

QUALITATIVE REFLECTIONS ON TEENAGE MOTHERHOOD EXPERIENCES

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DECLARATION

**I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in
this thesis is my own original work and that I have not
previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any
university for a degree.**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the current study was to undertake a phenomenological investigation on teenage motherhood and to learn how this experience forms part of the teenage mother's life. Using the snowball sampling method, five women aged between 26 and 35 years were selected to participate in the study. All the five women became mothers during their teenage years. In-depth interviews were conducted in Northern Sotho and Tshivenda depending on the language preference and fluency of the participant. The interviews were audio-taped, and later transcribed and translated.

A phenomenological method of analysis was used to transform the original data into natural meaning units (NMUs) which were further interrogated so as to distil central sociological themes that were associated with the experience of teenage motherhood. Apart from the finding that the participants got pregnant when they were aged between 16 and 18, five sociological themes associated with teenage motherhood were identified. These are:

- Lack of knowledge about sexual relationships contributes to teenage pregnancy and motherhood.
- Early childbearing has a negative impact on the teenage mother's social relationships.
- Teenage mothers tend to experience emotional problems after delivery of their babies.
- Teenage motherhood has a long term disruptive effect on the teenage mother's educational and occupational opportunities.
- Teenage motherhood leads to significant lifestyle changes for those who have been through the experience.

In view of the above themes, sexual education both at school and at home, is suggested here as a more viable option to help minimise the risk of teenage motherhood in society. Whilst other options like abortion and the newly introduced child support grant are also available to the teenage mother, these are not considered favourable.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van die huidige studie was om 'n fenomenologiese ondersoek oor tienermoederskap te doen en uit te vind hoe hierdie belewenis deel uitmaak van die tienermoeder se bestaan. Deur die sneeubaltoetsingsmetode is vyf vroue tussen die ouderdomme van 26 en 35 jaar gekies om deel te neem aan die studie. Al vyf vroue het tydens hulle tienerjare moeders geword. Diepte-onderhoude is in Noord-Sotho en Venda gevoer, afhangende van die taalvoorkleur en -vlotheid van die deelnemer. Klankopnames is van die onderhoude gemaak wat later getranskribeer en vertaal is.

'n Fenomenologiese analisemetode is gebruik om die oorspronklike data na natuurlike betekeniseenhede (NMUs – natural meaning units) te herlei wat verder ondersoek is om sentrale sosiologiese temas geassosieer met die belewing van tienermoederskap te identifiseer. Behalwe vir die bevinding dat die deelnemers swanger geraak het toe hulle tussen die ouderdom van 16 en 18 jaar was, is vyf sosiologiese temas geassosieer met tienermoederskap geïdentifiseer. Hierdie temas is:

- 'n Gebrek aan kennis oor seksuele verhoudings dra by tot die voorkoms van tienerswangerskappe en -moederskap.
- Vroeë kinderbaring het 'n negatiewe impak op die tienermoeder se sosiale verhoudings.
- Tienermoeders is geneig daartoe om emosionele probleme te ondervind na die geboorte van hulle babas.
- Tienermoederskap het 'n langtermyn ontwrigtende effek op die tienermoeder se opvoedings- en werkgeleenthede.
- Tienermoederskap lei tot betekenisvolle veranderinge in lewenstyl vir diiegene wat die ondervinding deurgemaak het.

Met inagneming van bogenoemde temas word hier voorgestel dat seksuele opvoeding beide op skool en by die huis 'n meer lewensvatbare opsie is om die risiko van tienermoederskap in die samelewing te verminder. Alhoewel ander opsies soos aborsies en die nuuttingestelde toekennings van kinderonderhoud ook vir die tienermoeder beskikbaar is, word hierdie opsies nie as bevorderlik beskou nie.

Dedicated to my three lovely children; Malapele, Mafase and Mmapula

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Teenage motherhood is presented in the literature as a problem both internationally and nationally. For example, a review done by Adams, Adams-Taylor and Pittman (1989) on adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in the United States of America showed that this experience is a problem to the society. Whilst the review found teenage motherhood to have been a problem in society for many years, these authors found that this phenomenon was more disruptive in contemporary society than in the past. They attributed the disruptive tendency to the fact that with time changing, teenage pregnancy and motherhood result in few jobs, many academic years lost and teenagers fail to be productive workers in adulthood. They indicate that it is not the behaviour that is problematic, but the timing and the implication it has for the teenage mother's future.

In response to the continuous prevalence of teenage pregnancy among teenagers in the United States of America, a book edited by Maynard (1997) entitled "Kids having kids" was published. In this publication various authors sought to document research findings relating to the disruptive impact of early parenting. Generally, the authors reported that:

" ... adolescent parenting results in a loss of human potential and other economic and social costs that our society can ill afford"
(Maynard, 1997: x).

In a chapter that he contributed to the book, Maynard (1997) specifically focused on the economic costs and social consequences of teenage motherhood. He concluded by highlighting the following observations:

- a) Child poverty rates were found to be high and also rising;
- b) The number of welfare recipients and the costs of public assistance was found to have risen dramatically; and

- c) Those reliant on welfare grants were on average found to show a long period of dependency as compared to the general population.

Similar studies in other developed countries have found equally disturbing trends relating to teenage motherhood (de Jong, 2001; Olausson, 2001; Hanna, 2003). For example, a literature review done by Bissel (2000) in Canada found that women who become teenage mothers were more likely to be socio-economically disadvantaged later in life when compared to women who tend to delay childbearing. In concluding her article, Bissel stated that:

"there are definite negative consequences associated with teen pregnancy. When compared to women who delay childbearing past teen years, those women who become teen mothers are less likely to complete high-school, more likely to work at low-income jobs and experience longer periods of unemployment, more likely to receive welfare benefits during the years following birth and more likely to experience single parenthood and higher levels of poverty" (2000:10).

The socio-economic disadvantages relating to teenage motherhood have also been widely reported in the developing countries (Mahomed, Ismael and Masona, 1989; Barnette, 1998; Mba, 2003; Mngadi, Zwane, Ahlberg and Ransjo-Aridson, 2003), including South Africa (De Visser and Roux, 1996; Macleod, 1999a; 1999b; Williams and Mavundla, 1999). For example, in a study conducted by Barnette (1998) it was found that one fourth of Brazilian teenagers are mothers. This situation was found to have serious social and health problems as teenagers and their children were likely to be at a high risk for sickness and death.

In a study conducted by Boult and Cunningham (1992) aimed at getting an African perspective on teenage pregnancy, early childbearing was found to be associated with disorganised family structure, disregard for traditional norms and low education. In a fairly recent study focusing on early pregnancy and unplanned childbirth in Swaziland, Mngadi, Zwane, Ahlberg and Ransjo-Aridson (2003) found that twenty five percent of the deliveries in Mbabane Government Hospital were by women aged between ten and nineteen. Using

semi-structured interviews to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data on thirty seven adolescent mothers, the study by Mngadi et al (2003) further indicated, among others, the following disturbing social consequences of teenage motherhood:

- a) There was poor or no communication between adolescent girls and their parents regarding sexuality and reproduction;
- b) Communities did not offer services aimed at providing adolescents with information and skills regarding safe sexual behaviour;
- c) Support towards teenage mothers from families, communities and health professionals was generally poor; and
- d) Pregnancies among adolescents were found to be unplanned.

The high incident of teenage motherhood together with its socio-economic consequences has also been widely reported in South Africa. Drawing on the results of South African research (both published and unpublished), Macleod (1999a) suggested that teenage mothers do not have adequate knowledge concerning the emotional needs of their babies, and that their acceptance of parental responsibilities were limited. In another review, Macleod (1999b) found reproductive ignorance to be one of the causal factors of teenage pregnancy.

The last South African Demographic and Health Survey (SADHS) published in 1998 has also reported teenage motherhood as one of the major problems facing the country. This survey showed that thirty five percent of all nineteen year-old women who were part of the sample already had children when the study was conducted. Whilst the survey indicated considerable variation in teenage fertility by region, education and population group, rural teenagers were generally found to start childbearing at an earlier age as compared to urban teenagers. Also interesting in this survey, Limpopo province was found to have the highest number of teenage pregnancies when compared to all the other eight provinces in the country. The findings of this survey are thus suggesting that Limpopo province is more likely to have many socio-economic problems resulting from teenage motherhood than any other province. There

is therefore a need to conduct investigations to understand the phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and motherhood in Limpopo province and beyond.

1.1. Aim and rationale of the study

The aim of the study was to undertake a phenomenological investigation on teenage motherhood experience and to learn how this experience forms part of the teenage mother's daily life. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their pregnancies, the early period of motherhood and to express their experiences as they perceive them. Specifically this investigation sought to focus on the phenomenological experiences of five young women drawn from the three dominant cultural groups (i.e. Sepedi, Tshivenda and Xitsonga speaking people) of Limpopo Province. It is hoped that a study of this nature will:

- a. Help articulate the lived experiences of a section of the South African population whose unique teenage motherhood experiences have hitherto not been phenomenologically investigated;
- b. Sensitise the local provincial education department about the issues that may impact on curriculum development and the academic performance of young people; and
- c. Help generate debate on the psychosocial factors that could impact on sexuality education for young people in society.

1.2. Organisation of the study

The purpose of the present chapter was to introduce the phenomenon of teenage motherhood as a social, economic and health problem both nationally and internationally. In view of the need to understand the many challenges posed by teenage motherhood, the present study seeks to understand and explicate the experience of early childbearing from the perspective of those who have experienced this. In chapter two I will give a review of pertinent literature available on teenage motherhood. In chapter three I will focus on the method of investigation by first giving a general description of the qualitative approach in research. This will be followed by a presentation on phenomenology as a specific method of qualitative research. In the third section, I will then give a step-by-step explanation of the data

collection and analysis procedures as used in the current study. A presentation of the findings is given in chapter four. In the first section of the chapter, the phenomenological experiences of the individual participants are presented as they emerged during the interviews. The second section presents a synthesis of the '*natural meaning units*' (NMU's) into emerging and consistent themes. In chapter five, a discussion of the results of the present study in relation to existing literature is given whilst conclusions are also drawn.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Several studies that have investigated the issues of teenage pregnancy and teenage motherhood have indicated that these developmental experiences could have some negative physiological, psychological and social effects on the adolescent. In a review of studies focusing on the causes and consequences of teenage motherhood in South Africa, Macleod (1999) found that this experience has a disrupting effect on the teenager's education and life in general. The aim of this chapter is to review the literature that focuses on teenage motherhood. In the first section of the chapter, the focus will be on the reactions of teenagers when they realize that they have fallen pregnant. The second section will look at physical and mental health issues related to teenage motherhood. In particular, obstetric and psychological effects of teenage motherhood will be discussed. This will be followed by a presentation of other developmental issues. The last section of the chapter will focus on the effect of teenage motherhood on the teenager's social relationships.

2.2. Reaction to pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is mostly unplanned; and as a result, people react to the experience differently. The teenager has to come to terms with the unexpected demands of being an adult, and in some cases, she may also have to deal with disapproval and dissatisfaction shown by significant others like parents and relatives. In several studies, teenage mothers reported having felt sad, disappointed, shocked and depressed after their pregnancies were confirmed (De Visser and Le Roux, 1996; Mpetshwa, 2000; De Jong, 2001; Clemmens, 2002). A study conducted by Parekh and De la Rey (1997:226) found that most teenagers started by denying the pregnancy at first, before they could inform their parents who, in most cases received the news with "anger and disappointment". The following quote from a study by

Kaplan (1996:100) shows some of the typical reactions of parents of teenage mothers:

"She asked me whether I was going to keep it (baby) and who's the father and where were I going to stay. I told her, yeah, I'm going to stay. And she said, how do you know that I want you here? I've already raised my kids".

Sodi (1999) conducted a study on the experiences of four teenage mothers who were university students at the time of the investigation. In this particular study, Giorgi's phenomenological method of data analysis was used. A number of themes that emerged during the interviews were presented. One of the participants said:

"I did not accept the pregnancy at all. I tried a lot of things including abortion but I failed. I did not accept it until when I delivered the baby" (Sodi, 1999: 04).

Apart from the thoughts of abortion, some of the respondents reported feelings of loneliness, rejection and disruptions in educational training. On a positive note, all participants in this study reported that the experience had taught them to be focused in life.

A study by Parekh and De la Rey (1997) found that social support for teenage mothers was found to be "minimal and, if available, was derived mostly from mothers and grandmothers, although not without conflict" (Parekh and De la Rey, 1997:226). This indicates that the experience interferes with the manner in which people relate to a teenage mother. Parekh and De la Rey (1997) also reported that many teenage mothers had lost contact with their original school friends, either because friends no longer wanted to associate with them or because their cohort had moved to a higher standard.

In another South African study conducted at Ga-Rankuwa Hospital, Kekesi (1997) focused on the social and educational background of 70 teenage mothers who had delivered their babies at the hospital between April and September 1995. Data was collected using structured interviews. The study found that even though most of the participants managed to talk to somebody,

some were scared to tell others until their families realised that they were pregnant.

An investigation done by Mpetshwa (2000) that focused on seven teenage mothers, found that community members tend to have a wide range of negative reactions towards these adolescent mothers. Some members of the community tended to react with shock whilst other would gossip about the parents of the teenage mothers. In some churches the members who fell pregnant would even be refused an opportunity to participate in congregational activities. Some of the participants in this study experienced a lot of ill treatment from their family members, especially their parents who felt betrayed by their children falling pregnant. Participants indicated that they were no longer treated like other members of the family, as was the case before pregnancy. Pregnancy made some of the participants to be rejected by their friends.

It is evident from the above presentation that confirmation of pregnancy in the case of a teenager triggers different negative reactions by the teenage mothers and their significant others. In most cases the teenager concerned and her family find it difficult to accept the pregnancy. It is these negative responses to the pregnancy that could lead to some health problems being experienced by the teenage mother. In the next section I will focus on some of the physical and mental health issues related to teenage motherhood.

2.3. Physical and mental health issues associated with teenage motherhood

Several studies have suggested that teenage motherhood could lead to both physical and mental health risks for the adolescent. Most of these studies have reported on the obstetric complications while others have focused on how this experience could lead to depression on the part of the teenage mother.

2.3.1. Obstetric outcomes

The body of a woman has to naturally develop to such an extent that it can comfortably accommodate a developing baby. An underdeveloped body would obviously pose some problems for both the woman and the baby she carries. A teenager would be considered physically underdeveloped to comfortably accommodate a baby. Such a situation poses a greater health risk to the individual concerned (Mogotlane, 1993). Here follows a presentation of some studies that looked at obstetric consequences of teenage motherhood.

In a study that focused on live births in Mitchell's Plain (Cape Town) during the first 8 months of 1985, Rip, Keen and Woods (1986) found that 11,9% of infants were born before the expected date. They also found that teenagers delivered a high proportion of low birth neonates, and the mean birth weights were negatively skewed. That is, the average birth weight of the children was very low.

Whilst a study by Rip et al (1986) focuses on the obstetric complications of teenage motherhood in relation to the health of the baby, most investigations have looked at the physical/obstetric health of the teenage mother. For example, a report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) states that hypertensive disorders are much common in young women, especially with their first pregnancies (Van Coeverden De Groot, 1991). The report further indicated that a higher maternal mortality rate among teenagers as well as other obstetric problems like obstructed labour and obstetric fistula are common. These problems of obstetric fistula were also found to lead to problems like divorce and rejection of the woman by her husband and family. Here we see a physical condition resulting in a psychosocial problem. The young woman faces rejection and this could lead to more serious psychological problems like depression, avoidance, etc.

A health study conducted several years ago by Notelovitz (1970) offers detailed information of the health problems that could result from teenage pregnancy. These include pre-eclamptic toxæmia and, delivery to premature

and underweight babies. Kekesi (1997) also found that teenage pregnancy resulted in premature babies, stillborns and babies born with respiratory distress.

A study conducted by Trivedi (2000) sought to compare the different obstetric parameters of teenage women and adult women in New Zealand. Teenage mothers were found to experience some obstetric difficulties as compared to adult women. The participants were organised into an experimental group comprising of teenage mothers and a control group comprising of adult women. The results indicated that the average birth weight for the two groups had a 100g difference, with the teenage mothers' babies in the lower end whilst adult women's babies weighed at the upper end. Seven in the teenage mothers group had neonatal birth defects and only one patient from the adult women had a neonatal birth defect. The teenage mothers group had fifteen breech deliveries of which eleven were delivered by caesarean section. The adult women group had seven breech deliveries, of which three were delivered by caesarean section. The most common cause for caesarean section in teenage mothers was obstructed labour/poor progress in labour. The incidence of pre-eclampsia/gestational hypertension in the teenage mothers group was 26 and in the adult women group was 16.

It does appear that teenage pregnancy and motherhood do impose considerable obstetric health problems to the teenager herself and the child. The studies that report on this problem are, however, quantitatively-oriented and detailed information that could be sought to supplement their findings through qualitative methods was not presented.

2.3.2. Depression and Self-esteem

Depression is one health problem that has been reported in several studies on teenage mothers. Clemmens (2002) assembled a purposive sample of 20 teenage mothers aged between 16 and 18 who were participating in programmes for adolescent mothers in the Northeastern cities of the United States of America. The sample comprised of teenage mothers who reported feeling depressed since the birth of their babies, had experienced normal

deliveries and no complications for both the mother and the baby. All the participants were at school and the age of babies ranged from 1 to 11 months at the time of the interview. Participants in Clemmens' (2002) study reported feeling depressed after the birth of their babies. None of the participants had a history of being treated for depression. Participants reported feeling scared with the sudden realisation of motherhood. Some felt abandoned and rejected by partners and peers whilst others indicated being overwhelmed with questioning and not understanding the experience of depression and what was happening to them. Some participants reported feeling confused by the experience, thus suggesting that some of them felt uncertain about their new status and their future.

In a cross-sectional survey of 'Young Maternal Age and Depressive Symptoms', Deal and Holt (1998) used the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) to learn about depressive symptoms among adolescent mothers. The aim of their study was to provide population-based estimates of the prevalence of depressive symptoms among primiparous US adolescent mothers. These authors obtained data from the National Centre for Health Statistics' 1988 National Maternal and Infant Health Survey. Data comprised of black and white adolescent respondents and a comparison group of primiparous women 25 to 34 years of age. Maternal age was categorised as young teen (15 to 17 years), older teen (18 to 19 years), and adults (25 to 34 years). The final sample comprised of 447 women aged from 15 to 17 years, 479 women aged from 18 to 19, and 870 adult women aged from 25 to 34 years. This sample of 1 796 represented 760 314 US national 1988 first live births.

Respondents had to respond to the CES-D 20 item questionnaire. Variables examined as having an impact on the association between maternal age and depressive symptoms included maternal education, marital status, and current smoking; family income; type of insurance for infant's health care; current receipt of Aid to Families with Dependent Children or food stamps; enrolment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) since delivery; and pregnancy intendedness. Both mistimed

and unwanted pregnancies were considered 'unintended'. Unconditional logistic regression was used to calculate odd ratios for the prevalence of depressive symptoms associated with each category of young maternal age. The unadjusted odd ratios indicated an inverse association between maternal age and depressive symptoms. Deal and Holt (1998) concluded that adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years were more than twice as likely as adult mothers to be depressed. Other studies have also found teenage motherhood to be associated with depression (Schweingruber and Kalil, 2000; Kalil and Kunz, 2002; Quinlivan, Tan, Steele and Black, 2004).

Hudson, Elek and Campbell-Grossman (2000) conducted a study to examine levels of depression, self-esteem, loneliness, and social support, and the relationships between these variables, among adolescent mothers participating in a project called the New Parents Project. This is an innovative internet-based programme that is designed to provide information, social support, and access to professionals with expertise in neonatal, infant, child and adolescent development. The programme is offered through discussion groups and electronic mail. Participants are supplied with a personal computer and internet access. They are also taught how to access the web site, participate in the discussion groups and use electronic mail to contact the professionals. A total of 21 teenage mothers were sampled using convenient sampling. Depression scale, self-esteem scale, loneliness scale and the social support questionnaire were administered to participants during the ninth month of pregnancy and three months after delivery. Hudson et al (2000) found the depression score to be in a high range for 53% of the teenage mothers. Depression was associated with increased feelings of loneliness and decreased social support. A good self-esteem was correlated to social support. Loneliness on the other hand increased as a result of poor social support. There was no significant relationship between depression and self-esteem.

