

Grief, discrimination and reconsideration: Examining the Effects of Re-entry Policy on Teenage mothers (TMs) in Zambia.

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Abstract

This study examined the misery and gender discrimination experienced by teenage mothers (TMs) at secondary and primary schools in Zambia. Research indicates that girls who become pregnant in these schools are not re-entering school despite the re-entry policy (REP) having been in place since 1997 (Mwansa, 2011, Mutombo & Mwenda, 2010). The main aim of the study was to examine the reasons for the failure in implementing REP and its effect on the TM's life trajectories at school in Zambia. The argument is that failure by school authorities to involve TMs in REP formulation has contributed to gender discrimination at secondary and primary school level in Zambia. The study is based on TMs pregnancy life experiences and their stories in Zambian secondary and primary schools.

This study reviewed literature related to the public policy implementation in the public service guided by Lindblom's incremental theoretical mode. The study also used the feminist concept of "intersectionality" to examine gender discrimination at secondary and primary school levels in Zambia. At issue was that the failure by policy implementers to take into account TMs intersectional life stories and challenges associated with child care, financial and social support system make it hard for the latter to appreciate the re-entry policy and renders it a mere piece of regulation on paper. Through TMs stories, the study explores for the uncertain relationship between policies, decisions and implemented programs in Zambia.

This study found out that the TMs that re-enter schools in Zambia after pregnancy are few compared to those that get pregnant. This is hampered by many challenges related to the triple (gender, productive and sexual) roles TMs assume after child delivery. The study has affirmed that the existence of the REP alone is not sufficient to eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary schools in Zambia. As such, it is recommended that increased awareness on the REP be promoted as well as engagement of several stakeholders such as the church, traditional leaders and other government departments. Equally, school policy implementers should consider putting in place robust support systems to address the many challenges TMs experience in schools.

Key words: Re-entry policy, grief, Teenage mothers (TMs), gender discrimination, intersectionality and incremental model

1. Introduction

Teenage pregnancy and early marriage are some of the cause of inequalities in school primary and secondary schools, resulting in poor completion rates for female learners in contrast to their male counterparts in many countries (Stromquist, 2015). Singh (2005:14) adds that teenage pregnancy is a prevalent problem that affects all communities worldwide. It is not a novel phenomenon, but it is hard to believe that in this era with a lot of information on sexuality education and contraception, there is still a high percentage of teenage pregnancy globally. For example, a study conducted by Darrock, Singh and Frost (2001) in which a comparison was made among four advanced countries, it was established that the USA had the highest adolescent pregnancy rate at 22%, with that of the UK standing at 15 % while that of Canada was at 11%. The study indicated that Sweden's percentage was the least at 4% because of their open and easy policy when dealing with sexuality and reproductive health issues such as access to contraception, abortion services among others (Arai, 2003; Hawkes, 2004). Besides, Honig (2012) states about 85% of teenage pregnancies in the USA are unintended. She illustrates that Britain and America have the highest

rates of teenage pregnancy compared to the rest of the world. In these economically advanced societies, various factors that lead to teenage pregnancy are too many to itemize. Unfortunately, the risks associated with teenage pregnancy are never documented. At issue, according to Bonig (2012) is that the media, particularly in America, tends to glamorise teenage pregnancy and these mothers ultimately become well-known within their communities and, occasionally, broader society.

However, studies undertaken in African countries show that Mali has the highest school going pregnancy rate at 45%, followed by Liberia at 35%, then Botswana with the rate of 24%, followed by Kenya and Togo at 21%, then Ghana with the rate of 19%, Zimbabwe at 16% and Zambia at 12% (Panday, et al, 2009). Nevertheless, these are only estimates as pregnancy outside marriage is looked down upon by many cultures in Africa (Chilisa, 2002). In their study, Meekers and Ahmed (1999) found that up to 10% of school girls stopped schooling because of teenage gravidity in African regions. Ten percent is too high considering that very few girls are still able to access secondary education in this region, too.

