' work at school. Young mothers are marginalized in classrooms by other girls who may not want to work with them in groups. Other learners identify with their teachers' attitudes towards young mothers and avoid them.

In relation to the experiences of young mothers with regard to their peers, the findings of this study indicate that young mothers are rejected by their peer groups.

5.2.3 Young Mothers' experiences in their communities

These young mothers always meet with people who say bad things to them on the way to school and back home. Within the society are people who are against the return of teen mothers to schools, fearing that these young mothers would teach their girls bad things, like influencing other girls to engage themselves in pre-marital sex.

Due to the cultural values, beliefs and traditions of the Basotho people, the young mothers find it very difficult to withstand the intimidations and ridicules. Tayler-Ritzler and Balcazar (2007) indicate that lack of encouragement related to school, and maternal interference with their school enrolment, and refusals to sign school enrolment forms impose pressure and stress on young mothers at school. The young mothers experience problems both at school and at their homes. At home they cannot do their homeworks due to the fact that they will be attending to their babies and the work at home that they are expected to do, since most of them come from very poor families that cannot afford to provide any type of assistance. The young mothers have sleepless nights and for this reason they sleep during lessons and learning becomes very difficult.

The Rowntree Foundation (2007) states that teenage pregnancy and mothering are not a problem on communities as such, but young fathers are not willing to support their girlfriends even if they are in the same schools. Arlington Public school (2004) indicates that young mothers experience undue pressure from parents. This was discussed in chapter two.

In relating to the experiences of young mothers with regard to the community they live in, the study revealed that the young mothers are rejected and humiliated by the community, mainly because of the Basotho culture.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS:

The major problem with young mothers in Lesotho is that no one understand their situation and how they feel. There should be counseling at schools for all learners, including young mothers and their teachers.

- Teachers should identify pregnant girls at their schools and inform the social welfare office and parents in time so as to prepare for good mothering.
- There should be a guidance and counseling office in schools to help young people with sexuality issues and career guidance, and many others.
- Teen mother should be regarded as learners with special needs. They should provided with materials and baby sitters at school by the Ministry of
- Education because it is evident that no one is willing to help them. With regard to Peers
- Children's rights to education should be observed by all stakeholders, the young mothers and peers included. So that there may be no friction between the parties With regard to the community
- Poor communication between young mothers, teachers and parents on sexuality issues leaves young mothers unattended to socially. Social workers should work together with the community to help young mothers and their respective families to avoid abandoned children and immortality deaths among young mothers and their babies.
- Educational programmes on sex education for learners and parents should be conducted so as to enable the parents to break through the barrier of fear that prevents parents from talking freely with their own children about sexuality issues. This way the number of young mothers in our schools may decline.
- Schools must have a policy on teenage pregnancy and mothering. All the problems and challenges of these young mothers can be discussed and addressed by all the stake holders.

- Children’s rights to education should be observed by all stakeholders, the young mothers and peers included. So that there may be no friction between the parties.
- Learners should not be engaged in work that may put them in more risk of being raped like collecting water and fetching firewood from remote areas and unsafe places. Parents and guardians may alternatively be deployed.
- The government should not regard teenage pregnancy and motherhood as a taboo subject but as a problem that needs to be addressed. The planning department should plan and implement the curriculum that equips learners with life skills education, such as assertive and refusal skills and HIV/AIDS based on protection.
- It may be recommended that in future teen mothers’ problems and special needs be addressed and included as part of the school curriculum.

The findings of this study revealed that some of the educators are not willing to help or teach young mothers because of their beliefs and culture which regards young mothering (sex out of wedlock) as a disgrace. This implies that schools have no policies on teen mothers.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified in the study:

- The investigation was conducted in only one district (Leribe). Initially the study intended to cover or include all the high schools with teen mothers in the district. This was not possible due to financial constraints

- The other limitation is that the study focused only on the female part of the issue. The reality is that biologically mothering is about fathering and the truth is that our schools are full of young mothers and fathers.
- There was a limit in accessing the young mothers in some of the high schools in the district as the educators in those schools could not allow the researcher to meet with the young mothers and talk about something that is regarded as a taboo.
- There was a limit in relation to communication. Some of the young mothers were not able to respond to the questions and declared that they were so disappointed by the fathers of their babies and that they did not want to recall those days. The young mothers stated that they were recuperating and were trying to forget about those boyfriends.
- Another limitation adding to poor communication was the Basotho culture which suppresses the young mothers' freedom of speech. The interviews proceeded slowly, as the young mothers tried to find suitable words to use, they were very shy.

However, regardless of these limitations, the study managed to gather useful information, highlighting the experiences of young school-going mothers in the Leribe district of Lesotho.

5.5 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study did not investigate the impact of teenage pregnancy and mothering in schools. It only covered what these young mothers experience in the high schools of Leribe district in Lesotho. Therefore, further research is recommended to determine whether the young mothers impact positively or negatively on schools in different areas of the country or from other cultures. Other areas to be investigated are as follows:

- There is a need to investigate this type of study throughout the country so as to compare the young mothers' experiences between rural and urban high schools in Lesotho.
- There is a need for studies to investigate educators' attitudes towards young mothers in schools.
- There is also a need for studies to investigate the impact of teenage pregnancy and mothering on educators and other learners in schools.
- A comparable study on young mothers and young fathers in schools.