Medora and Von der Hellen (1997) conducted a study with teenage mothers to learn about their romanticism and self-esteem tendencies. A demographic questionnaire and two standardized scales were administered to the teen

mothers. The standardized scales were the Dean Romanticism Scale (DRS) and the Bachman Self-esteem Scale (BSS). Self-esteem was measured using the BBS. The sample comprised of 94 teen mothers residing in a large metropolitan area of Southern California. The age range was 13 to 18 years, with a mean age of 16,22 years. Of the 94 teen mothers, 51 were Latino, 22 were African-American, 17 were Anglo and 4 were Asian. These mothers were enrolled in the Teen Mother Program affiliated with a continuation high school. The ages of the teen mothers' infants ranged from 6 months to 1 year. A majority of the teenage mothers were raised in single-parent families and were receiving 'Aid to Families with Dependent Children'. Academically most performed poorly at their comprehensive middle and high schools. However, school achievement improved when they enrolled in the Teen Mother Program at the continuation school.

Data were analysed using the t-test and the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Compared with the control group of nonpregnant, nonparenting adolescents, it was found that the control group had significantly lower romanticism scores than did the pregnant teens and teen mothers. This was seen to be suggesting that respondents in the control group had more realistic and practical attitudes about romanticism items. It was further suggested that the difference might be due to the fact that teen mothers, who were 'new' parents, may be receiving attention and help from friends and family, thus delaying a full realisation of the seriousness of their situation. Self-esteem was also found to be higher for teen mothers when compared to the control group.

Hurlbut, Culp, Jabunathan and Butler (1997) also measured self-esteem of teenage mothers. The purpose of their study was to investigate the relationship between the adolescent mother's self-esteem and her knowledge of parenting skills. Participants were first-time mothers who were 21 years old or younger at the time of their baby's birth and they were participating in an ongoing rural Midwestern County Health Department Program. They included Caucasians, African American and multi-ethnic.

A demographic questionnaire and a self-esteem assessment were completed before the baby was born. The self-esteem measure was repeated when the baby was three months old. Teenage mothers also completed a parenting skill questionnaire when the baby was three months and again at six months. Self-esteem of the mothers was evaluated with the Index Self-esteem (ISE). This is a 25-item questionnaire encompassing questions about how a person feels about him/herself. The questions were answered on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating 'rarely or none of the time' and 5 indicating 'most or all the time'. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the relationship between self-esteem and dimensions of parenting skills knowledge. This was done to see if adolescent mothers would be in a position to proceed to the next developmental stage as indicated in Erikson's theory of development (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1989). This theory maintains that an adolescent is expected to resolve role identity crisis during adolescence stage. With the task of having to be a parent during adolescence, the fear is that role identity may not be resolved and could thus interfere with one's development. In this study, it was found that the adolescent mother's knowledge of parenting skills correlated positively with her self-esteem. Measuring self-esteem was found to indicate that parenting at an early age does not really interfere with one's development in this study.

In a quantitative study that focused on the quality of relationships between teenage mothers and their mothers, Caldwell, Antonucci and Jackson (1998) found a link between the number of depressive symptoms and the teenage mother's perception of her mother's level of support. In this particular study, Caldwell et al (1998) explored the influences of the quality of intergenerational family relationships on psychological adaptation in families with teenage mothers. Positive and negative aspects of the mother-daughter relationship that may be associated with psychological well being among African American and White teenage mothers and their mothers were examined. Of particular interest was the influence that supportive and conflictual relationships may have on levels of depressive symptoms expressed in both generations.

The sample was restricted to first-time teenage mothers with three months old infants, and their mothers. Data were collected from 372 participants representing 86 multi-generation families with teenage mothers 19 years or younger. These participants were recruited from two community based adolescent health clinics and three local high schools in one county within the Mid-western states in the US. The CES-D was administered to measure depression. The Pearson correlation coefficients were computed, where appropriate, to determine the magnitude and direction of associations between number of depressive symptoms and the two indicators of familial relationship quality. Results indicated that teenage mothers' perceptions of having both a supportive and conflictual relationship with their mother were associated with their expressed number of depressive symptoms in the expected direction. For example, the more supportive teenage mothers perceived their relationship to be with their mothers, the fewer the depressive symptoms. A strong association was found between perceptions of maternal conflict and depressive symptoms.

In the same study, Caldwell et al (1998) also made use of a hierarchical mapping technique to assess the structure, function and quality of social relations. Both the teenage mothers and their mothers were presented with a set of three concentric circles. The set had a smaller circle in the centre in which the word 'you' was written. They were then asked to think about people to whom they felt so close that it was hard to imagine life without them. The identified individuals were entered in the inner circle of the network diagram. The second circle included people to whom the respondent may not have felt quite as close as those in the inner circle but who were still very important to them. The outer circle included people not already mentioned but who were close and important enough in their life that they should be included in the respondent's personal network. This was done to learn about the quality of relations between teenage mothers and their mothers, and other important figures in the network. Having looked at this and the results of the CES-D, Caldwell et al (1998) concluded that conflictual maternal relations resulted in more depressive symptoms among teenage mothers. The birth of a baby to a

teenager was also reported to be depressing to both the teenage mother and her mother in this study.

Whilst the studies reviewed in this section have focused on the emotional consequences of teenage motherhood on the adolescent, no report was given on the psychological effects of this experience on the children themselves. A study by Hubb-Tait, Hughes, Culp, Osofsky, Hann, Eberthert-Weight and Ware (1996) measured depressive symptoms among children of adolescent mothers. Their findings indicated that children of adolescent mothers tend to have problems related to feelings of insecurity, behaviour problems or both. This implies that it is not only the teenage mother alone who experiences problems, but also those closer to her. This was also the case in both Deal and Holt (1998) and Caldwell et al (1998) studies that indicated that the birth of a child to a teenager was depressing to the mother herself and those other significant others around her. Other health problems like stress and other physiological problems have been reported. A study by Ravert and Martin (1997) found stress level for pregnant teenagers to be higher than average when compared to Adolescent-Family Inventory of Life Events (A-FILE) instrument norms.

The above studies do show that teenage mothers are more likely to experience both physical and psychological problems as a result of their early childbearing. Furthermore, it was also found that children born to teenage mothers are also likely to experience emotional problems. In the following section I will focus on other developmental issues that are related to teenage motherhood. In particular, issues about parenting and the effects of teenage motherhood on education opportunities of the teenage mother will be reviewed.

2.4. Other developmental issues related to teenage motherhood

Teenage motherhood has been reported to affect the development of both the mother and her child (Hurlbut, Culp, Jabunathan and Butler, 1997; Medora and Von der Hellen, 1997). In relation to Erikson's theory, the adolescence stage is marked by achieving a positive role identity through the

understanding by the adolescents of their present self in terms of their past development achievement and uniting it with their future aspirations and expectations of competence (Meyer, Moore and Viljoen, 1989). This expectation makes one to question whether teenage mothers had the opportunity to integrate their past developmental experiences into a personal identity. Hurlbut et al (1997) argue that teenage mothers have not had the opportunity to adequately resolve identity crisis; this then places their social and emotional development at risk since they have to deal with caring for others before they are ready. Medora and Von der Hellen (1997) also indicate that adolescence is a time of psychological exploration. It would then appear that teenage mothers miss out on this period of psychological exploration. Smith (1995) points out that teenage mothers end up missing out on being young and experiencing developmental challenges relevant to teenagers.

Adolescents are expected to be undergoing developmental transaction during this stage, so child bearing interferes with their development. And the unreadiness to be a parent also leads to premature and underweight babies as noted earlier. In the following section a few developmental issues are presented.

2.4.1. Parenting

A parent is usually expected to take care of her/his children, giving love and all the support possible. Parenting skills are therefore seen as being important in order for a parent to cope with parenting tasks. A few studies were conducted to learn if teenage mothers could successfully raise their children as expected of any mother.

Camarena, Minor, Melner and Ferrie (1998) conducted semi-structured interviews focused on the self-perceived adjustment to parenthood by adolescent mothers. The main focus was on how mothers construct life aspirations in the face of new parent roles. Participants were 58 young mothers from a rural region of the upper Midwest in the US. The interviews included questions about background information, perceived changes in aspirations across the transition to parenthood, and sources of support for motherhood and aspiration related to the tasks. Interviews were conducted to

learn about any changes due to the transition to motherhood being an adolescent. They used both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis due to the nature of the interview protocol. The majority of the participants reported that parenting demands had resulted in an adjustment of expectations rather than a dramatic change in either the level or nature of aspiration. Teenage motherhood was not treated as an event in relation to other events in one's life. The focus was rather on what the experience did to the participant's aspirations.

Higginson (1998) conducted a study to learn about competitive parenting among teenage mothers. Her study was conducted over a period of three years, doing participant observations and conducting in-depth interviews. The study was conducted in the US in Colorado. Participants were 50 teen parents and their children who were registered in the Teen Center for parenting program run just less than 5 miles from the University of Colorado where the author works. Interviews were conducted with 12 teen mothers. Each interview lasted between 1 and 2 hours. Those interviewed were 10 Whites and 2 Latina, and their ages ranged from 15 to 20 years, with an average of 16. Higginson spent a minimum of 2 days per week at the center for at least four hour per day. During these visits, formal and informal observations were made of the teen parents and their children.

Higginson (1998) found that the culture of teen parenting emphasized competition to be the best parent. By competing with one another and with other parents not in the program, teen mothers worked to prove their competence as parents in an effort to contradict the widely held view that teenagers should not be having children and to validate their decisions to bear and rear their own children. Looking at the period over which the study was done, one could understand the experience in relation to other life events. But for Higginson, the interest was on learning about the importance of competition among teenage mothers. Her method of investigation does allow for the understanding and exploration of different events of the teen mother's life, but Higginson identified one specific event, competition, to learn about its impact on the teen mother's parenting.

De Visser and Le Roux (1996) conducted a qualitative study to learn about the experience of teenage pregnancy and parenthood in Knoppieslaagte, a semi-urban area situated south of Pretoria. A purposeful sample was obtained by selecting certain categories for individual interviews. A total of 27 black women aged between 13 and 24 were recruited. All of them had given births to a child in their teenage years. Of the 27, 13 were students and 14 were working. Both individual and group interviews were conducted. As they put it:

"by using both these methods, data obtained during individual interviews could be 'tested' during the group discussions, and information from group discussions requiring more intensive investigation could be followed up during individual interviews" (De Visser and Le Roux, 1996: 99).

They used semi-structured interviews when collecting data, and they also included some open-ended questions. Although both these methods were utilised to learn about the experience, the researchers did not go on to explore on how the individual's experiences of teenage pregnancy continue to shape or influence the individual's life. The findings of their research suggested that although teenagers adjust to motherhood to some extent, the black mothers involved define teenage pregnancy as a problem.

Whilst the studies by Camarena et al (1998), Higginson (1998) and De Visser and Le Roux (1996) did not directly find teenage mothers to be failing to cope with their role of being parents, teenage mothers in these studies did indicate that they find parenting to be demanding and as a result adjustment skills are needed.

2.4.2. Educational disruptions

Teenage mothers are more likely to be school pupils at the time they become pregnant, and dropping out of school following a pregnancy is an almost certain outcome. In some cases, dropping out is temporary and in some, a permanent arrangement. Temporary dropping results in the teenager loosing a year(s) before going back to school and when she goes back to school her attention is divided between child care and school work, the result of which is poor performance (Parekh and De la Rey, 1997). Freeman and Rickels (1993) maintain that early child bearing limits educational and training opportunities

of a teenage mother. And for Griffin (1998), teenage parenthood is considered synonymous with educational and economic failure. Hobcraft and Kiernan (2001) indicate that teenage mothers are more likely to be having no educational qualifications at age 33. This results in them being in social housing and being recipients of state social grants. If they are employed, they are more likely to work at low-income jobs. They are more likely to experience longer periods of unemployment, single parenthood and higher levels of poverty (Bissel, 2000; Hobcraft and Kiernan, 2001).

In some cases teenage mothers do not go back to school; they have to look after their children or their situations do not make it conducive for them to go back to school. De Jong (2001) reported that one of the participants in the study indicated that having a child at an early age has helped her escape the worry of having to decide whether to go to college or to work. This particular participant found it hard to adjust to the new responsibilities at college. She discontinued her further education when she became pregnant at the age of 16 because she felt too embarrassed to show that she was pregnant.

In the study by Kekesi (1997), some of the participants dropped out of school because they had to look after their children, some had to drop out because parents refused to pay school fees, and some dropped out because there was no money. Mpetshwa (2000) found that participants in her study continued with schooling, but finance was mentioned as a problem.

The above presentation does show that there are expectations and demands that teenage mothers have to meet. As a result, they are expected to allocate their time and energy to different roles that are equally demanding, being a pupil and a parent at the same time. These challenges sometimes steal on the teenager's time, and other engagements like relationships become undernourished. The next section will focus on teenage motherhood and social relationships.

2.5. Teenage motherhood and social relationships

A number of studies have indicated that becoming a mother during adolescence interferes with the manner in which the teenager in question

relates to other people. In De Visser and Le Roux's study (1996), teenage mothers indicated that their pregnancy made their parents to be upset. It was also indicated that some fathers were angered by the pregnancies to an extent that they threatened to chase the teenager from the house (Parekh and De la Rey, 1997). In the study by Kaplan (1996:431), teenage mothers indicated that their mothers were resentful toward them and would

"constantly [be] complaining about the additional money it costs to support [the] family since the baby's birth".

They also indicated that they thought of resolving problems with their mothers by moving out of their mothers' homes.

Teenage motherhood does not only bring about problematic relations between the teenage mother and those significant to her, these significant others, in some cases, end up having clashes among themselves due to the teenager's problem. For example, in the study conducted by Parekh and De la Rey (1997), one of the participants indicated that her father blamed her mother for the pregnancy, whilst her uncles "blamed [her] mother and told her that she was not strict with [her]" (1997:226).

The study conducted by Parekh and De la Rey (1997) also supplies information on intra-group accounts of teenage motherhood in an African community. This study was conducted with a view to explore and interpret intragroup accounts of teenage mothers. The study was conducted in KwaDedangendlale in KwaZulu-Natal. KwaDedangendlale is a semi-rural area, with low-density housing scattered across a hilly terrain. Access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads and telephones is limited. The formal health services comprise a single primary health care clinic with mobile clinics that visit various points in the area. A significant portion of the school-aged population is in under-resourced schools with high drop out and failure rates. The rate of unemployment is high with the majority of the population living below the poverty datum line.

Participants were selected with the help of a community health worker. They had to be aged between 15 and 21, and their babies between 12 months and

36 months, had to have been in their teens at the time of birth, and had to be attending school at the time of the study. Ten women volunteered to participate and they were enrolled at the same school. Their ages ranged from 16 to 20 years. They were of low socio-economic status, unmarried, and had only one child, aged between 1 to 2 years. Data were collected by means of focus group discussions that were held once a week for eight weeks, with each meeting lasting about an hour and a half. These were analysed using the thematic content analysis. The researchers found the transition to motherhood to be accompanied by a number of psychological consequences that place the teenage mother at risk in terms of later life adjustment and the way she relates to significant others in her life.

Whilst the study by Parekh and De la Rey (1997) could be commended for its incisive exploration and analysis of the subjective intra-group meanings of teenage motherhood, it is possible that some aspects relating to the experiential realities of these teenage mothers may not have been voiced in a group setting since they conducted focus group interviews. And as pointed out by Fontana and Frey (1994), a group culture may emerge in focus groups. This is when participation in a group tends to inhibit individuals from expressing certain opinions. In their investigation, Parekh and De la Rey (1997) report on a number of experiences that participants in their study discussed.

Relationships with partners were also referred to as being negative as a result of pregnancy. Less than half of teenage mothers in De Visser and Le Roux's (1996) study indicated that they were still having a relationship with the fathers of their children. In the preliminary study that I conducted, only one out of four participants was staying with the father of her child and the other three had their relationships with the fathers of their children terminated (Sodi, 1999). Macleod (1999a) reports that no South African study has accessed data from the partners of teenage mothers, they rely on accounts given by the teenage mothers. The accounts are reported to be on either side, with some studies indicating negative relationship with the partner and some indicating positive relationship with partners. Parekh and De La Rey (1997) found that

partners would initially refuse the teenage mothers, but later accept them when they realise that their families were also willing to accept them. The partners could however not be in a position to support the children as they were still at school. Mpetshwa (2000) indicated that relationships with partners did not really materialise even though the families of some of them assisted in supporting the children.

Kaplan (1996) reports on the relationship between teenage mothers and their mothers. Qualitative interviews were conducted with black teenage mothers and their mothers to learn about the impact of adolescent child bearing on teenage mothers' relations with their mothers. The study was conducted in Oakland and Richmond, California, between 1986 and 1989. Participants were 22 teen mothers and 9 adult mothers of the teen mothers. Out of the 22 teen mothers, 12 teen mothers and 9 of their mothers were met at a non-profit teen parenting service agency in Oakland where the author does volunteer consulting work. The rest were drawn from a snowball sample in which the teen mothers provided the author with the names of other teen mothers. These teen mothers lived in single-parent/mother only households. The interviews were mainly focused on getting the attitudes and reactions of both the teenage mothers and their mothers to teenage motherhood.

Kaplan's (1996) study also found that teenage motherhood stigmatises both teenage and adult mothers, causing problems for them. Kaplan (1996) goes on to mention that the real tragedy is that these teenage mothers have to expand energy on activities other than complex adolescent developmental issues. She concluded by indicating that adult mothers feel that their daughters' early motherhood threatened their deeply held moral values as well as their reputations in the community. Teenage motherhood was seen as a source of conflict for everyone involved in this study.

Relationships are reported to change as soon as the teenager becomes a mother. The teenage mother's partner does not take responsibility and completely disappears, friends are no more than interested and parents feel disgusted (De Jong, 2001; Hobcraft and Kiernan, 2001). The studies

presented above generally suggest that teenage motherhood is problematic to the teenager and her family.

2.6. Culture and teenage motherhood

Studies have indicated that societies across the world have evolved cultural systems and practices that help them to deal with sex matters during teenage years. In their book entitled: 'The politics of reproductive ritual', Paige and Paige (1981) give a global analysis of puberty rites and conclude by describing cultural female initiation practices as mechanisms for initiating girls into adulthood. Lincoln (1981) refers to puberty rites as women's initiation, a process that marks the attainment of menarche that is an indication of a woman's fertility, sexual and social maturity. Puberty rites are thus understood as a significant developmental milestone that results in a woman becoming "fertile, productive, experienced and whole" (Lincoln, 1981:90). These rites are a platform through which young women are given education on sexuality, gender and other health related issues through poetry, dances, singing and story-telling.

In Africa, female puberty rites are reported to be common practice that is seen as an expression of fundamental social values, the focus of which is on relations established by marriage and the community. For example, a study conducted among the Basanga in South Zaire describes female puberty rites as a transition stage that not only leads to acculturation into a new social group, but also results in more responsible behaviour on the part of the initiate (Persons, 1990). In Egypt, the cultural practice of female circumcision is a common puberty rite that is intended to encourage and maintain virginity (El-Sayed, 1997).

In South Africa, the different cultural groups have developed their own puberty rites that are supposed to prepare young people for acceptable behaviour in their culture. In Limpopo Province, the three predominant cultural groups have evolved an initiation rite referred to as vukhomba in Xitsonga ('kgopa' in Sepedi and 'vhusha' or 'khomba' in Tshivenda). According to Maluleke (2003:

48), this rite of passage is exclusively intended for girls after menarche. It is considered a period of seclusion during which the initiate changes

"... from one state of being to another, that is, from childhood to womanhood" (Maluleke, 2003a: 49).