1.1 An Overview of Literature

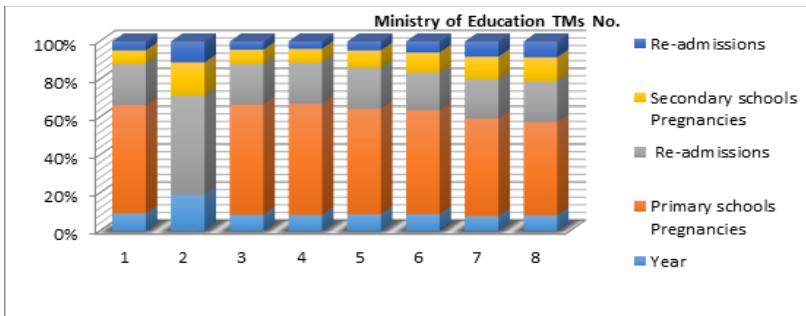
Reviews from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) state that having children remains a widespread problem in developing countries and continues to restrain girls and young women from participating in education (Eloundou–Enyegue 2004:510). Zambia teenage pregnancy is regarded as a huge social and health issue with 29% of women aged between 15 and 19 being pregnant or having given birth (ZDHS, 2013-2015). Teenage pregnancy is equally high in rural areas at 36% than urban areas at 20% (ZDHS, 2013-2014). Furthermore, the challenge of school-girls' pregnancies has continued to be of concern as shown by recent reports (MOE, 2015, ZDHS 2013-2014). At primary school level, the number of pupils who fall pregnant is very high compared to the secondary school level. In 2015 alone, 11, 989 pupils fell pregnant at primary school level compared to 3, 136 at secondary school level (MOE, 2015: 49). Despite the REP, many are unable to get re-admitted in schools. The table below shows pregnant levels at the primary and secondary

schools levels. The situation is worse at primary school level where the figures are high.

Table 1: Number of Pregnancies and Re-admissions at Primary and Secondary Schools from 2008-2015.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Primary schools Pregnancies	12370	13 634	13 769	13 929	12 753	12 500	13 275	11 989
Re-admissions	4692	5 517	5 034	5 106	4 915	4 492	5 322	5 217
Secondary schools Pregnancies	1 566	1 863	1 817	1 778	2 096	2 428	3 103	3 136
Re-admissions	1 019	1 162	1 033	924	1086	1 337	2 069	2 047

Table 2: Source: Ministry of Education Statistical Bulletin 2015. (Percentages).



The above tables show the number of pregnancies recorded among girls at primary and secondary school levels, with primary schools having the highest teenage pregnancies and lowest re-admissions. Less than half the number of teenagers that become pregnant at primary school level get re-admitted compared to slightly more than half of their friends at secondary level. From table 1, it is clearly that the re-admission of girls in primary schools is very low and this

means that very few teenage mothers get re admitted while others drop out of school completely.

In Zambia, the rate of adolescent pregnancy is high in the rural areas and among the families from low income brackets. In 2015, Southern and North-Western provinces had the highest pregnancies from grades 1-12. Southern Province alone recorded 209 pregnancies in rural areas and 185 in the urban areas and only 107 were readmitted in rural areas compared to 131 in urban areas (MOE, 2015). These pregnancy rates are too high and the stakeholders in the education sector need to develop strategies to reduce the high teenage pregnancy rates to enable the female pupils to complete their education.