5.6 CONCLUSION

According to this study, it has emerged that the school place is highly concentrated with the stigma attached to, and discriminations against, young mothers. The stigma attached to young mothers by parents and community can be neutralized by educating the community about the young mothers' situation. This can only be done through schools as community developing centers. The researcher's focus is directed at schools where there is a great need for professionals like psychologists; counselors and highly trained teachers to manage the challenging and difficult world of a learner of today, especially young mothers. From the findings of this study, it is quite clear that the legislation to allow teen mothers to return to school, has not been accompanied by enabling policies and support instruments to make the legislation work at the level of the school. This is the gap that needs to be filled to make the legislation achieve what it intends to achieve. The researcher has learnt through this study that teen mothers experience lot of challenges and they are rarely supported by teachers, peers and the community.

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ANNEXURE A
LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT TH STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
PRIVATE BAG X 1001
KWA-DLANGEZWA
3886

21st August 2008

SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER
LERIBE-300
LESOTHO

re: **Permission to conduct research in your schools**

I am a Masters (Educational psychology) student at the University of Zululand. I am currently engaged in a research project concerning **Experiences of teenage mothers in High Schools** as part of my thesis in the department of psychology.


My basic concern is to evaluate the experiences these young mothers encounter in your schools. I would greatly appreciate your assistance regarding allowing me access to your schools. This research will identify new issues about teenage mothers and the intervention provided to these young school-going mothers and also add to the existing knowledge about teenage mothers.

The following ethical considerations will be adhered to: informed consent, privacy and confidentiality and also risk management.

Your support is of utmost importance and will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation.


C.M. MOLAPO



Masters (Educational Psychology) Student

STUDENT NO: 200814065

SUPERVISOR: Dr. J. D. ADAMS



Senior Lecturer: Department of Educational psychology and Special Education.



ANNEXURE B

LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DISTRICT OFFICE)



LERIBE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICE. P.O. BOX 12. LERIBE 300

08/09/ 2008

The Principal

Leribe 300

Dear sir/Madam

Re: Research


Experiences of teenage mothers in
High Schools.

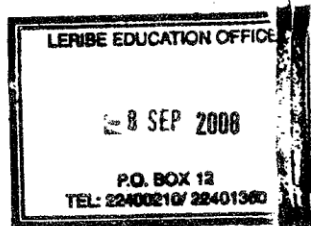
Mamofela C. Molapo is a student who is conducting a research on the above stated topic. She/He therefore wishes to carry out a research at your school in September 08.

You are kindly requested to provide her/him with the information that she may require.

Thanking you in advance for your usual cooperation.

Yours faithfully


Maselloane Sehlabi (Mrs)
Senior Education Officer-Leribe



TELEPHONE: 22400210/22401360

FAX: 22400022

ANNEXURE C

LETTER FROM THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE (Lesotho)



District Administration Office
P.O. Box 1
LERIBE 300

Tel: (+0266) 22400293/301/451
FAX: (+0266) 22400710/451
Email: daleribe@com.ls
DALC/EDU/MATT/9
MGM/mrn

23rd May, 2008

University of Zululand
Faculty of Education
Kwadlangezwa
Zululand

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: LETTER OF CONSENT; PERMISSION IN RESPECT OF MRS C.M.
MOLAPO TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN THE LERIBE
DISTRICT - MAY, 2008**

The above subject matter refers.

By copy of this letter I wish to affirm that the Office of the District Administrator – Leribe has officially given the abovementioned person permission to undertake research in the field of Education with particular interest in Teenage Pregnancy.

Thank you for your understanding.

Yours sincerely,

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR
MUSI OA SETEREKE
P.O. BOX 1

M.G. Mofolo
23 MAY 2008
M.G. MOFOLO (MR.)
22400293

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR - LERIBE
LERIBE 300 LESOTHO

ANNEXURE D

LETTER OF CONSENT

EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG SCHOOL GOING MOTHERS IN LESOTHO

CONSENT FORM:

Dear Participant,

I am studying and investigating on the experiences of young school going mothers in high schools in the Leribe district of Lesotho. The purpose of the study is to find out how these young mothers experience schooling and mothering.

As part of the overall evaluation of my study, I am inviting all participants to participate in a series of interviews that will be held in different high schools. Please be informed that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any point.

If you feel comfortable with this study, please complete the following form. All names will be removed.

I _____ agree to participate in this study.

I understand the purpose of this study and know about the benefits, risks and inconveniences that this study entails

- I understand how confidentiality will be maintained during this research.
- I understand the anticipated uses of data with respect to publication, communication, and dissemination of results.
- I understand that I am not obliged to participate in this study. I am free to not answer certain questions, and to withdraw from the study at any point.

I freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Date: _____

Name (printed):p

Signature _____

ANNEXURE E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Good afternoon ladies, my name are Cecilia Molapo. I come from the University of Zululand. The purpose of being here is to conduct a research project on the experiences of young school-going mothers. I would like you to assist and join me as volunteers' thank you.

Section A: Biography

Age:

School:

Village:

Section B:

- 1. What are the experiences of young school-going mothers with regard to their interactions with teachers?**
- 2. What are young school-going mothers' experiences with regard to classmates /peers?**
- 3. What are the experiences of young school-going mothers in their community?**