Apart from its social and cultural significance, 'vukhomba' is also regarded as a traditional sexuality education programme the content of which is limited to personal hygiene, maintenance of virginity, self-control and social morals (Maluleke, 2003b).

Whilst self-control and maintenance of virginity are supposed to be some of the goals of vukhomba, Maluleke (2003a) found that such a cultural practice does not necessarily reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and motherhood in the particular community that she investigated. For example, the study found that there was no difference regarding teenage pregnancies between initiated and uninitiated girls. Furthermore,

"initiated women also indicated that teenage pregnancy is a problem in the villages for both initiated and uninitiated girls" (Maluleke, 2003a:55).

According to Macleod (1999a), two cultural factors are among the many reasons advanced to explain the increasing phenomenon of teenage pregnancy. Firstly, the sexual control practices like initiation ceremonies and other puberty rites provided for, among others, instruction about sexual matters, vaginal inspection and supervision (and control) of marriage by kinfolk. This idealised picture is believed to have collapsed due to a number of factors that include urbanisation, erosion of the patriarchal structure of the family and formal schooling that has taken away education from the control of parents. These factors are believed to lead to more sexual permissiveness on the part of young people as compared to traditional adolescents. Secondly, the high value placed on fertility in African society is believed to lead to young people being pressurised to conceive so as to escape the reputation of being infertile. Bearing children is thus seen as "an essential part of being a woman and achieving success as a woman" (Macleod, 1999a:13).

2.7. Concluding remarks

The main aim of this chapter was to review some investigations on teenage motherhood and to present their findings. The above presentation does show that teenage motherhood is associated with a number of problems that both the teenage mother and those related to her experience. The experience of teenage motherhood is reported to impact negatively on the physical, psychological and social conditions of the teenage mother. Whilst the studies reviewed in this section provide useful information on teenage motherhood, there is also a need to investigate and understand how this experience form part of the lives of those people who became mothers during their teenage years. The current study is motivated by this need. In the next chapter I will give a presentation of the methodology used to obtain the data for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will give a review of the qualitative approach and the methodology used in the present study. The first section will constitute a brief overview of the philosophical debate between the adherents of quantitative methods and those in support of qualitative approach. The section will be concluded by a presentation of major characteristics that constitute the basis for qualitative researchers' claim for scientific status. The second section of the chapter will focus on phenomenology as one of the qualitative methods of research. The third and final section of the chapter could be seen as more technical in the sense that I will give an account of phenomenology as a method of inquiry used in the present study. The procedures that have been followed in data collection and analysis will also be elucidated.

3.2. The philosophy of qualitative research

The presentation here will focus on the philosophical differences that distinguish qualitative from quantitative research. Five such principles that distinguish the two research traditions are discussed.

(i). Hypothesis testing versus theory generation

Unlike a qualitative researcher who will usually subscribe to the holistic notion that regards human experiences and social phenomena as entities to be explicated and understood in their entirety, a quantitative researcher on the other hand seeks to break down the social world into manageable packages. These packages are then regarded as problems that are transformed into research hypotheses that postulate causal relationships between two or more variables in one or more populations (Bryman, 1993; Mouton & Marais, 1991).

The need for the establishment of causal relationships was expressed by Babbie (1979:243) when he indicated that the chief goal of a scientist, social science or other, is to

"explain why things are the way they are. Typically we do that by specifying the causes for the way things are: some things are caused by others".

This extract from Babbie gives an indication that quantitative researchers are primarily concerned with the establishment of causal relationships between phenomena. This kind of research orientation calls for the formulation of hypotheses before an investigation is embarked on. Quantitative researchers will also ensure that these hypotheses are formulated in such a way that they should either be rejected or accepted (Neuman, 1997). This gives an indication that the whole study will primarily revolve around a hypothesis.

On the other hand, qualitative researchers tend to provide no more than a general aim in their introductions (Mouton & Marais, 1991). They go to the research field with no preconceived theoretical framework. This makes them to be more inclined to theory generation.

(ii). Observation

Positivism in the social sciences maintains that only observable aspects of human behaviour are supposed to be the subject matter of the social sciences (Bryman, 1993; Behr, 1983). This implies that a person's subjective experiences are not supposed to be accommodated as valuable material from which scientific knowledge may be derived. The anti-positivists on the other hand will strongly dispute this claim and instead regard the subjective nature of human experience as a basis for the true social science (De Koning, 1986). Quantitative researchers simply control the context and focus on observable variables. Qualitative researchers on the other hand take the broader context of the investigation into account and become involved with the phenomenon under investigation (Giorgi, 1992; Kvale, 1994). By going to the research field ready to make observations of anything related to the phenomenon under question, the qualitative researcher has the opportunity to record unexpected (not preconceived) material for a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Quantitative researchers get limited material since they go to the research field with predetermined variables to observe.

(iii). Method of enquiry

The quantitative approach maintains that the same scientific methods used in the natural sciences should be used in the study of social phenomena (Plotnik, 1993). This implies that the same methods used in studying molecules and atoms will be adopted in the study of human beings.

Qualitative approach on the other hand maintains that appropriate research strategies that are useful to social phenomena should be adopted. Following this argument a number of qualitative methods have been developed. These include methods like discourse analysis (Burman, 1996; Burman & Parker, 1993; Edwards & Potter, 1992), life history (Chambon, 1995; Mann, 1992; Watson, 1976), phenomenology (Giorgi, 1975; 1985a; 1985b; 1994; Husserl, 1977); etc.

(iv). Generalisation

In quantitative research, the researcher goes on to generalise research findings beyond the confines of the research location. They tend to pay attention to the representativity of samples in order for them to legitimately generalise their findings. On the other hand, qualitative researchers are interested in obtaining

“true meanings that individuals assign to events, and the complexities of their attitudes, behaviour and experiences”(Bowling, 1997:336).

In other words, qualitative researchers only seek to present the participant's perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

(v). The question of values

Positivists believe that science is objective and value free. This belief makes them to put aside social and political influences when conducting their studies. Qualitative researchers on the other hand believe that social science is based on social and political values prevailing in a particular society (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994; Henwood & Nicolson, 1995).

Huysamen (1994) argues that whilst the natural scientist has nothing in common with his research objects, the social and behavioural scientist is in reality a member of what he is studying. Huysamen's argument supports the idea that qualitative researchers would tend to acknowledge the influence of values in the products of their investigations.

3.3. Characteristics of qualitative research

The qualitative approach is seen as an approach that allows participants to share their experiences and point of view. Bryman (1993: 46) describes it as

“an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied”.

This gives an understanding that participants are allowed to be who they truly are, without the researcher being seen as a judge. As Bryman (1993: 46) further puts it; “the participant is given a much freer rein than in the survey interview”. It would also imply that the researcher presents the information as the participant presented it. Researchers do not include any information that would be seen as bringing some change or different meaning to what the participant has presented. Qualitative approach allows the researcher the opportunity to learn and understand different social and cultural contexts. What follows is a presentation of some of the characteristics of qualitative approach.

(i). The context is critical

Qualitative researchers emphasise the importance of social context for the understanding of social world. They believe that the meaning of a social statement or action depends on the context within which it happens. If a researcher removes a social action or statement from the context in which it happens, social meaning and significance are lost (Neuman, 1997). A qualitative researcher therefore takes into consideration that which precedes or surrounds the focus of the study. This also implies that the same events or behaviour can have different meanings in different cultures or historical eras. Parts of the social life are placed into a larger whole in order to avoid losing the meaning. According to Watson (1976), the demands and expectations that

the participant and others impose on the act of relating to the phenomenon, brings meaning to the phenomenon studied.

(ii). The value of the case study

A qualitative researcher gathers large amount of information on one case or a few cases, go into greater depth and get more details on the cases being examined. With the amount of data a qualitative researcher has, he or she immerses herself/himself in it. This gives the researcher an intimate familiarity with people's lives and cultures (Neuman, 1997).

(iii). Researcher integrity

Qualitative researchers interact with participants when collecting data. This makes researchers from the quantitative orientation to question the integrity of qualitative researchers. This does not, however, become an issue for qualitative researchers whose main aim in collecting data is to develop ideas from it and not to prove anything. So, qualitative researchers go to the field and get what participants have to share with them. Qualitative researchers are aware of their values or assumptions, and take measures to guard against the influence of their beliefs or assumptions when doing research (Neuman, 1997).

(iv). Grounded theory

Unlike a quantitative researcher who gathers data after he or she has theorised, developed hypothesis, and created measures of variable (De Vaus, 1996), a qualitative researcher begins with a research question and little information. Theory develops during the data collection process. This is more of an inductive method that is based on the understanding that theory is built from data or grounded in the data (Neuman, 1997). This inductive nature of qualitative research makes it flexible and allows the interaction of data and theory. Qualitative researchers are therefore open to the unexpected and are also willing to change the direction or their focus depending on what prevails during data collection.

(v). Process and sequence

Qualitative researchers look at the sequence of events and pay attention to the logic of such events. Since they do examine the same case or set of cases over a long period, they are in a position to see issues evolving, conflicts emerging, or social relations developing. The researcher is therefore in a position to detect process and causal relations (Neuman, 1997).

(vi). Interpretation

Qualitative researchers report data in terms of discussions of their significance. They interpret data by giving them meaning, translating them, or making them understandable (Neuman, 1997). The meaning given begins with the point of view of the people studied (Smith, 1995; Bryman, 1993).

In the following section, I will be focusing on phenomenology as a qualitative method of inquiry that shares the above characteristics. It is this method of inquiry that I have adopted in the current study.

3.4. Phenomenology

3.4.1. Introduction

According to Patton (1990), phenomenology focuses on how people put together the phenomena they experience in such a way as to make sense of the world. It is these subjective experiences that must be described, explicated and interpreted so as to understand the world as perceived by the individuals themselves. It is therefore important in phenomenological research to know what people experience and how they interpret the world, Patton (1990). This point is supported by Bryman (1993) who maintains that social scientists must examine social action in terms of the actor's own interpretation of his or her action and its motivational background, thus, seeing things from the person's point of view.

Edmund Husserl (1977) considers phenomenology as an appropriate science of phenomena. He believed that reality could be reached through the study of consciousness. By interrogating the conscious material, the researcher can get to the real understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In Husserl's

(1977) view, phenomenological method could systematically recover the content of consciousness and thus help the researcher to arrive at the knowledge of the real thing in question. This systematic process of recovery, Husserl (1977) maintained, would proceed from original intuition to a two-fold process of eidetic and phenomenological reduction. By original intuition, a phenomenologist uses that which manifests itself in bodily presence (i.e. the immediate vision) to seek the ultimate foundation of that which is being investigated. By subjecting that which presents itself to intuitive reflection, the researcher paves the way for eidetic reflection which involves moving from the realm of facts as originally presented to that of general essences. Following closely is phenomenological reduction which moves the researcher from the general essences to the ultimate presuppositions. The successful practice of this process of reduction requires '*bracketing*' or freeing oneself from any preconceptions, biases, beliefs, and habitual modes of thinking. Husserl (1977) called this suspension of all ideas and beliefs '*epoché*'.

The many phenomenologically oriented researchers who were influenced by Husserl (1977) further broadened on his idea, and some like Amedeo Giorgi (whose work will be reviewed shortly) even went further to refine his theoretical arguments and to propose a step by step method that should be followed in phenomenologically inspired research.

3.4.2. Amedeo Giorgi and phenomenologically based research

In his many writings on phenomenology, Giorgi was of the view that social research should investigate and describe phenomena as lived by people in the life-world (1985a, 1985b, 1975). For Giorgi, the natural science paradigm was regarded as inappropriate in social research since this approach cannot provide a faithful understanding of social phenomena. To demonstrate his point, Giorgi undertook a study (using phenomenological praxis) to discover what constitute learning for ordinary people. Using descriptions given by subjects of their own lived phenomena, he tried to demonstrate how rigor and scientific discipline could be applied without necessarily having to transform data into quantitative material. It was mainly through this study that Giorgi developed a research method that followed four essential steps;

In the first step, the entire description given by the subject is read in order to get a general sense of the whole statement. In the second step, the researcher goes through the entire description once more with the aim of isolating '*meaning units*' that would be expressed mainly in the subject's phraseology. This, according to Kruger (1988:153), is to allow the data "to speak for itself". In the third step, the researcher rigorously reflects on the '*meaning units*' and expresses the insight contained in them more directly. In the fourth step, which can be broken down into a number of levels, the researcher synthesizes all the transformed '*meaning units*' into a consistent statement regarding the subject's experience. Very crucial during this step is to turn the synthesized descriptions into a structure that would be communicated to the world of critical opinion. I will again refer to these steps in the next section when I give a detailed outline of the methodology that I have followed in this study

As a way of demonstrating its independence as a legitimate and viable scientific method of inquiry, Giorgi (1975) identified eight characteristics of phenomenology. What follows is a brief review of these characteristics.

(i). Fidelity to the phenomenon as it is lived

This means that researchers need to faithfully work on the subject's lived experience as an important source of data for analysis. It also refers to making explicit the perspective of the researcher as this is seen to have a bearing on the research situation.

(ii). Primacy of the life-world

In order to capture the subject's lived experiences, the researcher will need to go back to the '*life-world*' in which the subject is embedded, thus allowing the subject to be truly what he/she is. This should provide the necessary point of departure in terms of research undertaking. When interpretation of data is done, the nature of the phenomenon under investigation must be captured. The '*life world*' (revealed in the natural attitude) and the phenomenological attitude should be clear. Engaged in the process, the researcher should

consider specific aspects of the phenomenal consciousness in relation to the whole context. From a phenomenological point, one is aware of events, people, feelings, self-images, and objects as these stand out in the individual's consciousness, together with the participant's relationship to these various phenomena. The life world also constitutes some of the aspects of which the participant is unaware, which should be inferred (Watson, 1976).

(iii). Descriptive approach

Because of its reliance on what is communicated by the subject in the form of language, phenomenology needs to rigorously analyse the descriptions given in order to understand the phenomena.

(iv). Expression of the situation from the subject's viewpoint

In setting up a structure of research, phenomenology is very much concerned with the subject's viewpoint. The point that Giorgi (1975) tried to raise here is that rich data can best be obtained if the subjects are given the freedom to choose their own examples of lived experiences. Analysis of data should also be sensitive to the subject's own interpretation and ideas of the situation.

(v). Situation as unit of research implies a structural approach

Phenomenological approach accepts the lived situation as the basic unit of research. There is therefore a need to take into account the interpersonal context that is created by the very act of investigation. Understood from this angle, it therefore becomes necessary to consider the interaction between the researcher and the subject when research data is interpreted.

(vi). From the personal to the general

Giorgi (1975) tried to draw a line between traditional experimental approach and phenomenological approach in terms of how theoretical concepts are formulated. Unlike the former that tends to formulate its concepts before undertaking the investigation, phenomenological approach seeks to develop these concepts after contact with the data. In this sense, phenomenological approach would start with personal accounts of the subject and, on the basis of these, gradually generate and construct theoretical positions.

(vii). Engaged researcher

Giorgi is of the view that phenomenological approach should aim at presuppositionless descriptions. Understanding that this is not possible in an absolute sense, he suggests that researchers admit the existence of any possible presuppositions, and become engaged and play an active role in the construction of the actual data of the research. The constitution of data does not mean reduction, but is transformed with both the subject and researcher being involved so as to get to the intentions and aim of the research. Giorgi (1975) is of the view that phenomenological approach should treat the results of scientific inquiry as products of an engaged researcher.

(viii). Search for meaning

While the measurement method in scientific research is generally regarded as an important route, phenomenological approach seeks to directly get to the meaning of the phenomenon without necessarily having to go through the measurement process in the strict sense of the word. According to Giorgi (1975:101):

“the value of the phenomenological approach is the direct access it provides to meaning by interrogating the qualitative aspects of phenomena”.

These characteristics of phenomenological approach present the research as an involved process for all parties involved. The lived experiences to be explored should be interrogated to come up with an understanding of the phenomenon in question.

3. 5. Research design

The philosophical framework of qualitative research presented in the previous sections lays the foundation for the use of an approach that gives the researcher the opportunity to examine a phenomenon relying on the participant's point of view (Bryman, 1993). The research design of the current study is based on the view that the phenomenon in question should be addressed in such a way as to make sense of the lived world of the participants. This section focuses on issues relating to research design for the current study; thus looking at participants, data collection and analysis.

3.5.1. Participants

Five women who became mothers during their teenage years were selected through snowball sampling and requested to participate in this study. Snowball sampling, according to Neuman (1997) involves getting referrals to individuals who possess the information that is needed. The researcher would start with just one or two individuals who have lived through the experience being investigated. These individuals would then act as informants who would suggest the names of other people with similar experiences. The researcher therefore depends on his or her participants to suggest more names, and would then follow this strategy until the required number of participants is reached.

In the current study, the researcher started by approaching a friend who became a mother during her teenage years. After presenting the aims of the study, the friend willingly participated in the investigation. She then suggested names of other women who had a similar experience. These were followed up and included until a total number of five participants was reached. All five participants had already completed grade 12 and were either working, still looking for jobs and /or pursuing some post graduate studies. Their level of education also made it easier for them to understand the research process and what was expected of them. The participants were aged between 26 and 35. At the time of the interviews, the youngest child was doing grade two at school and the oldest was doing grade eleven. Selecting participants in the age groups of 26 to 35 was considered important as these individuals were considered to have sufficiently incorporated their experience of teenage motherhood into their life worlds. This group of participants was carefully selected as they were regarded as having had the opportunity to reflect on teenage motherhood experience and how the experience forms part of their lives. The researcher therefore relied on the participants' recollection of the experience and reflections on how the experience became part of their lives. Such consideration was also given by researchers in other studies (De Jong, 2001; Clemmens, 2002).

3.5.2. The interviews

Data were collected through interviews. A presentation of qualitative interviewing will be done after which I will give details on how this mode of investigation was used in the present study. Qualitative interviewing involves an open, genuine and sympathetic approach which treats the interview as a personal encounter (Hagan, 1986). In this regard, it is important for the researcher to listen to what comes without selectively testing hypotheses. In other words, the researcher should maintain an air of naturalness and spontaneity while at the same time taking a non-categorising approach to what is taking place in the interview situation. According to Bowling (1997), qualitative interviewing also involves getting deep beneath the superficial responses to obtain true meanings that individuals assign to events, and the complexities of their attitudes, behaviour and experiences. Marshall and Rossman (1995:80) maintain that qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to:

“explore a few general topics to help uncover the participant’s meaning perspective, but otherwise respect how the participant frames and structures the responses”.

This method therefore allows for the unfolding of the participant’s reflections on a phenomenon of interest, not the researcher’s perspective. Schurink (1988) talks of the researcher’s task as simply to introduce the general theme on which information is required, motivate the participant to participate spontaneously, and to stimulate through probing and tactfully guiding the participant back to the research topic should digressing occurs. Guided and informed by the principles of qualitative interviewing, the researcher interviewed each participant separately. Conducting individual interviews with participants was considered to be an appropriate method. This was based on the fact that individual interviews allow the participant an opportunity to focus on the phenomenon in question. The interviews were conducted between April and August 2002. They were mainly conducted after five o’clock in the afternoon. This was due to the fact that most of the participants were working at the time of the interviews. During the first meeting with each participant, I would introduce myself and give an explanation of the aim of the study. Furthermore issues relating to confidentiality of the interviews and the results

were discussed and clarified with participants. They were also informed that pseudonyms would be used to conceal their identity. Arrangements regarding the date and time of the main interview were made during the first meeting. Some kind of rapport was also established during the first meeting with each participant. The main interviews lasted between two to three hours per participant. Interviews were conducted in Sepedi and Tshivenda, depending on the language spoken. English was also used with those participants who were either not fluent in the mentioned languages or they preferred it. These interviews were recorded and later transcribed before they were translated into English. At the end of each interview, the researcher would request the participant to be available for follow up interviews should a need arise in future.