1.2 Zambia's Re-entry policy (REP) and implementation

The Zambia REP guidelines aim at promoting the education of all girls and boys with the objective of not leaving any child behind in education. This is done to promote the right of education for all as indicated in the national constitution and other international treaties and declarations. This idea is seen in the motto “protect the rights of all children, leave no child out of school! Secure the future today!” (Ministry of Education, FAWEZA et al. 2004). This policy was formulated to enhance the education of vulnerable pregnant girls who, prior to 1997, were expelled from school when they became pregnant. Many of the pregnant girls lost their opportunity to complete their education. The MOE, in an effort to avoid the foregoing, revised the 2004 guidelines and outlined the following steps to be taken by school authorities after a pregnancy was detected in schools:

Inform parents or guardians about the pregnancy;
Initiate counselling programmes for a girl who is pregnant;
The schools' executives to inform parents about the pregnant pupil on the existence of the REP.
Parents to sign committal documents that allow the teenage mother to re-enter;
Pregnant learner to apply for flexible maternity leave (MOE, 2012).

1.3 The Concept of Implementation

Implementation inevitably takes different shapes and forms in different cultures and institutional settings. This point is particularly important in an era in which processes of “government” have been seen as transformed into those of “governance” (Hill and Hupe, 2002, p1). In the *Zambian scenario*, the policy guidelines stated that when a girl becomes pregnant, the parents need to be informed immediately guided by the steps above with counselling services to commence immediately. This was found critical for smooth policy implementation and re-admission of girls into school. Following the introduction of the policy, MOE instructed all managers and administrators to implement the REP and any officer who failed to comply risked breaking the laid down rules and guidelines (Shonga, 2011:22). The policy was introduced in 1997 and the implementation guidelines followed later in 2004. The 2004 REP guidelines have been revised and the above issues addressed through the new guidelines designed in 2012 (MESVTEE, 2012). Unfortunately, there was a delay in developing the REP guidelines after the introduction of the REP in schools. This contributed to the mixed reactions among the stakeholders towards the policy as observed by the concerned parents later. This further implied that the officers applied their own rules when implementing the policy.

The above is contrary to Lindblom’s observations on principles of policy implementation in public institutions. He suggested that adequate policy implementation literally means carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing and completing a given task. Further, the founding fathers on policy implementation namely Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) define it in terms of a relationship to policy as laid down in official documents. Yet, a study conducted in Zambia by Banda (2010) and Mutombo and Mwenda (2010:12) observed that schools “implemented it, somewhat indifferently because they did not have a choice. They did not want to be seen to be fighting Government, so they just obliged. They have never believed in the idea of girls who have had babies attending school”. Clearly, this is reflective of a policy whose formulation process was not consultative as the strategic stakeholders like teachers and

TMs were not involved. This means that TMs knowledge, truth and reality on REP were ignored. Additionally, interpreting TMs lived experiences at school has also been ignored. Therefore, this shows many policy weak points resulting in weak, inconsistent and unfair implementation of the guidelines on the REP. Another challenge has been the negative attitude of people towards the policy, especially from the church and the teachers' unions (Post Newspaper, 1997).

1.4 "The Intersectionality" Feminist Concept.

Although many scholars consider the feminist concept of intersectionality as being descriptive (Creshaw, 2013; Hancode, 2011 and McCall, 2005), in this article, the concept provided useful insight in redefining REP at secondary and primary school levels in Zambia. The concept offered an epistemic value called in to question by most feminist poststructuralist scholars. The concept enabled the researcher to excavate the socio-historical context of Zambia's policy formulation in education at secondary and primary schools levels. It was particularly important in helping to excavate TMs interlocking life experiences and narratives in terms of culturally localised dynamics and institutional processes through multilevel approaches in terms of explaining the interrelations between gender and power dispossessions of TMs in schools. The argument was that failure by the educational authorities to recognise the discrimination of girls at policy formulation stage, based on power relations dispossesses their right to education. This infers that "intersectionality" serves to mark visible dimensions of this oppression masked by the assumption that learners know what is expected at school. Adopted as an analytical strategy to examine gender relations in schools, intersectionality unmask the oppressed and silenced TMs at school. Their stories are unknown in their own terms because of no representation at policy formulation level in schools.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- a) examine the misery and gender discrimination experiences by teenage mothers (TMs) in Zambian schools.

- b) determine the reasons and effects for the failure in implementing re-entry policy in Zambian school.

2. Methodology

The study is based within the qualitative framework and is anchored within the interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2014b). This approach helped to understand and examine TMs in Zambian schools. The research participants were selected purposive from selected schools around the country. The study also borrowed from Lindblom's incremental theoretical mode. It also drew a feminist concept of intersectionality to examine the gender discrimination of teenage mothers in Zambian schools. The collected data was analysed thematically (Creswell, 2014a).

3. Findings and discussion

The findings and discussion of the study have been presented in line with the objectives of the study. The main themes that emanated from data and document analysis have been presented below.

3.1 The Effect of REP on Teenage Mothers (TMs): Grief, discrimination and reconsideration.

The grief and stigma associated with being a TM is common in families and communities in Zambia. Studies have revealed that many girls who fall pregnant at primary and secondary school experience "grief without tears" and are stigmatised by their peers in terms of being looked down upon. They are called names and frowned at on anything and everything they do (Gillham, 1997; Wanyama & Simatwa, 2011). One of the participants, when interviewed on her pregnancy, was aggrieved and said this: "The loss of a school place and opportunity to advance in education created a permanent feeling of worthlessness in me". Similarly, Banda (2007) in his descriptive study on the REP in Zambian secondary schools argued that in some mission schools, TMs are not re-entered making them grieve without tears in them. The ones not re-entered are taken to public schools where there are insufficient social services. Thus, many TMs narrated that: "We view ourselves as having nothing to strive for but

shame and disgrace”. From analysis, this is further complicated by their chaotic family relationships and friends, shunning them and considering them as welfare mongers, unprincipled, immoral and unmotivated beings. Usually, their families are torn apart, distant and unforgiving towards them for their status. Mwansa (2011) and Hamusonde (2003) made a similar observation on the stigmatisation of TMs in schools in Zambia. This means that TMs are uniformly constructed as having no control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decision.

The loss of a school place and an opportunity to excel in school created a permanent feeling of worthlessness in me.

Studies on teenage pregnancy carried out in Australia, Botswana and Zimbabwe similarly revealed that young mothers are at great danger of being single parents, having both many failed relationships and experiencing violent relationships (Boulden, 2001). The study done by the Canadian Ministry of education (1998) on the problems and choices of accommodating re-entered mothers in schools established that fellow learners and teachers use judgmental glances or mean remarks, and that other TMs quit school because of pressure from school authorities or teachers (Canada, Ministry of Education, 1998). For Wanyama and Simatwa (2011), many TMs assume their family responsibilities alone because the fathers of their babies often leave prior to the birth of their children. In the same vein, the Canadian Ministry of Education (1998) in its study further stated that TMs did not receive any support from the fathers who often do not show concrete commitment as fathers. In the Zambian case, this is attributed to the policy itself, which is discriminatory as it is silent on how to address the issues of support from school boys who make teenage girls pregnant. Mwansa (2011), Hamusonde (2003), Chunga (2014) and Chilisa (2002) contend that the REP only works against

pregnant girls as it does not ensure that the teachers and boys who impregnate girls are punished. The school boys in many cases are left to continue their education without any disturbances while the girls take leave and care for the children and the studies.

In psychiatry, Marks (2001) contends that a policy contributes to the grief of learners when it pays lip service to social factors. Some studies have established that some girls experience many problems regarding their education when they become TMs. The triple gender role of motherhood and being a pupil takes effect and contributes to failure to complete school for girls as they fail to cope with pressure. Further, Chilisa (2002) observed that REP policies in a way violates the rights of girls as they are required to be removed from school while the boys, teachers and other people who make them pregnant continue with their lives with little or no disturbances at all. The TMs have had to contend with a hostile school environment, where they are isolated, humiliated and stigmatised by the fellow pupils; with hardly any effective interventions from teachers (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). This shows how TMs grieve silently without tears as they deeply criticise the act as being punitive on them.