3.5.3. Analysis of data

In analysing the data, the four phases of phenomenological explication as proposed by Kruger (1988) were followed:

(i) Phase 1: Sense of the whole

During this phase data is read several times with a view to (a) understanding the language of the describer and (b) getting an intuitive and holistic grasp of the data. The researcher is required to remain faithful to the data so as to understand it as it reveals itself. This involves what Aanstoos (1986) calls '*braketing*' – a process where the natural world is allowed to come out without the researcher's bias influencing what is revealed. By so doing the researcher suspends all narrowly confining interests preceding attention to the phenomenon and become fully interested in the phenomenon itself. By suspending all preconceived ideas the researcher is in a position to escape the danger of finding only what he/she expects, instead "one adopts an attitude of open-ended presence to the phenomenon that is unfolding" (Aanstoos, 1986: 85). In this phase the researcher familiarises himself /herself with the data by simply reading through the transcripts many times to get a sense of the whole.

(ii) Phase 2: Discrimination of ‘natural meaning units’ (NMU’s)

This phase requires the researcher to break down the text into naturally occurring ‘*meaning units*’ that will be manageable and easy to analyse. Cloonan (1971:117) defines natural meaning units as:

“statements made [by the participant] which are self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognizable aspect of the [participant’s] experience”.

These are descriptions of the participant’s structural world. The researcher should then articulate the essence of the NUM’s using the participant’s phraseology as much as possible. Giorgi (1985) maintains that this process of articulation should happen within the context of discovery rather than that of verification. The researcher simply discovers what is in the data without being required to test any hypotheses. In the present study, this discrimination of the ‘*natural meaning units*’ is done in Section A of Chapter 4.

(iii) Phase 3: Transformation of NMU’s into central themes

During this phase, the researcher starts by reflecting on the NMU’s that are still in the ordinary language of the participant. According to Kruger (1988), this act of reflecting on the phenomenal descriptions is intended to transform the NMU’s into central themes. It is during this phase that the researcher aims to transform the phenomenal description into a properly phenomenological understanding by laying bare the immanent structural significance therein (Aanstoos, 1986). Like in the case of Phase 2, the transformation of NMUs into central themes is also done in Section A of Chapter 4.

(iv) Phase 4: Synthesis of central themes into consistent structures

This last phase of the process of phenomenological explication is divided into two steps as recommended by Kruger (1988). During the first step, all the central themes are synthesised to communicate the insights contained, taking the particular context of the experiencing individual into consideration. During the second step, all the insights contained in specific

descriptions are put together to develop a general description of the phenomenon involved. The researcher presents a general structure of the phenomenon as it unfolded from participants' description. With the guidelines articulated above in mind, the researcher in the present study synthesised the insights and developed general descriptions of the experiences of teenage motherhood in Section B of Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS: PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES

In this chapter the protocols obtained from the participants are interrogated so as to discriminate the natural meaning units (NMUs). These NMUs are then subjected to a process whereby they are transformed into central themes which are then synthesised into insights. These insights form the basis for developing general descriptions of the experience of teenage motherhood. Section A will be comprised of Phases 2 and 3 of the phenomenological explication process (i.e. the discrimination of natural meaning units and the transformation of the natural meaning units into central themes). Section B will focus on Phase 4 of phenomenological explication which involves the synthesis of central themes into insights that are then developed into general descriptions of the experience of teenage motherhood.

4.1. SECTION A: DISCRIMINATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF NMUs INTO CENTRAL THEMES

4.1.1. The case of Masindi

Masindi is a 30-year old woman who works as a receptionist at the consulting rooms of a specialist medical practitioner. She stays with her parents, siblings and her 14-year old son. At the time of the interview, Masindi was not involved in any meaningful heterosexual relationship. The relationship with the father of her child ended a few years after the child was born.

4.1.1(a) Situation and/or events that led to the pregnancy

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations / events that in your view might have contributed to your falling pregnant

P1: *Not being open of parents and friends count.*

Masindi believes that lack of knowledge contributed to her falling pregnant. She indicates that her parents were not open with her when it comes to matters relating to sexual relationships. Her friends influenced her.

4.1.1(b) Realisation of the pregnancy

Res: Didn't they realise that you were pregnant?

P1: *No, you see, I was just young and thin. The pregnancy was not visible. All was just play – we just met with this guy just once, and I conceived, and I did not know that I had conceived. One Friday my sister came home, and that night I just felt that I was having some stomach cramps. So they took me to the hospital, and it was discovered that I was about to give birth.*

Masindi was not aware of her pregnancy until the time that she was due to deliver. She indicated that she just felt some pains in the stomach, and it was discovered at the hospital that she was experiencing labour pains. She reports that there were no bodily changes that could have made her aware of the pregnancy. Even when she was informed of her condition, she did not want to accept it. She told people that she was having a headache. Other members of the family were also not aware of her pregnancy. The parents only learned about it after the child was born. At first her father was angry with her for being a teenage mother. He later accommodated her situation. Other people including the mother had to accommodate her situation from the beginning.

4.1.1(c) Educational opportunities

P1: *So I went back home on Sunday and on Monday I went to school.*

Res: What about at school after you had delivered, didn't they learn about what happened?

P1: *No, nothing really showed that I had a child. I did not even want people to say that I had a child.*

Masindi's pregnancy was not noticed until she gave birth. She therefore continued with her schooling without any disruption. Her child was born on a weekend and she went back to school on a Monday. Her pregnancy was not

known at school and as a result even her motherhood remained unknown. She continued with her schooling without any disruptions resulting from her early motherhood. At the time of the interview, Masindi had completed her standard ten and some post-matric secretarial training.

4.1.1(d) Responsibility

P1: When they came to fetch me, I told my uncle that I was having a headache. They also came with my aunt and she so much wanted the child, and I agreed that she should take him. I think it was because I did not feel that he was part of me. I just said: you can take him. But my mother did not agree. And to tell the truth, I used to forget him, forgetting him totally. I would go out and leave him. So my aunt used to look after him. I was just free like before. I would go and play in the streets with my friends and they would be teasing me saying that I was a mother, but it never really made me felt that I was one. There was nothing that connected me with the child, serious! I would just give her. You see, she told me that she would buy him clothes and everything. So for me, that was fine. I did not think of anything. I never thought that a child is something or can be something in future, those are the things that I did not think of. And for sure I would blame myself if I had given her the child, because now!, (laughter) serious! You see with him now, he keeps on saying Heh!, to have a young mother is nice, she understands things easier. He realises that I understand him and my younger sister better as compared to my mother. My mother is older now, so she does not understand some of these fashion things. So my son knows that I am aware of things and keep on indicating that having a young mother is good because she understands better than oldies. Now I realise that if I had given him away then, I would not know what to do now.

Masindi reports that she did not feel the urge to be responsible towards her child. She indicated that she did not take care of her baby. She would go and play with friends in the streets. She did not even feed the baby. When the baby cried she cried as well and was even afraid to touch him. She was even willing to give the baby to her aunt. This shows that she was at first not ready to take responsibility as a parent. Her partner is reported to have been willing

to take responsibility towards the child. Masindi did not want to commit herself to the responsibility because the partner wanted her to stay with the child as he supports them. She indicated that she wanted to continue with her studies. It was only after the child was about 13 years that Masindi began to feel connected to him and to be responsible. She reported that if she had given the child to her aunt, that would have been a great mistake, as she had grown closer to her child, with time.

4.1.1(e) Relationships

P1: *My father was angry with me, but when he went back to work, he sent a lot of clothes for the child. He did not apologise for his anger, but I took it that what he did for the child was his way of showing support.*

Res: Does the child's father interact with him?

P1: *Ja, they do not have a problem. Even with me he is fine, we talk about things and I taught him to respect me, calling me mum- not just interacting as if we were siblings. So he respects me and we have a good relationship together. Since he is the only one we spend a lot of time together, talking about his schoolwork. I also share with him issues about my work and he gives me some guidance. And I love him!, hey!, I love him.*

Res: So how is the relationship with his father?

P1: *He knows because when we separated he knew. But he appears to have lost interest in him. He would rather go and visit his grandparents, not the father because he would always hear him shouting at me, so he did not like the way he used to treat me. So even if he goes there, he spends his time with his grandmother, not the father.*

Masindi reported that her relationships with significant others in her life were not seriously affected by her motherhood. She, however, indicated that her father was at first angry with her when he learned about the child. But he was later reported to be supportive and Masindi interpreted it to mean that he has accommodated her and the child. Other significant people in her life also gave her the support she needed to carry on with her life. She, however, separated with the partner sometime after the child was born. She reports having a good relationship with her child. She has however reported feeling reluctant

towards being involved in serious relationships with members of the opposite sex ever since her child was born. Her main reason for avoiding heterosexual relationships was as a result of fear of dangerous sexually transmitted diseases.

4.1.2. The case of Fhedzisani

Fhedzisani is a 27-year old woman. She works as an ambulance attendant. She stays with her in-laws, her partner and the child. The couple has been staying together since the birth of their son. The child is nine years old. Fhedzisani started staying with her in-laws immediately after the child was born, as her father could not accept her with the child. Her mother-in law looked after the child when Fhedzisani continued with her schooling.

4.1.2(a) Situation and/or events that led to pregnancy

Res: I would want us to start by talking about things that you think might have contributed in your becoming pregnant (events, situation, etc that you may think of).

P2: *With me, things just happened. I just started a relationship with this guy. In my mind I had told myself that I would not get myself into sex even if I get into love relationships. It just happened that I fell in love with this guy, I loved him very much. We spent something like six months without sex. It just happened that one day he got me into having sex with him. Because I loved him, I unwillingly slept with him. It just happened that I conceived at that time and it was my first time to do it.*

Fhedzisani could not think of any specific thing that she could attribute her pregnancy to. She said, "it just happened". She indicated that her mother had earlier told her that if she slept with a man, she would fall pregnant. When she first got involved in a relationship, she thought that there would be no sex involved. After six months in the relationship, they engaged in sex and she conceived.

4.1.2(b) Realisation of pregnancy

P2: No. I did not have any problems at all. I went to school until I had a child. They did not realise that something had happened. People could not see anything. Even with myself, I did not know. But the guy knew what he did. After the experience of sleeping with him, I never wanted to sleep with him again because I experienced a lot of pain the day we slept together. But he kept on coming to me and I did not want to be with him anymore, thinking about the pain I felt. I think he knew what had happened.

Res: So you were not aware then that you had conceived?

P2: No, I was not aware, I knew nothing. I could not feel that something had happened. I used to play netball at school, but I began to feel unusually tired after playing. I would feel very tired but I did not know what was causing the problem (tiredness). And it was not long that I had started menstruating, so realising that I had stopped menstruating, I became happy that at least that experience had passed and it will not happen to me anymore. I did not know that it meant that I was pregnant. It used to be a nauseating experience for me, so being out of it made me happy.

Res: So when did you know that you were pregnant?

P2: I only learned that I was pregnant when I was going to have a child. I did not know. I would just feel tired, but I never thought of anything, I was still a child. And the experience of going to have a child happened when I was at home preparing supper. The veranda at home has a lot of stairs, so I was about to climb the stairs and I was unable to lift my foot, and I started feeling the whole body aching. My younger sister was at home and she thought it was a joke when I told her that I was unable to go up the stairs. So I sat down, it was painful, my abdominal area felt very painful as if some pressure was exerted on it. My mother came and I told her that I was in pain, and I was beginning to see darkness in my eyes. She rushed me to the doctor, who after examining me indicated that I was about to have a child. I was surprised and I asked myself: 'me going to have a child, how come?' But I quickly remembered that my mother used to tell me that if you sleep with a man after becoming a woman, you will be pregnant and have a child. So I then remembered that that one day I slept with that guy, I became pregnant.

Fhedzisani did not know that she was pregnant until the day that she was due to deliver. A doctor informed her after she was taken for a consultation because she was complaining of pain. She indicated that after sexual contact with her partner, she did not want to see him again because she always thought about the pain she experienced then. She continued with her life with no problem. She said that when she realised that she had stopped menstruating, she became happy because she did not like the experience. It used to be a nauseating experience for her. At that time she did not know that cessation of her periods was an indication of pregnancy. After delivery her father did not want her back at home. She then had to go and stay with the child's father. At the time of the interview, Fhedzisani was still staying with her partner.

4.1.2(c) Educational opportunities

P1: *The child was born during December holidays and it was moving towards school opening days.*

Res: So didn't you have problems with your new home?

P2: *No, I did not have any problem there, not at all. The problem was with my father about the school issue. I did not have any problems, even at school; they could not believe me when I told them that I had a child, even my friends, they only believed me when they saw the child and when they realised that I was staying with the guy's family. By just telling them, they did not believe me.*

Res: So when you went to school, what happened to the child?

P2: *During my school years, I was not staying at home; I was at a boarding school. So I went to school from the in-laws' place. They looked after the child there. They did not agree to send me back home. And the woman there understood that I was still a child. She started from the beginning with me, teaching basics. She was not rough on me. She treated me like her own children. So now that I have a child, I just have to accept it, my future is disrupted. I had not planned it that way. I had plans for good things, but I just took it that it happened and there is nothing I can do about it. But I told myself that I would not have another child immediately. I understand that I am staying with this person (partner), but not another child if it is not both of us working. You see!, my family background is different from his background. They were*

not that well and things were a little difficult. After having the child, there had to be changes in my lifestyle. There was a big difference; life was no longer the same. I understand that had I known that having that kind of a relationship would end up with a child, I would not have fallen in love. You see, I realised that you cannot just say you love the person without sleeping with him. It is not possible. According to me, if it were possible to go back, I would not fall in love with any person until I feel ready to start a family.

Res: How do you feel now about the experience?

P2: Now I do not have a problem. It has happened and my partner too was not expecting us to have a child then but we have accepted it. So we have to look forward and plan for our future, getting the two us go further with our studies. And he struggled to get me to continue with my studies. And also go through tertiary training. And at the moment, it is not that we do not want to have another child, we would love to. He is working, but his concern is me, I do not have a stable job yet, so he would want both of us to have reliable jobs and we can then plan other children. He realises that it needs both parents to be working to have a decent family.

Fhedzisani's pregnancy was not noticed until the child was born. The delivery took place during school holidays. This meant that she could not loose out in terms of her schooling. Her mother-in-law offered to look after the child. After completing her standard ten, Fhedzisani went for training as an ambulance attendant. At the time of the interview she was volunteering her services at a private ambulance service. Fhedzisani indicated that even though she did not loose any academic year, her educational plans were disrupted, she had to settle for what was possible given her new role.

4.1.2(d) Responsibility

P2: And in my whole family, I am the only one who got married in this manner, but I am better settled. All my sisters had weddings for their marriages, but they keep on going back home with marital problems. And I have never been home with problems since I started staying with my in-laws. I have never gone home because of problems, not even a single day. When I had a problem, sometimes there are problems in a marriage, I would just sit down and cry,

who would I tell? I would not go home, who would I tell; my mother is also very strict. During that time she also turned her back on me like her husband. So when I had problems I would just cry. And when my partner realised that I was unhappy, he would feel bad and stop doing what would be causing the problem.

Fhedzisani did not directly talk about being responsible. She accepted her new role of being a mother and having to stay with the family of her partner. She reported being able to deal with her marital problems on her own.

4.1.2(e) Relationships

P2: *My mother came to see me and found me having a child. My father was told that I had a child. Eh!, he did not want to hear that and did not want to come and see me.*

Res: So, when your mother left, did she know that you were going to have a child?

P2: *Yes, but she did not believe it. They did talk, but I did not hear what they discussed. So my mother had not told my father what the doctor said. She just told him that I was sick. I think it was because she did not believe the doctor or she was afraid to tell my father. He knew nothing. And as a result when he came, he indicated that he was not taking me with him, I should go to the father of the child. So my mother tried to persuade him, saying that it would be better if they take me home and get a solution when we would be at home rather than leaving me at the doctor's surgery. But my father insisted on leaving me behind. The doctor also tried to talk to my father but he did not want to go with me. So he then asked me if I knew where the father of the child stayed because he realised that my father was serious about leaving me behind. The doctor does provide transport to his patients, so he drove with me to the father of the child's place. When we got closer to the place, I showed him, and it was his relatives' place. So there was no problem because he knew them. So when we got in, he explained to the guy's mother what happened, and the lady indicated that there was no problem since her son had indicated to her that it appeared as if something had happened to me but he was not sure. So I had to stay with them.*

Fhedzisani's pregnancy did not really interfere with her social relationships outside home. Her friends did not know about her pregnancy and as a result nothing changed. She continued with the relationship with her partner and they were still together at the time of the interview. Her motherhood, however, affected her relationship with her parents, especially her father who at first could not accept the fact that she had become a mother. Her father sent her to go and stay with the father of her child. She reported that the way her father treated her makes her to have reservations towards him. She reported that her "mother also changed and had become like her husband". She indicated that she does not think she could share her problems with her parents even though they later accepted her. At the time of the interview, Fhedzisani's child was staying with his grandmother. Fhedzisani was working at another town.

4.1.3.The case of Mulatedzi

Mulatedzi is a 30-year old woman. She works as a receptionist at the consulting rooms of a health practitioner. She stays with her 12-year old daughter, mother and her siblings. Her father passed away when she was still young. At the time of the interview she was studying towards a bachelor's degree part-time and was not involved in any meaningful heterosexual relationship. The relationship with the father of her child ended before the child was born. This was due to the fact that her mother did not want the relationship to continue; she felt that it would be an embarrassment for her as the two families were friends.

4.1.3(a) Situation and/or events that led to pregnancy

Res: I would want us to start by talking about situations or events that you think have contributed to you falling pregnant.

P3: *Friends influence!. When we were at school being free or on weekends when we were not at school, we would talk about boys. So I ended up being influenced. And unfortunately for me, my mother was very strict. She did not tell me anything about – or if you have sex with boys you will fall pregnant or even to use contraceptives or something. So I did not know anything about that.*

Res: So you only had information from friends?

P3: Yes! influence from friends – that heh!, being in love is good.

Mulatedzi indicated that lack of sex education was one of the main factors that contributed to her pregnancy. She did not have information about contraceptives. In addition she had to succumb to peer pressure when it came to falling in love. She ended up having a boyfriend and after some time of being involved, she became pregnant.

4.1.3(b) Realisation of pregnancy

Res: So when you discovered that you were pregnant, was it immediately or after some time?

P3: Ja!, the first month, but I was on denial, I told myself that no!, I was not pregnant. I kept on telling myself that I would menstruate the following month because I knew my dates, even though I could see that there were some changes. Like in the mornings I would be sick. By then it was during exam time, so I finished writing exams and went to Johannesburg to visit my aunt (father's sister). That was because I was afraid that people would realise how I was.

Res: So at home they were not aware yet?

P3: Yes, they were not aware, they became aware immediately when I came back in January. I had just passed standard ten (10) and was supposed to go and look for admission space. That was the time that they realised that there was something wrong because I had gained weight.

Res: Oh!, ok, so when they realised, how did they react?

P3: eh—

Res: Were there any discord or anything may be?

P3: Like my mother, she saw me in the morning. We were at my uncle's place (he is our neighbour); I had a towel wrapped around my waist. So she could see that there was something wrong, and then she left and went home to sleep. But it was still in the morning, and she went back into the blankets. So when I got back – around 1 o'clock, she called me to her bedroom and asked

me. So I did not dispute it because I was already six to seven months pregnant. Eh!, six.

Res: Ok.

P3: *So I told her the truth that I was pregnant. She started as if she wanted to shout at me but she ended up admitting, like, most kids in the community, most teenagers were pregnant. So she just said there was no problem, "in fact so and so is pregnant, your cousin is pregnant--"*

Res: So what about other people at home except the mother?

P3: *Ja, like my aunt (mom's younger sister) did not believe, mom's elder sister could not take it. Like my younger sisters, it affected them.*

Mulatedzi learnt about her pregnancy immediately after she missed her menstrual period. She did realise some physical symptoms but she kept on hoping that she would menstruate the following month. She was not ready to accept it. She even tried abortion but could not succeed. She reported that when her mother discovered it, she was a little upset with her but immediately accepted it since she was not the only girl in their neighbourhood who was pregnant then. Other members of the family were reported to have experienced some difficulties at first in accepting her situation. The family ended up supporting her.

4.1.3(c) Educational opportunities

Res: Did you stay for some time without going back to study?