Santroek (2009) argues that in many schools, classrooms and teachers do not encourage the spirit of unity in resolving the challenges faced by TMs and their families. Teachers, schools and the community do not promote emotional intelligence among the youths. Santroek (2009) furthermore contends that classrooms need to spell out the requirements that need to be adhered for them to learn in harmony. Grief, discrimination and stigmatization should not be encouraged as allowing the TMs to learn in such an environment inevitably makes them experience intense symptoms of distress and depression. Symptoms of distress include yearning for the second chance in school or getting married quickly, a feeling that life has lost its meaning, having anxiety about the future and experiencing shock at the loss of the school place. Many studies in Africa have revealed that the TMs are stigmatized upon return to school (Hamusonde, 2003; Mwansa, 2011; Wekesa, 2014, Grant & Hallman 2006, Runhare, 2010). Consequently, some teenage mothers may be compelled to drop out completely or get a transfer to

another school where their status is not known. This shows the lack of collective family support disempowering TMs from their right to education. It explains the perpetuation of gender inequalities that go unquestioned, resulting in what Shelton (2018) “TMs guilty”.

3.2 Permanent Rejection of TMs by the family

A study conducted by Banda (2005) established that majority of TMs run away from home to live in rented small rooms in shanty compounds. Others search for shelter from well-wishers which lasts for only some weeks or a few months. While many suffer beatings from their brothers who believe unmarried girls should not be allowed to relate with their family.

During interviews, several TMs shared how they were abused by family members who threw them out of home and ended in areas with high crime rates. In Lusaka’s for instance, two residential areas, namely, Chibolya and Kanyama compounds have high crime rate. Further, studies have revealed that the family setup believes that unmarried young single mother is a disgrace to the family which if not punished other young girls would follow suit. Such are kinds of family rejection TMs experience and face when pregnant increasing the drop out numbers from school. For some, changing schools and leaving with a family member that can offer them the support they desperately need becomes their only option. Unfortunately, even such options are inadequate as they are unsustainable to well-wishers for long. The few who are determined to complete their basic education at primary and secondary level that experience intense and lasting despair may benefit from REP through traditional counseling by school authorities, even though such may be the best choice for them too. What is proposed by many studies on TMs is to consider seeking empirically supported psychotherapies for those affected and depressed or grieving for the loss of a school place (cite the studies).

3.3 Rejection of TMs in the community

Wanyama and Simatwa (2011) argued that TMs suffer rejection as the community does not value or recognize their morals, because they are viewed as Mahule (prostitutes in Nyanja and Tonga

languages of Zambia). In a study on community challenges in Meru, it was revealed that young TMs confessed that it becomes hard for one to get married as men would not accept someone else's children and see them as a burden. Further, the study revealed that old men take them for granted and sexually abuse them for small favours and that men demand for unprotected sex just to punish. For Banda (2005), adds that TMs are perceived as perverse and hence no man likes to associate with them or even to ask for their hand in marriage. This has been catalysed by the cultural beliefs that girls are not meant for education or leadership hence no less effort is put to take them back in school or assist with the upkeep of the child to put them on track to complete their education. These are the lived experiences and narratives of TMs in Zambia. The aim of any public policy is to correct social injustices as a government action Lindlom, (1985). Unfortunately, the presentations of life stories of TMs are not captured under REP in terms of the internality of it but the externality of life structures.

Further, an investigation done by Mpetswa (2000) focusing on seven TMs made known that community members tend to have a wide range of negative reactions towards TMs. Some members of the community tended to react with shock whilst others would gossip about the teen parent's behaviour. It was further revealed that some church members would even deny them (teen mothers) an opportunity to participate in congregational activities. Some of the participants in Mpetswa's (2000) study reported having experienced a lot of ill treatment from their families who felt betrayed by their children.

Therefore, despite the policy being available in Zambia, and implemented in many schools, very few girls are being re-entered. According to the Ministry of Education (2009), 15, 497 girls got pregnant in 2009 but only 6,679 were readmitted in school implying that nearly 9000 girls have either stopped learning completely, others are married and maybe the rest were transferred to different school. Nonetheless, this shows that there are a lot of challenges TMs experiences with regards to continuing their education after pregnancy. The MOE (2003), in a research carried out in Kalomo,

stated that although the REP allowing girls to return to school after delivering was introduced, parents did not see its practicability nor did teachers help the parents understand the importance of returning to school. Most likely, many fail to return because they are simply not aware of the REP in schools while others may have other unknown difficulties. Therefore, this study revealed that TMs experience challenges in balancing the children's needs and school demands. With this, so many factors contribute towards the TMs discrimination experienced in schools.

Further, a research done by Kelly (1998) established that family income, gender and stopping school are linked. The results of the research indicated that families with low income levels were unable to send their female children to school for fear of them getting pregnant but would rather send their male children. Therefore, the socio-economic status of a given household becomes a major factor in the education of children and school drop-out (Hunter & May, 2003) and this is so for many girls that fails to complete their education in Zambia. The cost of education which includes fees, uniforms and fees add to the high drop-out rates for girls (Mwansa et al, 2004). The study further revealed that the disappointment that results in the lack of school fees compels many children to start having intimate relationships that end in pregnancies as a way of raising money for their education.

3.4 Challenges faced by Teenage mothers: Role conflicts of Teen mothers

Although teenage is a conversion stage for mature life (Phoenix, 1991; Nsamenang, 2002), teenagers are still supposed to adolescents, as stated by the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) that describes person less than 20 years as a child or a minor. This minor immediately takes up the role of a mother and a pupil upon becoming pregnant and that negatively affects her education. In a study done by the Ministry of Education (1998) on TMs in Zambia, the evidence showed that they face problems in organising their new lives, managing their roles as mothers, and meeting the demands of school. Further, the study revealed that TMs 'day to day problem in progressing with education lag or fall behind with school work

and have to catch up during school holidays and weekends which is expensive in terms of tuitions and transport, but in some cases, they are working very late in the evening to meet deadlines (MoE,1998). In another study in Namibia on TMs, De Boek and Honwana (2005) argue that children start to manage adult roles of becoming early mothers and are unable to enjoy their youthful and mature life.

Chetty and Chigona (2007) in their study on TMs returning to school established that youth mothering is a major cause of drop out because many of them find it very challenging to spare ample time for studies and parenting. Literature also points to the fact that since these teen moms have assumed new status, their roles are always in conflict because of some emergency frequenting issues pertaining to school and parenthood (Kaufman et al,2001). Lema (1997) further argues that in Tanzania, regardless of the age, a girl is regarded as an adult after she has given birth; she is expected to assume adult responsibilities and terminate her education. This leaves the girl with no opportunity for her to pursue her education. In addition, in cultures where the role of girls and boys is explicitly stated, it fits well with the concept of having children only when one is married (Phoenix, 1991). In a marriage set up mothers have the major responsibility of taking care of children while fathers provide for their families. However, times have changed and both men and women are expected to contribute to the family basket.

3.5 Time management of Teen mothers

With conflicting and triple roles teen mothers experience and face, it is evident that such roles cost them time management in school. A study in Namibia on teenage pregnancy in central and southern Namibia revealed that an overwhelming workload, lack of peer support and too many demands at once, contributed to a sense of frustration and panic that there was not enough time to complete their workloads (at school, home and attendance to baby's needs as well as the demands of the father). This infers that that balancing the demands of family and school can cause many teen mothers to feel fatigued and generally stressed.

Other scholars, for instance, Chetty and Chigona (2007) have established that adolescent mothering is a major cause of

low retention rates at primary and secondary schools. This was so because of their new roles that affects their time management. The study further stated that girls do not have enough time to complete their homework and to study at home because their relatives who take care of the babies want to be free of the child chores the moment they are back at home. Additionally, the study further revealed that the babies also want the attention from their mothers when they return from school. This means that that returning to school after giving birth is problematic for many teenage mothers because of the duo role of being a mother and a pupil at the same time.