P3: *No, my mother was supportive, she said to me that I would not stay because of a child; I have to go to school. So, fortunate enough at Venda (university) they had replied saying I should come. So I went to school. She indicated that when the baby is born, I should bring it home. She would look after the baby - She did not have any problems.*

Mulatedzi became pregnant towards the end of the year. She managed to write her standard ten examinations and passed. Her child was born when she was doing her first year at a university. She therefore encountered no disruption in terms of her schooling. At the time of this interview Mulatedzi

was enrolled as a part-time student with Vista University as she could not complete her studies full-time. Failure to complete her studies full-time was due to other circumstances and not teenage motherhood.

4.1.3(d) Responsibility

P3: *Ja, because she took the child and has given me another freedom. You see, my mother was the one looking after her. Like things like preschool – I was just surprised to hear that the child was attending preschool. So my mother would just decide and I would not even know who was paying for her. They just buy clothes for her like my younger sisters, when they are at universities, they would just bring her clothes when they come back. So I do not want a child for the whole family. With other kids to come, I want the child to be mine! So they would just buy, not that it should be a must because the child does not have clothes, she does not have school uniform, she does not have school fees. Like even now, you may find that I do not have money, some times my sisters have to help out*

Res: How did you feel then?

P3: *When she took the child?*

Res: No, the experience. How did you feel about having a child?

P3: *Hey!, I do not know how to explain it. I felt frustrated. I thought of doing abortion. I would ask friends and they would tell me to drink this and that, try this and this. So when I was in Johannesburg, I would try to drink but realising that they do not work. So it was frustrating.*

Res; So now, how do you feel? I understand some years have passed.

P3: *Oh, now I am proud of my child, and myself she has grown and she is wise. So at the moment I am ok.*

Mulatedzi was not ready to take the responsibility of being a mother. She tried to do abortion but did not succeed. When the baby was born, her mother took the responsibility and Mulatedzi continued with her studies. She indicated that she was not ready to have other children shortly as she wanted to prepare herself adequately for motherhood, so that she could be in a position to afford the expenses of having a child and be in a position to look after the child. She appreciated the role played by her mother who was looking after the child.

4.1.3(e) Relationships

P3: You see, at home they asked me and I told them who the father of the child was. His mother is my mother's friend and they are from a rich family. So my mother was afraid that maybe I did it purposefully because I know they are rich. But they told them and it just ended in the air. You see, his mother and my mother were friends, but when I became pregnant, the friendship just ended.

Res: So the two of you?

P3: It just ended because my mother was afraid that people would say that she sent me to be pregnant; that's why she sent me to school; I would bring the child back so that we can get the monies from the partner's family, all those things. But it was hurting because it meant that my child and her father would not have any contact because of my mother's fears of what people might say.

Res: So now?

P3: No!, he is just my friend!

Res: The child, does she know about her father? I mean- does she know who her father is?

P3: No, she does not know.

Res: How do you handle it?

P3: No, she has not asked yet, because, when we grew up at home, there was no father. She does not know of a father figure at home. So she does not have a problem with that.

The pregnancy does not seem to have affected Mulatedzi's relations with her family. Her family and friends supported her and further advised her to attend prenatal classes. It is only the relationship between her parents and those of her partner that got seriously affected. Before Mulatedzi's pregnancy, the two families were friends. When Mulatedzi's mother learnt about the pregnancy, the relationship between the two families ended. The relationship between Mulatedzi and her partner was terminated. As a result, Mulatedzi reported that her child did not know who her father was.

4.1.4.The case of Muofhe

Muofhe is a 32-year old woman. She works as an assistant librarian at an academic institution and she is also furthering her studies part-time. She stays in a flat right in the city with her two daughters who are both doing their high school grades. Muofhe was 17-years old when her first daughter was born, the second one was born just two years thereafter, both fathered by the same person. Muofhe fell pregnant at the time when her parents were going through a divorce, and she was still in high school when her two daughters were born. The relationship with her partner ended but his parents offered to stay with the children and to look after them. Muofhe stayed with her father and continued to visit her girls. The mother of her partner died at the time that she had just started working. She then took her children and stayed with them.

4.1.4(a) Situation and/or events that led to the pregnancy

Res: Do you think your parents' divorce contributed to your pregnancy?

P4: *No. Maybe, maybe my parents would have prepared me. I never really wanted to blame anybody, but myself.*

Muofhe did not talk much about her pregnancy and what led to it. She was more concerned about what would happen. She just indicated that she did not want to blame anybody for her pregnancy. But she also mentioned that if somebody spoke to her before pregnancy, maybe she would have done things differently. This suggests that she did not have information relating to heterosexual relationships and sex.

4.1.4(b) Realisation of pregnancy

P4: *I did not have knowledge of what would happen. My main concern was what will happen. It just meant that I would no longer go back to school that year.*

When her pregnancy was realised, Muofhe began to prepare for motherhood. She also informed her friends of her condition, and moved to stay with her father whom she regarded as being more understanding and supportive. She

appeared to be ready to accept the responsibility; hence she indicated that she did not want to blame any other person.

4.1.4(c) Educational opportunities

Res: What was the experience of being a teenage mother like?

P4: *My mother made it clear that I would not go back to school. So, I started contacting friends informing them that I was pregnant and that I will not be at school that year. I was just home the whole year. I wished time could move faster. When I went back to school, I had to do more. After school you have to rush home. You basically manage between schoolwork and child minding.*

I do have wishes and dreams, but I do not know! Academically, I want to get a Phd.

Muofhe became pregnant towards the end of the year but she managed to write her year-end examination and passed. She then had to stay out of school for a full year since it was not allowed at her school to attend classes whilst pregnant. She indicated that after delivery she found herself playing the role of a learner during school time and having to rush home after school to be a mother. She could no longer participate in sports at school because she did not have the time to do so. Despite the setback of having to be out of school for sometime, Muofhe was determined to continue with her studies. At the time of the interview, she was working as an assistant librarian at an academic institution and studying part-time towards a master's degree in library and information science. She also indicated that she would want to study towards a doctoral degree after completing her master's studies.

4.1.4(d) Responsibility

Res: So, how has life been?

P4: *Responsibilities changed. After childbirth, I could not demand things. It's a mistake, so no more favours. Nobody will tell, but you have to sacrifice. My parents were divorced and officially I was supposed to stay with my mother. But after the realisation of pregnancy, I moved to my father.*

Res: You mentioned that responsibilities changed; can we talk more about that?

P4: *Ja, you see, after school you have to rush home. You basically manage between schoolwork and child minding. No sports on weekends. I had to forget about athletics. I was a good athlete. You trade things. Everywhere you go, you go with a child. Basically, it is about changing responsibilities, no more school trips. Social life changes a great, you loose out on mixing out with girls of your own age because things that they do, you cannot afford to do. You just do not have time. At one stage my child was sick. I had to arrange with my father to take my child to the doctor so that I could meet them there. When we were still waiting for our turn to see the doctor, a woman I knew came in and asked my father whose child it is he was holding?*

He told her that the child was mine. She asked me the child's name, and I said Mashudu (meaning lucky). She then said: Ni songo ri lwalela rine, ndi mashudu a mini hu mu hwalo ("do not be mad, what luck is it when it is a burden"). From there I made it a case that my child is not a problem / burden to anybody. It is my responsibility. You cannot explain; they are not interested. They have already created a child who cannot listen, but you never had anybody to listen to.

Muofhe appears to have accepted her responsibility as a mother. She spoke of changing responsibilities as a way of coping with the experience. She indicated that she did not want to blame anyone. She also had to shed some of the activities in order to have time for her motherhood. At the time of the interview, Muofhe was staying with her two daughters, looking after them and herself.

4.1.4(e) Relationships

Res: How are you doing now?

P4: *Fairly happy. There might have been certain choices – If I did not have a child, I would have travelled all of Africa and not only here, but outside (outside the African continent).*

The relationship with my children is healthy; I tell them that we should decide together. There is no communication between their father and me; I do what I

think is good for them. People do come with advice, saying that I should get him to maintain the kids, but I do what I think is right. I allow them to see him. And I always go to my father for advice, and my uncle and his wife support me.

Res: What about dating?

P4: *I do date, but if I feel uncomfortable, I let go. I make my expectations and policies clear. Some would expect me to be dependent. For me it is different! I have to mind my children – assist with homework, attend parent meetings, be at home. I encourage my children to read - I buy books to guide them. I have been in a support group for women. This helps me to develop confidence and to be open-minded.*

I do counselling, even men. People call me for short counselling. I might not be an ideal person- because I stay in a flat, a single parent, and I walk around with my kids. People would say: why don't you leave your children at home? I want my children to know me; I want to build trust with them. My first-born is 15; I decided I should talk to her. If somebody spoke to me then, maybe I would have done things differently. I cannot say everything is 100%, but I could not choose to be anywhere.

My boss was not prepared to work with me at my previous job, because I was a woman and looking after my kids as a single parent. I always had to do a lot more than expected. People will call you names, things! If you try to be nice, they think you want to take their men. So, you have to prove that you are not like that. You set limits.

Res: How do you see the future?

P4: *Very gloomy. I wish I could get money and have more children. If I could be rich I would have more children. But at the moment it will be risky – financially and health wise.*

If I marry, it will have to be for love, other things will follow. I basically do everything for my children and myself. The other thing is the fear that I have – ‘what if it does not work’, so this fear holds me back. I do not want to be failed by anyone, I would rather fail myself. One guy told me that the way I am, pushes people away.

At the time when Muofhe fell pregnant, her parents were divorced. She decided to go and stay with her father whom she considered to be more supportive. She also could no longer mix that much with her contemporaries. The relationship with her partner ended and, at work her male boss was alleged to be difficult towards her because she was a single parent. She also alleged that people do not trust her because they think she might want to steal their men. But she indicated that she had a good relationship with her children. Being a teenage mother seems to have an impact on her relationships with men. She indicated that she would love to have a family, but she is always afraid of failing. She said that she did not want to be failed by another person. She also indicated that her other social relationships were good and that she was a member of woman support group. She feels that it is the support that she gets from her father and other people that keeps her going.

4.1.5.The case of Ndifelani

Ndifelani is a 29-year old woman. She works as a receptionist at a specialist medical practitioner's consulting rooms. Ndifelani stays with her relative in a town house near her place of work. Her daughter is 13-years old. She is at a boarding school and stays with Ndifelani's brother during holidays. At the time of the interview Ndifelani was not involved in any kind of heterosexual relationship.

4.1.5(a) Situation and/or events that led to pregnancy

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations or events that you think might have contributed to you falling pregnant. What in your situation can you say had contributed to you falling pregnant?

P5: *I would say friends! Friends influenced me. My mother had told me that if I sleep with a man, I would fall pregnant. But you see, that was all she told me; she did not explain to me what exactly would happen. So just my first contact with a guy, I conceived. And I kept on telling myself that it couldn't be, just once!*

Ndifelani indicated that friends contributed to her falling pregnant. She did not have enough information relating to sex issues. Her mother had indicated to her that if she slept with a man, she would fall pregnant. That was all she was told. Unfortunately she got pregnant during the first sexual contact with her boyfriend who she got involved with as a result of peer pressure.

4.1.5(b) Realisation of pregnancy

Res: When was it realised?

P5: *Just during the first month. I missed my periods and I was doing standard nine by the time, and we had already covered the section in biology that explains human reproduction. So I kept on asking myself if I were really pregnant, and when I realised that no periods were coming, I then knew that I was pregnant. I began to realise some physical changes, gaining weight and my breasts growing big. I was totally convinced that I was pregnant. People began to ask me if I were pregnant and I would always say I did not know.*

Res: What about home, what happened?

P5: *My father chased me away. I had to stay with my aunt. After sometime she suggested that I go to the in-laws. I went there, the child was born when I was staying with the in-laws.*

Ndifelani learnt about her pregnancy during the first month after conception. At that time she was in standard 9 and had already covered the section about human reproduction in biology. She observed a few bodily changes that included weight gain and development of big breasts. When her father learnt about her pregnancy, he chased her out of the house and she had to go and stay with her aunt. She subsequently lost interest in many things as a result of her pregnancy.

4.1.5(c) Educational opportunities

Res: What happened at school?

P5: *I was no longer interested in anything. I was depressed, I was always quite. When I thought about going to be a mother, it was painful. I started to lose concentration at school. My performance dropped and my teachers were concerned. One of my teachers even asked me if I had problems or if I*

had a boyfriend, but I would always say no! It was painful. A cousin of mine knew about my situation and she encouraged me to study hard so that I could pass at the end of the year, which I did, but the school failed me. I had passed all the subject except mathematics, but they did not promote me to standard 10. My brother went to the school to get an understanding on why I failed. They did not explain, they just told him that I failed. And I still think that they did not want to promote me because they had realised that there was something wrong with my behaviour. Before I fell pregnant, I was among the best students in my standard. So the pregnancy made me to go down a bit, but my performance did not warrant a fail at exams; they just failed me.

Ndifelani was doing Standard nine when she conceived. She managed to write her year-end examination but could not be promoted to Standard ten. She indicated that her performance during exam deserved a pass, so she believed and still believe that the school failed her after learning about her condition. She delivered her baby during the following year. This resulted in her missing two full years of schooling. Thus, the year that she believed the school failed her and the year during which she delivered.

4.1.5(d) Responsibility

P5: I could not go where she was staying when I was not working, I did not want to go and see her without giving her anything. But it was hard. When I got there her grandmother was furious, she was very angry with me. But she allowed me to see the child, and I began to visit them frequently since I had secured some temporary job. In fact my aunt got me a temporary teaching post, so I could afford to buy my child what she needed. At some point I bought her some clothes and fruit. The grandmother threw away the fruit but she gave her the clothes. The child started to learn to know me. I kept on sending her some daily allowance and a lunch box through my aunt's neighbour who was teaching at my child's school. I sent her these things because it was only the grandmother who was working and her father was not working. And she could not afford some of the things that were necessary for the child. The neighbour reported that the child was not concentrating at

school, it seemed as if she was having some problems. I thought of sending her for psychological help but I did not.

Ndifelani did not talk about responsibility at first. The sense I get is that she felt helpless and full of self-blame during her pregnancy. Eight years after the birth of her child she began to act after having secured a temporary job. She went to see her daughter and started to visit her frequently and assisting her financially. She also spoke about having to be a good example to her child.

4.1.5(e) Relationships

Res: What happened to the relationship with your partner?

P5: *I did not want to be in love then, it just happened and thereafter I began to hate him because I felt that he was the one who caused me the problems. He gave me the child that I was not proud of. But he was very nice to both the child and me. And he was very close to the child because he stayed with her, and he was looking after her, doing everything for her, even washing her nappies. It is only that I felt bored and hated him, so, the relationship did not go anywhere. He got married to another woman but they separated because the woman could not accept my daughter. She wanted her to go, so the grandmother told her that the child was not leaving. If she is not interested, she better leave because even when she got married, she knew about the child. That was before my brother requested the child.*

Res: Are you now involved with someone else?

P5: *It is a problem for me now, I would want to be involved, but when I think of my daughter who is not close to me, I just cannot commit myself. I would want to do what other people of my age do, get married. But when I think of having kids, I think about the one I have now. It looks like there is no bond between the two of us. So I am afraid that if I have other kids and we are close, she may feel that I do not love her. That is why I deserted her and only came to see her when she was eight years. So this thought keeps me out of any meaningful relationship. I do not even want her to see my boy friend. I am afraid that what if we break the relationship, and the following day she see me with somebody else, she may think of me as a slut, not a good example to follow. So I make sure that she does not see my boy friend.*

Res: Ok!

P5: You see, the problem is the thought that keeps on pestering me, the bonding problem with my daughter. I did have a stable relationship at some point. The guy was so kind and caring, but I had to terminate the relationship. The thought of having other kids tormented me. I would be happy, but the moment he mentions kids, I would change and be sad. Even now if I think of the relationship with my daughter, I just become sad. If that thought crosses my mind, I become sad. Even by the time when I went back to school, I used to play netball for under-19 years girls. It was hard to say I was a mother, but just thinking about it would make me sad. This experience also hurt my mother. When my father realised that I was pregnant, he beat both my mother and me. I felt bad about it because my mother had done nothing wrong. You see, my father is an instructor, so the way he relates with us is not good. My mother is just holding to the marriage for our sake, the kids. I love my father but when I think of the way he treated me, I cannot face him. Sometimes I feel like just strangling him; I feel angry with him. I know I was wrong, but he should not have chased me out of the house. He should have forgiven me. Maybe he felt that I was an embarrassment to the family. The way he treated me made me to be sick for the whole nine months. I even wished I could get a miscarriage.

Pregnancy and motherhood seem to have affected Ndifelani's relationships to some extent. She broke the relationship with her partner because she just felt uninterested. She still does not feel good about her high school because she believes they failed her. She says that she does not hate her father, but sometimes she just feels angry towards him and she still cannot face him for having chased her out of the house. She has been reunited with her child for almost six years now, but the two of them are not close to each other. She still does not stay with her child because the child does not feel comfortable with her. Ndifelani reports that whenever she thinks about her experience, her mood changes immediately. She gets sad. She cannot engage in meaningful relationships with people of the opposite sex. She indicated that not having a good relationship with her child holds her back when it comes to relationships. She feels that her child might think that she does not love her. At the time of

the interview, Ndifelani had just terminated a stable relationship because her partner proposed that they start to think about having a family. She indicated that the idea of having other children makes her sad because she does not feel emotionally ready.

4.2. SECTION B: SYNTHESIS OF CENTRAL THEMES

4.2.1. Situation and/or events leading to pregnancy

All the participants reported that they did not have enough information relating to sex. They had some information from home, but not enough to make them understand conception and how to practice safe sex. They did not know about family planning. Their families did not share with them what to expect when one enters womanhood.

Three of the participants (Masindi, Mulatedzi and Ndifelani) indicated that they were influenced by their friends to get involved in relationships with boys. It was not their wish to have boyfriends and to be involved in sex. Masindi and Ndifelani became pregnant during their first encounter with their partners, and the relationships could not go anywhere because they were not interested. Mulatedzi reported that she used to have unprotected sexual encounters with her boyfriend and she would always be happy when she continued to menstruate. Muofhe and Fhedzisani do not talk about their friends. Muofhe was not interested in talking about what happened before the pregnancy, as she was afraid of what will happen. She indicated that she did not want to blame any one, but herself. Fhedzisani said: "it just happened". She indicated that her mother had told her that if she slept with a man she would fall pregnant. According to the reports given by the participants, it does appear that the influence by friends and lack of reliable information from home led to their pregnancies.

4.2.2 Realisation of pregnancy

Some of the participants were not aware of their pregnancies until the day of delivery. For example, Masindi and Fhedzisani did not know that they were

pregnant until they experienced labour pains. Masindi was taken to the hospital in the evening complaining of stomach pains. On arrival, the doctor indicated that she was in labour. She could not believe what she was told. Even after the child was born she continued to be in denial for some time, as she would tell people that she was in the hospital because of a headache. Fhedzisani too was not aware. She was taken to a general practitioner's surgery where it was found that she was in labour. Fhedzisani indicated that she was happy when she stopped menstruating because she did not like it. She did not know that it meant that she had conceived.

The other three participants, Mulatedzi, Muofhe and Ndifelani came to know about their pregnancies when they realised that they had skipped their menstrual periods. Mulatedzi pointed out that even if she knew about her pregnancy, she kept on denying the experience and telling herself that she would menstruate. On realising that she had conceived, Muofhe began to inform her friends that she was not going back to school the following year, as she would be expecting a baby. Ndifelani also realised her pregnancy during the first month of having missed her menstrual period. Even though she knew, she was not totally convinced because she had had only one sexual encounter with her boyfriend.

Masindi and Fhedzisani were not worried about their pregnancies since they were not aware. With the other three participants, it was different. Mulatedzi had to go and visit her aunt because she did not want her family to know that she was pregnant. She also tried abortion but did not succeed. Muofhe began to think about what will happen and to prepare herself for motherhood. Ndifelani reported that she was depressed for the entire nine months period.

Significant others in the lives of the participants also reacted when they learnt about the pregnancies. Ndifelani and Fhedzisani's fathers chased them away from their homes. As a result, Fhedzisani had to get married and at the time of the interview she was still staying with her partner. Ndifelani came back home but her father sent the child back to her partner and she only saw the child after eight years. Masindi reported that her father was upset but later

accommodated her and the child. Muofhe was staying with her mother when she conceived, but had to go and stay with her father because she thought that he was more understanding compared to her mother. Mulatedzi did not experience any problems; her mother accepted her and offered to look after the child as she continued with her studies.

4.2.3. Educational opportunities

All the participants were high school pupils at the time they fell pregnant. Masindi, Fhedzisani and Mulatedzi continued with their studies without any disruptions to their academic programmes. Masindi's child was born on a weekend and the Monday following her delivery she went back to school. Fhedzisani's child was born during school holidays in December and when the schools reopened, she went back. Mulatedzi's child was conceived towards the end of the year when she was in standard ten. The child was born during her first year at the university. The disruption to her studies was thus minimal. Muofhe and Ndifelani both had one full year wasted during their pregnancies, only going back to school a year later.

At the time that the interviews were conducted, all the participants had completed some post-matric training and were working. Fhedzisani was working as an ambulance attendant. Masindi, Ndifelani and Mulatedzi were working as receptionists at medical practitioners' consulting rooms. Mulatedzi was also continuing with her studies part-time. Muofhe was working as an assistant librarian at a university and was studying part-time towards a master's degree in library and information science.

4.2.4. Responsibility

Motherhood is coupled with responsibility. The mother has to take care of the child. The participants in this study became mothers without having planned to be mothers. They did not seem to be aware of the responsibility they had to take on. It is only Muofhe who seemed to have realised that she had to be responsible. After realising that she was pregnant, she began to prepare herself for the challenges of being a mother and a student at the same time. At the time of the interview Muofhe was staying with her two daughters and

looking after them as a single parent. She indicated that she learnt to be responsible and do what is right for her family (the children and herself).

Other participants were not fully aware of what the experiences of teenage pregnancy and motherhood meant for them. Their families took care of their kids. For example, Masindi indicated that she would forget about her child, because other people were looking after him. She would go and play in the street with her friends. Mulatedzi's mother looked after the child as she continued with her studies. Fhedzisani's mother-in-law also looked after the child when she went back to school and she was at a boarding school. Ndifelani reported that her child was taken away from her when she was five months old only to see her again when she was eight years old. All the years in between, Ndifelani avoided seeing her child because she felt that it would only be proper to meet her daughter again when she had something to offer her. She waited until she got some temporary job and went to the child with some money. She indicated that she wanted to be with the child and to look after her.

Based on the above responses, it is evident that all the participants were not ready to be mothers when they got pregnant. As a result they could not adequately look after their children at first. Taking responsibility as mothers only developed with time.

4.2.5. Relationships

All the participants indicated that their relationships with other people were adversely affected after their pregnancies and deliveries. For example, Mulatedzi indicated that she was extremely frustrated with the experience as her usual way of functioning was disturbed. She even had to run away from home so as to avoid the people that she knew. Ndifelani reported that she was depressed for the entire duration of her pregnancy. Even after delivery she reported having occasional bouts of depression every time she thought about her experience. Fhedzisani indicated that the experience shattered her plans but she just had to continue with life.

The participants indicated that their relationships with family members, especially with their fathers, were negatively affected. For example, both Fhedzisani and Ndifelani were chased away by their fathers who were not ready to accept their changed status. Fhedzisani indicated that even though her father had subsequently apologised for his actions, she still finds it difficult to approach her father when she needs his help. Ndifelani indicated that even if she does not hate her father for his actions, at times she feels like strangling him. Masindi reported that her father was angry with her but later accommodated her. Unlike the other three who had problems with their fathers, Muofhe had to go and stay with her father who was at that time separated from her mother. She moved out because her mother could not accept the pregnancy. Mulatedzi did not experience any profound difficulties with her family, as they seemed to be accommodating of her and the child.

Relationships with partners were also affected. Four out of the five participants had terminated their relationships with the fathers of their children by the time the interviews were conducted. It was only Fhedzisani who was still having a relationship with her partner. The other four participants did not find pleasure in their relationships with the fathers of their kids, thus leading to a breakdown in these relationships. For example, even though Masindi and her partner continued to see each other after the birth of their child, the relationship gradually deteriorated over the years. In the case of Muofhe, she continued to have a relationship with the father of her child until they got another child. It was only after this second child that the relationship ended. For Mulatedzi, the relationship with the father of her child ended even before she delivered. She attributes the failure of the relationship to the fact that her mother did not approve of the relationship. This also strained the friendship that had developed between the two families long before she got pregnant.

Based on the phenomenological accounts of the participants, teenage motherhood was also reported to be causing problems for future love relationships. For example, Masindi and Mulatedzi indicated that it was risky to be seriously involved since they were not sure how the relationships would be. The issue of what would happen to their children should they get involved

was also raised by all the participants. Mulatedzi also indicated that she wanted her child to be old enough to understand heterosexual relationships before she could get involved in another relationship. Ndifelani indicated that she felt that her daughter might think that she does not love her if she gets involved in a heterosexual relationship. At the time of the interviews, Ndifelani had just terminated a relationship that she was uncomfortable with, as she did not feel ready for it. Muofhe indicated that she wanted to get involved but that she was uncomfortable. For Muofhe, a need to be independent was advanced as a reason why she would not want to be involved in a heterosexual relationship.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1.Discussion

The present study found teenage pregnancy and motherhood to have a negative impact on the participants. The results are discussed in relation to six themes that have emerged when the data were analysed. The themes identified are as follows:

- 5.1.1. Demographic details of the participants**
- 5.1.2. Lack of knowledge about sexual relationships contributes to teenage pregnancy and motherhood.**
- 5.1.3. Early childbearing has a negative impact on the teenage mother's social relationships**
- 5.1.4. Teenage mothers tend to experience emotional problems after delivery of their babies**
- 5.1.5. Teenage motherhood has a long term disruptive effect on the teenage mother's educational and occupational opportunities**
- 5.1.6. Teenage motherhood leads to significant lifestyle changes for those that have been through the experience.**

5.1.1 Demographic details about the participants

At the time of the interviews, participants were aged between 26 and 35 years. Taking into account the fact that these participants had become mothers between the ages of 16 and 18 years, the researcher considered them to have had the opportunity to reflect on their teenage motherhood experiences. Previous studies that have investigated the experience of teenage motherhood have also tended to take the reflective aspect into account when selecting individuals to participate in studies of this nature (De Jong, 2001; Hobcraft & Kiernan, 2001). Though participants are interviewed

when they are relatively older, it does appear that teenagers in contemporary society become actively involved in sex at the age of 17 (SADHS, 1998).

All the participants were from semi-rural areas of the Limpopo province. The family backgrounds of the participants differed. Only two participants were from families where both parents were present (these are the participants who were later chased away from home by their fathers after they became pregnant). One participant was staying with her mother and siblings, her father having passed away when she was still young. The other participant was staying with her younger siblings, as their parents worked far from home. At the time that the other participant fell pregnant, her parents were going through a divorce process. With the exception of two participants, the other three came from family structures that were disorganised. Disorganised family structures were found to contribute towards teenage pregnancy in Boult and Cunningham's study (1992).

Participants were high school pupils at the time of their pregnancies. Three of the participants did not experience any disruption in their schooling since their children were born either on a weekend or during school holiday. Incidentally these three participants also had people readily available to look after their children. Even though they did not experience any break in their schooling, they expressed the frustrations of being a mother and a pupil at the same time. Whilst these three participants did not experience any disruption in their studies, the other two participants were unfortunate in the sense that they had to take a one-year break after falling pregnant.

5.1.2 Lack of knowledge about sexual relationships contributes to teenage pregnancy and motherhood

There were a number of indications to suggest that lack of knowledge plays a major role in teenage pregnancy and motherhood.

- It became clear that the participants did not know about the risks involved when engaging in sexual relationships. They practised unprotected sex without being aware of the consequences thereof.

Such consequences included being infected with sexually transmitted diseases and the risk of falling pregnant without being prepared for it.

- The ignorance of reproductive health became apparent during interviews. Some of the participants did not have an idea about what happens in the process of human reproduction. This ignorance results from the fact that sexuality and reproduction processes are not openly discussed with 'children'. Teenagers therefore have to find out on their own and in the process fall pregnant. The source of information the participants relied on were their friends. These friends were themselves teenagers who were also not informed about sexual matters. Ignorance of reproductive health is also seen with elderly women. The mother of one of the participants is reported to have indicated to the participant that the use of contraceptives causes infertility. Another participant fell pregnant within a short period after the first pregnancy and she attributed her repeat pregnancy to lack of knowledge and advice. This suggests that even after the first pregnancy, this participant still found herself in a position where information about teenage pregnancy and related issues about family planning was not within her reach.

Two of the participants in the current study were alerted of their pregnancies when they were due to deliver their babies. They were not experiencing any menstrual periods during their pregnancies and were not worried as they did not know the significance of menstruation. They reported that they did not notice any bodily changes that made them suspect that they were pregnant. Their families too could not notice any difference. Each of the two participants had only one sexual encounter with the partner before falling pregnant.

Of the three participants who were aware of their pregnancies, only one attempted abortion. She did not seek any professional medical advice. She continued to rely on friends. She ultimately gave up after

realising that her efforts had failed. The health risks that may accompany abortion were not considered in this case.

- Participants indicated having experienced difficulties looking after their babies. Some participants indicated that they did not know what to do when their babies cried. One of the participants was even willing to give the baby away after birth. Family members had to take the responsibility of looking after the babies. As a result, participants mentioned that they only began to feel closer to their babies years after they were born. At the time of the interview one of the participants was still struggling to establish a relationship with her daughter, more than ten years after the child was born.

Lack of knowledge was also found to be a contributing factor towards teenage motherhood in previous studies. In a study conducted by Parekh and De La Rey (1997), participants indicated that their tradition (Zulu tradition) did not allow for sexual matters to be discussed in an informal manner. In their view, sexual matters could only be openly and formally discussed in initiation schools. Teenage girls would formally go through initiation rituals where issues such as womanhood and sexuality were addressed by elderly women in the society. With traditional practices like initiation disappearing as a result of modernisation, the participants argued that there was no longer a place for them to formally obtain information on matters of sexuality, hence an increase in teenage pregnancies. In a similar study conducted more recently, Mojapelo-Batka and Schoeman (2003) also attributed the phenomenon of teenage motherhood to lack of knowledge and the collapse of traditional practices like initiation. More often teenagers fall pregnant with little or no knowledge about sexuality and related matters.

5.1.3. Early childbearing has a negative impact on the teenage mother's social relationships

All participants in the present study indicated that their relationships with members of their families were affected by their pregnancies. In particular, their relationships with their parents were the most affected. Generally, fathers

were found to be less receptive and less supportive when it comes to their daughters falling pregnant at such an early age. Some of the fathers' anger resulted in them chasing their daughters away from the house. This behaviour on the part of the fathers was found to lead to the teenage mothers developing strong feelings of resentment towards their fathers. Whilst the fathers were found to be generally unhappy with their daughters' pregnancies, mothers were found to be relatively supportive. There was, however, a case where one of the participants felt so rejected by her own mother that she decided to leave home and stay with her father who was separated from the mother.

The negative impact of teenage motherhood on social relationships was also reported by Parekh and De La Rey (1997) who found that families tended to be disappointed by the pregnancies of their daughters. In some cases, teenage motherhood was found to bring considerable tension in the families as mothers would be blamed (by their husbands) for their teenage daughters' pregnancies. A study by Kaplan (1996) on the other hand found that most mothers of teenage mothers were unwilling to raise their grandchildren as they felt that they had already performed their duties by raising the teenage mothers themselves.

Apart from their difficulties in relating to their immediate family members, teenage mothers also struggled to maintain long lasting heterosexual relationships. At the time of the interviews for this study, four of the five participants were found to have separated with the men that had made them pregnant. These participants were not having any meaningful relationships with members of the opposite sex. They reported experiencing problems in relation to committing themselves to another person. Some of these teenage mothers indicated that they had only got involved in sexual activities as a result of peer pressure. Involvement in sexual activities as a result of peer pressure was also reported in the literature (Leach, 2002; Williams and Mavundla, 1999). In her review, Macleod (1999b) reported that involvement in sexual activities by teenagers was attributed to peer influence. She indicated that:

"peer pressure takes the form of exclusionary practices (e.g. sending sexually inexperienced teenagers away when having discussions concerning sexual matters)" (Macleod, 1999b: 11).

Both Leach (2002) and Williams & Mavundla (1999) found that girls tended to be submissive to boys even when they were not interested in sexual activities. This tendency was attributed to an African cultural practise that orientates black women to be submissive to men.

All the participants in the present study were found to have learnt a useful lesson when it comes to heterosexual relationships. Participants indicated that they were concerned about their health and were reluctant to fully commit themselves to new relationships before they could get married. This restraint in establishing relationships was also observed by Parekh and De La Rey (1997) who found that teenage mothers preferred to consider marriage before they could have other children. Similarly in the present study, participants indicated that they would not want to have other children outside marriage.

5.1.4. Teenage mothers tend to experience emotional problems after delivery of their babies

Considerable feelings of depression, sadness and self-blame were expressed by some of the participants in the present study. In trying to conceal their pregnancies, some of the participants ended up withdrawing themselves and thus getting socially isolated. One of the participants reported strong feelings of depression during pregnancy, as she felt rejected by her family. Feelings of depression among teenage mothers were also reported in other studies. In a cross-sectional study to learn about depressive symptoms, Deal and Holt (1998) found that teenage mothers aged between 15 and 17 years were more than twice as likely as adult mothers to be depressed. In an article published in the same year as Deal and Holt's study, Caldwell et al (1998) found that there was a link between the number of depressive symptoms and the teenage mother's perception of her own mother's level of support. That is, the more supportive the mother was perceived to be, the fewer were the depressive symptoms reported by the teenage mother. In a related study, Hudson et al (2000) found that teenage mothers who received support from

other people tended to report fewer depressive symptoms. The implication would therefore be that support offered to teenage mothers lessened their chances of going through depression.

Many other studies have also suggested the significance of support as a mitigating factor against depression and other emotional problems among teenage mothers. For example, De Jong (2001) found that those participants who received support from their partners reported experiencing an 'easier' life. It was found that support from significant others had the positive effect of assisting teenage mothers to adjust to motherhood (Preston-Whyte & Zondi, 1992 and Parekh and De La Rey, 1997). The implication here is that the potentially depressing effect of teenage motherhood could be minimised in cases where the individual concerned is given support.

5.1.5. Teenage motherhood has a long term disruptive effect on the teenage mother's educational opportunities

The present study found that the experience of teenage motherhood has had a disruptive effect on the educational and occupational opportunities of the participants. For example, two of the participants had to stay out of school for a year as a result of their pregnancies. Earlier studies had also suggested that teenage pregnancy had a disruptive effect on the experiencing individual's educational opportunities. Parekh and De La Rey (1997) found that some teenage mothers had to drop out of school. Those who managed to get back to school struggled to apply their minds to their studies as they were torn between the equally demanding roles of being a student and a mother. This, the researchers contended, led to poor school performance. In their study with teenage mothers, Freeman and Rickels (1993) concluded that early childbearing limits educational and training opportunities for the teenage mother. Griffin (1998) maintains that teenage parenthood is considered synonymous with educational and economic failure. The three studies referred to here demonstrate the disruptive effect of teenage motherhood on a teenage mother's educational opportunities.

In the current study, the participants had, however, managed to complete their high school studies with some pursuing post-matric education. One participant indicated that, due to her unexpected pregnancy, she could no longer pursue her original career as planned. She had to do what was possible given her situation. Another participant indicated that her performance at school dropped significantly after her pregnancy. Her family rejected her and she had to stay with the family of her partner against her will. She did not get the support she needed and as a result she mentioned having felt depressed and losing interest in most things, including her studies. Other participants indicated that the support that they got from their families made it easier for them to cope or deal with the experience. This seems to be in line with findings in an earlier study which found that teenage mothers' school achievement tended to improve when they were enrolled in supportive Teen Mother Program (Medora and Von der Hellen, 1997).

5.1.6. Teenage motherhood leads to significant lifestyle changes for those who have been through the experience

Becoming a teenage mother results in the experiencing individual having to change her lifestyle significantly. Responsibility becomes an issue that the teenage mother has to confront at the time when she herself needs to develop as an adolescent. In the present study, family members were forced to take the responsibility of looking after the children, as the teenage mothers were not ready for the responsibilities.

However, at the time that the interviews were conducted, all the participants indicated their readiness to look after their children as they felt that they have significantly grown to be more responsible. Parekh and De La Rey (1997) reported that teenage motherhood meant some changes in the life styles of a participant who was expected to take the responsibility of being a learner and a parent at the same time. This definitely led to lifestyle changes as the teenage mother had to be at school during the week and to take care of the child after school and during weekends. Some of the participants had to spend weekends at their in-laws places to help with household chores and looking after the children. Parekh and De La Rey (1997) thus concluded that

these teenage mothers had to manage a number of demanding chores that involved being a student, a mother and a daughter-in-law. Clemmens (2002:154) reported that:

"in feeling torn between the two realities, many teenage mothers also experienced a deep sense of regret over what could have been: a life with friends, and planning for college and their futures".

Hanna (2001) concludes that teenage mothers struggle to care for themselves and their children, while at the same time dealing with their own adolescent development.

5.2. Summary and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to do a phenomenological investigation on teenage motherhood and to learn how this experience forms part of the teenage mother's life. Apart from the finding that the participants in this study were all high school students who were aged between 16 and 18, five themes that could be considered the general descriptions of the experiencing individuals have been extracted: These are:

- Lack of knowledge about sexual relationships contributes to teenage pregnancy and motherhood.
- Early childbearing has a negative impact on the teenage mother's social relationships.
- Teenage mothers tend to experience emotional problems after delivery of their babies.
- Teenage motherhood has a long-term disruptive effect on the teenage mother's educational and occupational opportunities.
- Teenage motherhood leads to significant lifestyle changes for those who have been through the experience.

Whilst the above could be considered to be the overall findings, it is important to also highlight some of the shortcomings that are associated with a study of this nature. First, the size of the sample on which the results of the study are based is small and as such generalisations cannot be made beyond the sample itself. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, only five participants selected

on the basis of snowball sampling were interviewed. Whilst acknowledging the limitations imposed by number of participants interviewed, it should however be expressed that there was no intention to make this a quantitative investigation. Instead the researcher has explicitly sought to give a phenomenological analysis of teenage motherhood as experienced by the individuals affected.

Second, the use of snowball sampling made it difficult to have a fair representation of the different social groups that constitute people who have gone through the experience of teenage motherhood. The referral chain comprised of people who were largely working in the same field of practice. In other words, the participants, with the exception of one who was a librarian, were working within the health profession environment. Such a process of participant selection could mean that teenage motherhood as experienced by other social groups may not have been captured.

Thirdly, the research topic too imposed some limitations as to how far the researcher could go in probing the experiences of the participants. Given the sensitive nature of the topic and its potential to invoke deep emotional responses, the researcher at times could not follow up on some of the participants' responses as some of the participants appeared to be deeply touched by their experiences.

The fourth limitation of the present study relates to having to translate the interview data from one language to another. Since some of the interviews were conducted in Sepedi and Tshivenda, the transcripts were later translated into English. Such a process could have probably led to some omissions, substitutions and/or condensations of some parts of the interview protocols.

Having noted the limitations and given the above findings, particularly in view of the disruptive effect of teenage motherhood on the lives of teenage mothers, there is a need for appropriate interventions to deal with this social problem. Though abortion is legal in South Africa, this option should not be considered as desirable given the documented emotional consequences of

such a step (Mojapelo-Batka and Schoeman, 2003). Similarly, the introduction of child support grant in South Africa cannot be considered a favourable solution as it has a potentially disruptive effect on schooling as reflected in this article that appeared in the Sowetan (08 June 2004:04):

“Most schools in Limpopo have complained, through their unions, that classes are seriously affected on ‘pay days’, because most of the school girls are registered to receive child support. ...A 17-year old pupil ..., who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Sowetan she wanted to have something to supplement her monthly pocket money”.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- Sex education should be offered to teenage girls and boys in the schools. This is proposed as this study as well as earlier studies have indicated that there is a marked lack of knowledge about sex and related issues during this developmental period.
- Family planning units should conduct educational awareness programmes in the local communities. Such programmes would include, among others, information on human reproduction, sexuality and the use of contraceptives.