3.6 Reconsiderations

Since the beginning of policy implementation research, there is no theory of implementation that commands general agreement. Most studies on policy implementation continue to work from diverse theoretical perspectives and to employ different variables to make sense of their findings (O'Toole and Montjoy, 1984, quoted in Lester, 1995, p84). Nevertheless, the available literature on REP in Zambia neither is closer to curing policy gaps affecting TMs education inequalities.

Equally, in terms of methodology, many of the researches on REP implementation have been dominated by single case studies, not allowing the complex phenomena of implementation to be studied in a broad context. In each case, several data sources are often applied, such as reports and documents, qualitative survey with implementers, quantitative data on coverage of program, participation, output in terms of delivery performance and outcomes (Youn, 1982). Unfortunately, nothing is explored from TMs vantage point. One would suggest the need for renewed emphasis on multidisciplinary working in policy studies. Multidisciplinary research provides benefits for theory development in synthesizing ideas from a plurality of disciplines addressing similar issues from different perspectives. Such an approach would enable more teenage mothers to re-enter after pregnancy. The ministry of education and all stakeholders should address the silent grief experienced by TMs. The argument is that when these are not addressed TMs are affected by dropping out of school completely. Stigma should never be allowed

against any pregnant learner and teenage mother and those found guilty must be severely punished. Below are the recommendations.

That stakeholder should increase awareness on the REP to promote the re-entry of TMs after child birth. There is lack of awareness on REP attributed to lack of information on it generally. Equally, that schools should support TMs with academic support programs in terms of extra lessons, textbooks and other facilities to enhance their learning and successful completion of their studies. There should be an increase on the limited contact hours between the teacher and teenage mother due to pregnancy and maternity leave. Limited contact hours are a huge academic loss to teenage mothers in schools.

Surely, TMs require much support from home which should be encouraged by the school administrators so that the challenges of child care, material and financial resources are managed well. The vulnerable teenage mothers should be recommended for support after counselling sessions to help them focus on completing their education. A stipend for the empowerment of girls through education should be introduced by the school and its stakeholders so that the teenage mothers can freely and readily participate in their education as some have ambitions which need support to be realised. Further, school authorities should fight stigma against pregnant learners and teenage mothers by counselling all learners and making stigma against the teenage mothers and expectant learners punishable.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article has established that Teenage mothers (TMs) face many challenges that negatively affect their education that contribute to their drop out of school. Further, in exploring TMs life “intersectionality” experiences in primary and secondary schools, the author established weaknesses in the meaning of REP and its implementation which is loosely developed and lacks adequate specifications of causal mechanisms. Winter (2003) observed on policy that the concept “implementation” is often used to characterize both the implementation process and the output and sometimes also the outcome of it is never specified. From a critical analysis, it is not clear whether REP implementation is about achieving conformance

or performance? This is because, according to Winter (2003, p217), effective policy implementation should be human centered and must take shape of the bottom approach, a necessity involves comparing outcomes against a priori statements of intent or targets. Sadly, in the Zambian scenario, better performance of REP is thus judged in terms of achieving conformance with policy targets and standards. In practice, this means that, performance criteria have tended to operate more as conformance criteria. Implied, TMs are affected by such approaches as its effects are experienced by them at home and school. What is clear is that REP has not been properly implemented leading to the exclusion of TMs from school in preference for early marriage and other bad socio vices. Equally, what is also clear is the life “intersectorality” experiences between different kinds of girls, those not pregnant and the guilty mommies. This article has explored the lack of platform for TMs to express their needs in the REP.

Arising from the findings of the study, the following was recommended:

1. There is need to address the weaknesses of REP and the silent grievances experienced by TMs at school.
2. Stakeholders need to clearly re-conceptualize and re-strategize on how the re-entry policy should be implemented.

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