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APPENDICES

Key:

Res = Researcher

P1 = Participant one (Masindi)

P2 = Participant two (Fhedzisani)

P3 = Participant three (Mulatedzi)

P4 = Participant four (Muofhe)

P5 = Participant five (Ndifelani)

APPENDIX A- Interview with Masindi

APPENDIX B- Interview with Fhedzisani

APPENDIX C- Interview with Mulatedzi

APPENDIX D- Interview with Muofhe

APPENDIX E- Interview with Ndifelani

APPENDIX F- Phenomenological Explication (all participants)

APPENDIX A - Interview with Masindi

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations / events that in your view might have contributed to you falling pregnant

P1: Not being open of parents and friends count.

Res: So how did you deal with the situation?

P1: You would not get me with the child, never!

Res: What about at school? Didn't they realise that you were pregnant?

P1: No, you see, I was just young and thin. The pregnancy was not visible. All was just play – we just met with this guy just once, and I conceived, and I did not know that I had conceived. One Friday my sister came home, and that night I just felt that I was having some stomach cramps. So they took me to the hospital, and it was discovered that I was about to give birth. So I went back home on Sunday and on Monday I went to school. So when they said I was a woman, I would cry, and when the baby cried I would also cry. When I touched him, I would just cry, I was afraid of touching him. My mother had to arrange with one of our relatives (granny) staying at our neighbourhood to come and check on us (me and the baby) during the day. The child would always be crying and the old lady realised that I was not breastfeeding him, I would just give him water. So she told me to breastfeed saying that the child was crying because of hunger.

Res: What about at school after you had delivered, didn't they learn about what happened?

P1: No, nothing really showed that I had a child. I did not even want people to say that I had a child. I remember the time my father came back home. I heard that he was back when I was in the house, and the child was crying, I took a towel and wrapped him. I think I was doing that so that my father would not know that there was a child in the house – but that was childish because he knew when he came. I thought that by covering him he would not cry and my father would not hear him cry and would then not know that I had a child. And I told myself that if he wants to beat me, I would take the child and run away.

Res: What about the father of the child, was he aware?

P1: It looks like his friends alerted him. He promised me that he would support and look after me. But I told myself that I should continue going to school. Not going to school! No!, I would not know what would happen to me if I stopped going to school. So I continued with my studies.

Res: So, at the hospital, how was the staff?

P1: Oh!, I remember!, the doctor who was in charge told me that I was going to die. I was the youngest. And I just said I was having a headache, just imagine!, headache! When they came to fetch me, I also told my uncle that I was having a headache. They also came with my aunt and she so much wanted the child, and I agreed that she should take him. I think it was because I did not feel that he was part of me. I just said: you can take him. But my mother did not agree. And to tell the truth, I used to forget him, forgetting him totally. I would go out and leave him. So my aunt used to look after him. I was just free like before. I would go and play in the streets with my friends and they would be teasing me saying that I was a mother, but it never

really made me feel that I was one. I had a lot of support, my aunt was always there, and my mother would look after him during weekends.

My father was angry with me, but when he went back to work, he sent of clothes for the child. He did not apologise for his anger, but I took it that what he did for the child was his way of showing support. So, support is important, I was just free like before. My mother treated him like his last-born child. He is old now, just like me. One can say we are contemporaries.

Res: Now how do you feel about having had a child at an early age?

P1: This thing needs support, without support he!, like with me, my aunt wanted the child and I was going to give her free of charge. There was nothing that connected me with the child, serious! I would just give her. You see, she told me that she would buy him clothes and everything. So for me, that was fine. I did not think of anything. I never thought that a child is something or can be something in future, those are the things that I did not think of. And for sure I would blame myself if I had given her the child, because now!, (laughter) serious! You see with him now, he keeps on saying Heh!, to have a young mother is nice, she understands things easier. He realises that I understand him and my younger sister better as compared to my mother. My mother is older now, so she does not understand some of these fashion things. So my son knows that I am aware of things and keep on indicating that having a young mother is good because she understands better than oldies. Now I realise that if I had given him away then, I would not know what to do now. You see, having another child is

heh!, you have to think twice or thrice now. And the way he is so intelligent, I would really regret if I had given him away.

Res: Does the father interact with him?

P1: Ja, they do not have a problem. Even with me he is fine, we talk about things and I taught him to respect me, calling me mum- not just interacting as if we were siblings. So he respects me and we have a good relationship together. Since he is the only one we spend a lot of time together, talking about his schoolwork. I also share with him issues about my work and he gives me some guidance. And I love him!, hey!, I love him.

Res: So now, what about issues of having a family or having other kids?

P1: You know what, I just tell myself that heh!, life these days is so complicated, there is no more life. Having a relationship is risky. You can agree with your partner that you will use condoms, but as time goes on you ignore it and you no longer negotiate, so it's risky for one's health.

Res: What would you say you have learnt out of that experience?

P1: Of having children at an early age?

Res: Yes.

P1: Sometimes when I look at this thing, it has got advantages and disadvantages. Because if you look at me, my child is a boy and I do not know what would have happened to me if I did not have him. And at my age now, if you do not have a child, people get surprised. They would be surprised that at my age with no child! And also, having a child at an early age it's a problem unless you accept it. And it's not simple, you just have a child and you are young and not aware of things. You see, what would you teach a child because there is nothing you know. So the child would just grow without any guidance. The two of you would just play, the mother and the child playing together. What do you teach the child. At least if you have some experience it

can be something. You see, a child always look at the parents. My child thinks that everything I do is right. So I must make sure that in front of him I do the right thing. How do I tell him that what he does is wrong if he sees me doing the same thing. He would ask me as to why do I do it. Like my child, when he does his school- work he would want me to help him. If I tell him to let his grandmother help him, he does not trust that she would be in a position to help him. He would always ask me to check if what my mother told him is right. He does not believe that she knows, he wants to get it from me. You see, if I say it is right, it is fine with him, not getting it from another person, No! you see, that's the problem. You see kids are very observant, so you have to be an example. They will ask you why so and so do this or that. When I grew up I liked going to church. My child too, it's just the same with him, he likes going to church.

Res: Ok, so how old is he?

P1: He is 14 years. He is a young man. Sometimes he comes and check me at work. And he always likes checking what he does with me. Sometimes he demands that I check his school work. He would say: this month you have not yet checked my books, indicating that parents should check their children's books. And I would say, oh!, I am tired, I was busy at work, you bring homework everyday, I am tired. And he would say: heh!, you are lazy, you are always tired, how was your performance at school? And I would say I have passed, I have passed – that's why I am working (laughter).

Res: How is the relationship with his father?

P1: He knows because when we separated he knew. But he appears to have lost interest in him. He would rather go and visit his grandparents, not the father because he would always hear him shouting at me. He did not like the way he used to treat me. So even if he goes there, he spends his time with his grandmother, not his father.

END

APPENDIX B - Interview with Fhedzisani

Res: I would want us to start by talking about things that you think might have contributed in you becoming pregnant (events, situation, etc that you may think of).

P2: With me, things just happened. I just started a relationship with this guy. In my mind I had told myself that I would not get myself into sex even if I get into love relationships. It just happened that I fell in love with this guy, I loved him very much. We spent something like six months without sex. It just happened that one day he got me into having sex with him. Because I loved him, I unwillingly slept with him. It just happened that I conceived at that time and it was my first time to do it.

Res: So what about at school, didn't you have problems?

P2: No. I did not have any problems at all. I went to school until I had a child. They did not realise that something had happened. People could not see anything. Even with myself, I did not know. But the guy knew what he did. After the experience of sleeping with him, I never wanted to sleep with him again because I experienced a lot of pain the day we slept together. But he kept on coming to me and I did not want to be with him anymore, thinking about the pain I felt. I think he knew what had happened.

Res: So you were not aware then that you had conceived?

P2: No, I was not aware, I knew nothing. I could not feel that something had happened. I used to play netball at school, but I began to feel unusually tired after playing. I would feel very tired but I did not know what was causing the problem (tiredness). And it was not long that I had started menstruating, so realising that I had stopped menstruating, I became happy that at least that menstruating experience had passed and it will not happen to me anymore, I did not know that it meant that I was pregnant. It used to be a nauseating experience for me, so being out of it made me happy.

Res: When did you know that you were pregnant?

P2: I only learned that I was pregnant when I was going to have a child. I did not know. I would just feel tired, but I never thought of anything, I was still a child. And the experience of going to have a child happened when I was at home preparing supper. The veranda at home has a lot of stairs, so I was about to climb the stairs and I was unable to lift my foot, and I started feeling the whole body aching. My younger sister was at home and she thought it was a joke when I told her that I was unable to go up the stairs. So I sat down, it was painful, my abdominal area felt very painful as if some pressure was exerted on it. My mother came and I told her that I was in pain, and I was beginning to see darkness in my eyes. She rushed me to the doctor, who after examining me indicated that I was about to have a child. I was surprised and I asked myself: "me going to have a child, how come? But I quickly remembered that my mother used to tell me that if you sleep with a man after becoming a woman, you will be pregnant and have a child. So I then remembered that that one day that I slept with that guy, I became pregnant. When the doctor was checking me, I did not like it having somebody checking my genitals, but I had no choice because I was in pain. He then indicated that I may have problems with normal delivery since it appears as if I was still a 'virgin'. I began to have problems with that. So my mother left me at the

surgery and promised to come and check on me the following day. But I delivered normally. My mother came to see me and found me having a child. My father was told that I had a child. Eh!, he did not want to hear that and did not want to come and see me.

Res: So, when your mother left, did she know that you were going to have a child?

P2: Yes, but she did not believe it. They did talk, but I did not hear what they discussed. So my mother had not told my father what the doctor said. She just told him that I was sick. I think it was because she did not believe the doctor or she was afraid to tell my father. He knew nothing. And as a result when he came, he indicated that he was not taking me with him, I should go to the father of the child. So my mother tried to persuade him, saying that it would be better if they take me home and get a solution when we would be at home rather than leaving me at the doctor's surgery. But my father insisted on leaving me behind. The doctor also tried to talk to my father but he did not want to go with me. So he then asked me if I knew where the father of the child stayed because he realised that my father was serious about leaving me behind. The doctor does provide transport to his patients, so he drove with me to the father of the child's place. When we got closer to the place, I showed him, and it was his relatives' place. So there was no problem because he knew them. So when we got in, he explained to the guy's mother what happened, and the lady indicated that there was no problem since his son had indicated to her that it appeared as if something had happened to me but he was not sure.

So I had to stay with them. But I had problems because I was still young and there was nothing I could really do. At home there was a domestic servant, so there was nothing I could really do. And even when the child cried, I would just sleep, not knowing what to do. Laughter (both). The child was born during December holidays and it was moving towards school opening days. So my father began to have problems because those people sent a messenger to inform my family that they accept the child and the mother. My father began to be worried because he wanted me to go back home so that I could go to school, and the father of the child refused to let me go home. And he indicated that if they want me to go to school, I would go staying with his family. And my father wanted to use force to control those people, saying I am his child, but he sent me away.

Res: So didn't you have problems with your new home?

P2: No, I did not have any problem there, not at all. The problem was with my father about the school issue. I did not have any problems, even at school, they could not believe me when I told them that I had a child, even my friends, they only believed me when they saw the child and when they realised that I was staying with the guy's family. By just telling them, they did not believe me.

Res: So when you went to school, what happened to the child?

P2: During my school years, I was not staying at home, I was at a boarding school. So I went to school from the in-laws' place. They looked after the child there. They did not agree to send me back home. And the woman there understood that I was still a child, she started from the beginning with me, teaching basics. She was not rough on me. She treated me like her own children.

So now that I have a child, I just have to accept it, my future is disturbed. I had not planned that way, I had plans for good things, but I just took it that it happened and there is nothing I can do about it. But I told myself that I would not have another child immediately. I understand that I am staying with this person (partner), but not another child if it is not both of us working. You see, my family background is different from his background. They were not that well and things were a little difficult. After having the child, there had to be changes in my lifestyle. There was a big difference, life was no longer the same. I understand that had I known that having that kind of a relationship would end up with a child, I would not have fallen in love. You see, I realised that you cannot just say you love the person without sleeping with him. it is not possible. According to me, if it were possible to go back, I would not fall in love with any person until I feel ready to start a family.

Res: How do you feel now about the experience?

P2: Now I do not have a problem. It has happened and my partner too was not expecting us to have a child then but we have accepted it. So we have to look forward and plan for our future, getting the two us go further with our studies. He struggled to get me to continue with my studies and to also get a tertiary training. And at the moment, it is not that we do not want to have another child, we would love to. He is working, but his concern is me, I do not have a stable job yet, so he would want both of us to have reliable jobs and we can then plan other children. He realises that it needs both parents to be working to have a decent family.

Res: How does he relate to you?

P2: He does not have a problem. Maybe it is because he met me when I was young, and he would treat me like a child. Even now he still treat me like a child. He does not believe that I am a grown up person. (laughter)

Res: So, how is the relationship?

P2: There is no problem, the relationship is fine. But I would not have stayed with him if he was not patient with me. You see the problem I had at the beginning when I started staying with him was sex. I did not want us to have sex, thinking about the pain I had the first day. I used to think that a woman would always feel that pain when having sex. I think if it was just some impatient person, he would have left me. But he did not, maybe it was because of love. But the whole experience of having a child early upset me, but at least I did not loose even a single year out of school, maybe that also helped in comforting me. But my father was really upset by this whole thing. And in my whole family, I am the only one who got married in this manner, but I am better settled. All my sisters had weddings for their marriages, but they keep on going back home with marital problems. And I have never been home with problems since I started staying with my in-laws. I have never gone home because of problems, not even a single day. When I had a problem, sometimes there are problems in a marriage, I would just sit down and cry, who would I tell? I would not go home, who would I tell, my mother is also very strict. During that time she also turned her back on me and be like her husband. So when I had problems I would just cry. And when my partner realised that I was unhappy, he would feel bad and stop doing what would be causing the problem. He knows that there is no one I can turn to and I would not want to be a problem to him. I cannot just start telling him what the problem is, but when he realises that there is something wrong he would ask

me and I would then tell him what my problem is. And he would then see how to sort it out. But my sisters, they cannot sort out their own problems with their spouses, they went to school and got married the 'right' way but problems are always with them. It is difficult for them, they keep on going back and coming home. But with me, I have never been home carrying my belongings.

Res: And it has been quite some time heh!

P2: Yes, it has been sometime, since 1995. it's quite sometime.

Res: Ok!

P2: I was young then but now I am fine.

Res: How old were you?

P2: I was 18 years then, it is history now, there is no more any problem with me. And my father is proud of me now. He always refers to me when my sisters go back home with problems. He would tell them that – your younger sister is better, she does not come home, not even a single day. Now it is like I taught him a lesson that the one who left in the dark does not come back, but those who left during the day, keep on coming back.

Res: Ok.

P2: And even now that my father has accepted me and asked for forgiveness, I do not think I can ever go to him with any problem. The problem that I had at first turned out not to be a problem. I would think that if I sleep with a man, I would fall pregnant again. So I would always think that if I sleep with my partner, I would be pregnant again.

Res: When you talk about this thing, how do you feel?

P2: I have shared this experience with a lot of people, explaining to them what happened and some would guide me.

Res: Do you feel hurt when you talk about it?

P2: No, not now. At first I used to feel hurt, but now I no longer get hurt. I used to fell very hurt. I would cry, but now I no longer have problems. I just realised that my partner loves me, that's why we are still together. I think he was also brought more closer to me because of the way that my father treated me. He knew that I had no one to turn to, I had him only. So the two of us had to stand by each other.

Res: You spoke about the medical practitioner accompanying you to your in-laws after your parents deserted you, roles changed, he became a go between.

P2: Ja! He had to take me there, there was no any other way out. He was feeling for me. The way my father was, the doctor just had to help me. One would even think that it seems as if he could feel that the baby was the blood of his people. It just happened. I was lucky. I think my child was lucky. The doctor was not busy at that time so he could take us there. We were lucky.

Res: What is his name?

P2: Wanga (meaning- he is mine).

Res: Who named him?

P2: His father. There were other names suggested by other people, but he indicated that he would want him to be called that, the child is his own.

END.

APPENDIX C - Interview with Mulatedzi

Res: I would want us to start by talking about situations or events that you think have contributed to you falling pregnant.

P3: Friends influence – when we were at school being free or on weekends when we were not at school, we would talk about boys. So I ended up being influenced. And unfortunately for me, my mother was very strict. She did not tell me anything about – or if you have sex with boys you will fall pregnant or even to use contraceptives or something. So I did not know anything about that.

Res: So you only had information from friends?

P3: Yes!, influence from friends – that heh, being in love is good.

Res: When you discovered that you were pregnant, was it immediately or after sometime?

P3: Ja!, the first month, but I was on denial, I told myself that no!, I was not pregnant. I kept on telling myself that I would menstruate the following month because I knew my dates, even though I could see that there were some changes. Like in the mornings I would be sick. By then it was during exam time, so I finished writing exams and went to Johannesburg to visit my aunt (father's sister). That was because I was afraid that people would realise how I was.

Res: So at home they were not aware yet?

P3: Yes, they were not aware, they became aware immediately when I came back in January. I had just passed standard ten (10) and was supposed to go and look for admission space. That was the time that they realised that there was something wrong because I had gained weight.

Res: Oh!, ok, so when they realised, how did they react?

P3: eh—

Res: were there any discord or anything may be?

P3: Like my mother, she saw me in the morning. We were at my uncle's place (he is our neighbour), I had a towel wrapped around my waist. So she could see that there was something wrong, then she left and went home to sleep. But it was still in the morning just coming from bed, and she went back into the blankets. So when I got back – around 1 o'clock, she called me to her bedroom and asked me. So I did not dispute it because I was already six to seven. Eh!, six.

Res: Ok.

P3; So I told her the truth that I was pregnant. She started as if she wanted to shout at me but she ended up accepting. Like most kids in the community, most teenagers were pregnant. So she just said there was no problem, "in fact so and so is pregnant, your cousin is pregnant---" so she did not become somehow.

Res: What about other people at home except the mother?

P3: Ja, like my aunt (mom's younger sister) did not believe, mom's elder sister could not take it. Like my younger sisters, it affected them.

Res: Did you stay for some time without going back to study?

P3: No, my mother was supportive, she said to me that I would not stay because of a child, I have to go to school. So, fortunate enough at Venda (university) they had replied saying I should come. So I went to school and

she indicated that when the baby is born, I should bring it home she would look after the baby - She did not have problem.

Res: So what about prenatal visits?

P3: You know!, I did not go for any check ups. I was afraid of people. But when I got to the university my friends insisted that I should go for check up. For sure I was seven when I went. I did not want to go to the clinic at home because I did not want people to know. The other thing is that I was in Johannesburg for two months so people at home were not aware, so I did not want them to see me.

Res: Ok, when you had started going for prenatal care, how were the health professionals?

P3: Oh, the Sisters were so rude, like when they see that your card shows that you were still young. They were so rude. They would tell you "do like this girl!, hey, do like this".

Res: So what about the partner, what happened when he learned that you were pregnant?

P3: You see, at home they asked me and I told them who it was. His mother is my mother's friend and they are from a rich family. So my mother was afraid that maybe I did it purposefully because I know they are rich. But they told them and it just ended in the air.

Res: So the two of you?

P3: It just ended because my mother was afraid that people would say that she sent me to be pregnant, that's why she sent me to school, I would bring the child back so that we can get the monies from the partner's family, all those things. But it was hurting because it meant that my child and her father would not have any contact because of my mother's fears of what people might say.

Res: So now?

P3: No!, he is just my friend!

Res: What about the child, does she know about her father? I mean- does she know who her father is?

P3: No, she does not know.

Res: How do you handle it, or she has not yet reached a stage that she can ask?

P3: No, she has not asked yet, because, when we grew up at home, there was no father. She does not know of a father figure at home. So she does not have a problem with that.

Res: Ok!

P3: But maybe when she grows she would ask, but so far--- there is nothing. She knows that we grew without a father, he passed away when we were still young. She knows that there is no father at home. She does not have a problem.

Res: So it means your mother took care of the child, and you went to study, how did your friends take it? Realising that you had a child and you had gone to school.

P3: My friends just thought that maybe the way my mother was doing would make me to be pregnant again.

Res: Ok!

P3: Ja, because she took the child and has given me another freedom.

Res: How did you feel then.

P3: When she took the child?

Res: No, the experience. How did you feel?

P3: Hey!, I do not know how to explain it. I felt frustrated. I thought of doing abortion. I would ask friends and they would tell me to drink this and that, try this and this. So when I was in Johannesburg, I would try to drink but realising that they do not work. So it was frustrating.

Res; So now, how do you feel? I understand some years has passed.

P3: Oh, now I am proud of myself and my child, she has grown and she is wise. So at the moment I am ok.

Res: Oh, is a girl

P3: Yes, she is a girl

Res: How old is she?

P3: She is twelf.

Res; So what future plans are there? Now you have a child. So what about relationships – life has to go on. Another child or settling down and have a family? How do you think about such things?

P3: Like with me, my mother says if I get married or I go somewhere, I will not take my child with me. She says she is her last born. So I do not think that is going to work because I will also need her.

Laughter (both researcher and participant)

P3 continues: So about having other kids I do not know. I have not yet thought about it. I am not prepared yet. I want to see her at 15 years at least. You see, there will be a gap because I do not want others to suffer like her.

Res: For the child, things like clothes?

P3: Ja, you see my mother was the one looking after her. Like things like preschool – I was just surprised to hear that the child was attending preschool. So my mother would just decide and I would not even know who was paying for her. They just buy clothes for her like my younger sisters, when they are at universities, they would just bring her clothes when they come back so I do not want a child of the whole family. With other kids to come, I want the child to be mine! .so they would just buy, not that it should be a must because the child does not have clothes, she does not have school uniform, she does not have school fees. Like even now, you may find that I do not have money, some times my sisters have to help out.

Res: Ok, other things generally that you might think of about that experience for other people to learn or that which you have learnt.

P3: For other people to learn, you see with me my mother was so supportive so I did not go under eh--- ok, with me, I was stressed but they did not reject me. They looked after me and would give me enough pocket money at school, but after having the child, she reduced it. You see! But she looked after me.

Res: Any other things that you may want to talk about in relation to teenage pregnancy and motherhood?

P3: I think parents should tell their kids the truth, that if you do this, this would happen. Like preventing, my mother told me that she would not have told me that I should go and start using contraceptives, what about if in future I fail to bear children, I would blame her. But I do not think that is the reason. If you do not have a child, you do not have, it is not that you were preventing or what. So I just think parents should tell their kids, when they become 13 or so or when they start menstruating . they should tell them that if you sleep with a

man, you will fall pregnant, so the best thing, "you must prevent". They should tell them the truth.

Res: So, when you fell pregnant, was it the issue that you had a relationship that was going on or it was a once –of thing?

P3: No, with me it was happening often and I would say heh! Today I survived (laughter). No it was not one day. I used to do it and I would say today I survived at least. You see, but because they did not tell that you must do this, prevent – if they had told me that I should prevent I would have known that I should protect myself. But they tell me that if you prevent you would not have a child and you would blame us. They did not know!

Res: Is it maybe because we do not know much?

P3: Ja, if you use contraceptives, they do not make you infertile, no!

Res: Ja, it's knowledge that is unavailable. Maybe with time people should come out.

P3: Ja, people should know that if you are not fertile, you are not fertile. I think maybe sometime back, the abortions they used to do would cause one to be infertile because they were not done procedurally. But now, you can do it and the following months fall pregnant. if you go to the clinic and they do it well or you go to the doctor.

Res: Do you have something that you may want to ask me?

P3: No , nothing. Unless if you want to tell me something.

Res: No, not really.

P3: No. I am fine.

END.

APPENDIX D - Interview with Muofhe

Res: I would want us to talk about your experience. How has your experience of being a teenage mother been?

P4: I did not have knowledge of what would happen. My main concern was what will happen. It just meant that I would no longer go back to school that year. My mother made it clear that I would not go back to school. So, I started contacting friends informing them that I was pregnant and that I will not be at school that year. I was just home the whole year. I wished time could move faster.

Res: So, how has life been?

P4: Responsibilities changed. After child birth, I could not demand things. It's a mistake, so no more favours. Nobody will tell, but you have to sacrifice. My parents were divorced and officially I was supposed to stay with my mother. But after the realisation of pregnancy, I moved to my father.

Res: Why your father?

P4: My father was positive. He used to say: 'it is just a setback, you can still do it'. That was the time that I felt that any job could do for me.

Res: You mentioned that responsibilities changed, can we talk more about that?

P4: Ja, you see, after school you have to rush home. You basically manage between school-work and child minding. No sports on weekends. I had to forget about athletics. I was a good athlete. You trade things. Everywhere you go, you go with a child. At one stage my child was sick. I had to arrange with my father that he takes

my child to the doctor after school and I will meet him at the doctor's surgery. When we were still waiting for our turn to see the doctor, a woman we knew came in and asked my father whose child it is he was holding?

He told her that the child was mine. She asked me the child's name, and I said Mashudu (meaning lucky). She then said: Ni songo ri lwalela rine, ndi mashudu a mini hu mu hwalo (meaning- do not be mad, what luck is it when it is a burden).

From there I made it a case that my child is not a problem / burden to anybody. You get names, responsibilities. You cannot explain, they are not interested. They have already created a child who cannot listen, but you never had anybody to listen to.

Res: Do you think your parents' divorce contributed to your pregnancy?

P4: No. Maybe, maybe my parents would have prepared me. I never really wanted to blame anybody, but myself. Basically, is about changing responsibilities, no more school trips. Social life changes a great, you loose out on mixing out with girls of your own age because things that they do, you cannot afford to do. You just do not have time.

Res: How are you doing now?

P4: Fairly happy. There might have been certain choices – If I did not have a child, I would have travelled all of Africa and not here, but outside (outside the African continent). The relationship with my children is healthy, I tell them that we should decide together. There is no communication between me and their father, I do what I think is good for them. People do come with advices, saying that I should get him to maintain the kids, but I do what I think is right. I allow

them to see him. And I always go to my father for advices, and my uncle and his wife support me.

Res: What about dating?

P4: I do date, but if I feel uncomfortable, I let go. I make my expectations and policies clear. Some would expect me to be dependent, for me it is different! I have to mind my children – assist with homework, attend parent meetings, be at home. I encourage my children to read - I buy books to guide them. I have been in support group for women – need confidence, help me in being open-minded.

I do counselling, even men. People call me for short counselling. I might not be an ideal person- because I stay in a flat, a single parent, and I walk around with my kids. People would say: why don't you leave your children at home? I want my children to know me, I want to build trust with them. My first-born is 15, I decided I should talk to her. If somebody spoke to me then, maybe I would have done things differently. I cannot say everything is 100%, but I could not choose to be anywhere.

My boss was not prepared to work with me at my previous job, because I was a woman and looking after my kids as a single parent. I always had to do a lot more than expected. People will call you names, things! If you try to be nice, they think you want to take their men. So, you have to prove that you are not like that. You set limits.

Res: How do you see the future?

P4: Very gloomy. I wish I could get money and have more children. If I could be rich I would have more children. But at the moment it will be risky – financially and healthwise.

If I marry, it will have to be for love, other things will follow. I basically do everything for my children and myself. The other thing is the fear that I have – 'what if it does not work', so this fear holds me back. I do not want to be failed by anyone, I would rather fail myself. One guy told me that the way I am, pushes people away. I do have wishes and dreams, but I do not know! Academically, I want to get a PHD.

END.

APPENDIX E - Interview with Ndifelani

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations or events that you think might have contributed to you falling pregnant. What in your situation can you say has contributed?

P5: I would say friends! Friends influenced me. My mother had told me that if I sleep with a man, I would fall pregnant. But you see, that was all she told me, she did not explain to me what exactly would happen. So just my first contact with a guy, I conceived. And I kept on telling myself that it couldn't be, just once!

Res: When was it realised?

P5: Just during the first month. I missed my periods and I was doing standard nine by the time, and we had already covered the section in biology that explains human reproduction. So I kept on asking myself if I were really pregnant, and when I realised that no periods were coming, I then knew that I was pregnant. I began to realise some physical changes, gaining weight and my breasts growing big. I was totally convinced that I was pregnant. People began to ask me if I were pregnant and I would always say I did not know.

Res: What happened at school?

P5: I was no longer interested in anything. I was depressed, I was always quite. When I thought about going to be a mother, it was painful. I started to lose concentration at school. My performance dropped and my teachers were concerned. One of my teachers even asked me if I had problems or if I had a boyfriend, but I would always say no! It was painful. A cousin of mine knew about my situation and she encouraged me to study hard so that I could pass at the end of the year, which I did, but the school failed me. I had passed all the subjects except mathematics, but they did not promote me to standard 10. My brother went to the school to get an understanding on why I failed, they did not explain, they just told him that I failed. And I still think that they did not want to promote me because they had realised that there was something wrong with my behaviour. Before I fell pregnant, I was among the best students in my standard. So the pregnancy made me to go down a bit, but my performance did not warrant a fail at exams, they just failed me.

Res: What about at home, what happened?

P5: My father chased me away. I had to stay with my aunt. After sometime she suggested that I go to the in-laws. I went there, the child was born when I was staying with the in-laws. When the child was five months, I went home only to find that my father was not ready to accept the child. He indicated that the child should go back to her father, because she was not his legal granddaughter he could not stay with her. So the child was taken away from me when she was five months, and I only saw her when she was eight years. I did not know her; she too did not know me. She only knew my name and that the name belongs to the person who is suppose to be her mother.

Res: Why after eight years?

P5: I could not go where she was staying when I was not working, I did not want to go and see her without giving her anything. But it was hard. When I got there her grandmother was furious, she was very angry with me. But she allowed me to see the child, and I began to visit them frequently since I had secured some temporary job. In fact my aunt got me a temporary teaching

post, so I could afford to buy my child what she needed. At some point I bought her some clothes and fruits. The grandmother threw away the fruits but she gave her the clothes. The child started to know me. I kept on sending her some daily allowance and lunch box through my aunt's neighbour who was teaching at my child school. I sent her these things because it was only the grandmother who was working and her father was not working. And she could not afford some of the things that were necessary for the child. The neighbour reported that the child was not concentrating at school, it seemed as if she was having some problems. I thought of sending her for psychological help but I did not.

Res: Was she still staying with the grandmother?

P5: Yes, she was still there, but the grandmother indicated that if I wanted the child, I could have her but only if my family apologise to them for throwing the baby like they did. And my father was not prepared to do that, he instead indicated that they are the ones who are suppose to apologise to him. So my brother went to my in-laws and negotiated until they released the child on condition that she would visit them every school holiday. But then my child was not close to me, she would be freer with my mother as compared to me, and she requested to be in a private school. So my brother offered to stay with her.

Res: Ok!

P5: But she is still not close to me, she does not even request anything from me. She is not free when she is with me. It is really hard to have a child when you are young. It is hurting. It is a bad experience. You are pregnant, you are young, you give birth away from home, your child is taken away from you and, it is hard.

Res: What about during pregnancy, did you attend prenatal classes?

P5: Yes I did, and the nurses were very good to me. They sympathised with me. But at the hospital when I was due to deliver, the nurse in charge was very rude. One lady who was also in labour gave birth just by herself, because she was told that she knew nothing about giving birth and that she was not ready yet to deliver, and the child was just born in front of us. I was so afraid and that made me to be afraid of the nurse and I could not even tell her that I felt like giving birth. The ward was overcrowded and the lady I was sharing the bed with had to tell the nurse that I was in pain. I was just quite and in pain. So, I was examined and taken to labour room. I could not talk for myself because I always thought about my age; I was 16years when I delivered. I always thought that people would say I was young and why did I become pregnant- what were you doing? That is what I always thought of, and I would be quite most of the times.

Res: What happened to the relationship with your partner?

P5: I did not want to be in love then, it just happened and thereafter I began to hate him because I felt that he was the one who caused me the problems. He gave me the child that I was not proud of. But he was very nice to both the child and me. And he was very close to the child because he stayed with her, and he was looking after her, doing everything for her, even washing her nappies. It is only that I felt bored and hated him, so, the relationship did not go anywhere. He got married to another woman but they separated because the woman could not accept my daughter. She wanted her to go, so the grandmother told her that the child was not leaving, if she is not interested,

she better leave because even when she got married, she knew about the child.

That was before my brother requested the child.

Res: Are you now involved with someone else?

P5: It is a problem for me now, I would want to be involved, but when I think of my daughter who is not close to me, I just cannot commit myself. I would want to do what other people of my age do, get married. But when I think of having kids, I think about the one I have now. It looks like there is no any bond between the two of us. So I am afraid that if I have other kids and we are close, she may feel that I do not love her. That is why I deserted her and only came to see her when she was eight years. So this thought keeps me out of any meaningful relationship. I do not even want her to see my boyfriend. I am afraid that what if we break the relationship, and the following day she see me with somebody else, she may think of me as a slut, not a good example to follow. So I make sure that she does not see my boy friend.

Res: Ok!

P5: You see, the problem is the thought that keeps on pestering me, the bonding problem with my daughter. I did have a stable relationship at some point. The guy was so kind and caring, but I had to terminate the relationship. The thought of having other kids tormented me. I would be happy, but the moment he mentions kids, I would change and be sad. Even now if I think of the relationship with my daughter, I get sad. If that thought crosses my mind, I become sad. Even at the time when I went back to school. I used to play netball for under-19 years girls. It was hard to say I was a mother, but just thinking about it would make me sad. This experience also hurt my mother. When my father realised that I was pregnant, he beat both my mother and me. I felt bad about it because my mother had done nothing wrong. You see, my father is an instructor, so the way he relates with us is not good. My mother is just holding to the marriage for our sake, the kids.

I love my father but when I think of the way he treated me, I cannot face him. Sometimes feel like just strangling him, I feel angry with him. I know I was wrong, but he should not have chased me like he did. He should have forgiven me. Maybe he felt that I was an embarrassment to the family. The way he treated me made me to be sick for the whole nine months. I even wished I could get a miscarriage.

Res: So what have you learnt out of this experience?

P5: It is hard without support.

Res: How old is your child?

P5: Thirteen years

END.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLICATION

This section comprises of the actual interview transcript and the meanings that the researcher deduces from the participants statements

Interview with Masindi

By the time of the interview, Masindi was working as a receptionist at the consulting rooms of a specialist medical practitioner.

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations / events that in your view might have contributed to you falling pregnant

P1: Not being open of parents and friends count.

Res: So how did you deal with the situation?

P1: You would not get me with the child, never!

Res: What about at school? Didn't they realise that you were pregnant?

P1; No, you see, I was just young and thin. The pregnancy was not visible. All was just play – we just met with this guy just once, and I conceived, and I did not know that I had conceived. One Friday my sister came home, and that night I just felt that I was having some stomach cramps. So they took me to the hospital, and it was discovered that I was about to give birth. So I went back home on Sunday and on Monday I went to school. So when they said I was a woman, I would cry, and when the baby cried I would also cry. When I touched him, I would just cry, I was afraid of touching him. My mother had to arrange with one of our relatives (granny) staying at our neighbourhood to come and check on us (me and the baby) during the day. The child would always be crying and the old lady realised that I was not breastfeeding him, I would just give him water. So she told me to breastfeed saying that the child was crying because of hunger.

She mentions that not being open of parents and friends contributed to her pregnancy (lack of knowledge)

She does not take care of the baby (irresponsible)

She talks of her experience in such a way that one realise that she was not ready. She could not even feel any physical change to her body until she was due to give birth.

This also shows that she is emotionally not ready to be a mother (immaturity).

She does not want to accept the responsibility of being a mother. Her behaviour too, when her father came back shows that she is still a child.

Res: What about at school after you had delivered, didn't they learn about what happened?

P1: No, nothing really showed that I had a child. I did not even want people to say that I had a child. I remember the time my father came back home. I heard that he was back when I was in the house, and the child was crying, I took a towel and wrapped him. I think I was doing that so that my father would not know that there was a child in the house – but that was childish because he knew when he came . I thought that by covering him he would not cry and my father would not hear him cry and would then not know that I had a child. And I told myself that if he wants to beat me, I would take the child and run away.

Res: What about the father of the child, was he aware?

P1: It looks like his friends alerted him. He promised me that he would support and look after me. But I told myself that I should continue going to school. Not going to school! No!, I would not know what would happen to me if I stopped going to school. So I continued with my studies.

Res: So, at the hospital, how was the staff?

P1: Oh!, I remember!, the doctor who was in charge told me that I was going to die. I was the youngest. And I just said I was having a headache, just imagine!, headache! When they came to fetch me, I also told my uncle that I was having a headache. They also came with my aunt and she so much wanted the child, and I agreed that she should take him. I think it was because I did not feel that he was part of me. I just said: you can take him. But my mother did not agree. And to tell the truth, I used to forget him, forgetting him totally. I would go out and leave him. So my aunt used to look after him. I was just free like before. I

This childish acts and thoughts indicate that she is not ready to be responsible.

The partner is reported to be willing to take responsibility.

She stresses her need to continue schooling.

This continues to show unreadiness on her part, not telling the truth about her condition.

She is prepared to give the baby away. This shows that she is not ready, she even goes to play and forget him. There is no connection between the two. She is emotionally not ready.

would go and play in the streets with my friends and they would be teasing me saying that I was a mother, but it never really made me feel that I was one. I had a lot of support, my aunt was always there, and my mother would look after him during weekends. My father was angry with me, but when he went back to work, he sent a lot of clothes for the child. He did not apologise for his anger, but I took it that what he did for the child was his way of showing support. So, support is important, I was just free like before. My mother treated him like his last-born child. He is old now, just like me. One can say we are contemporaries.

Res: Now how do you feel about having had a child at an early age?

P1: This thing needs support, without support he!, like with me, my aunt wanted the child and I was going to give her free of charge. There was nothing that connected me with the child, serious! I would just give her. You see, she told me that she would buy him clothes and everything. So for me, that was fine. I did not think of anything. I never thought that a child is something or can be something in future, those are the things that I did not think of. And for sure I would blame myself if I had given her the child, because now!, (laughter) serious! You see with him now, he keeps on saying Heh!, to have a young mother is nice, she understands things easier. He realises that I understand him and my younger sister better as compared to my mother. My mother is older now, so she does not understand some of these fashion things. So my son knows that I am aware of things and keep on indicating that having a young mother is good because she understands better than oldies. Now I realise that if I had given him away then, I would not know what to do now. You see, having another child is

She talks about support as being important throughout the experience. She admits that she was not really connected to the child, and if it was not for the support she received, she would have given the child away. It shows that she was not ready then.

She now feels connected to the child, and begins to appreciate him.

The relationship with the child appears to be good and she feels good about it and she is taking responsibility.

heh!, you have to think twice or thrice now. And the way he is so intelligent, I would really regret if I had given him away.

Res: Does the father interact with him?

P1: Ja, they do not have a problem.

Even with me he is fine, we talk about things and I taught him to respect me, calling me mum- not just interacting as if we were siblings. So he respects me and we have a good relationship together. Since he is the only one we spend a lot of time together, talking about his schoolwork. I also share with him issues about my work and he gives me some guidance. And I love him!, hey!, I love him.

Res: So now, what about issues of having a family or having other kids?

P1: You know what, I just tell myself that heh!, life these days is so complicated, there is no more life.

Having a relationship is risky. You can agree with your partner that you condomise, but as time goes on you ignore it and you no longer negotiate, so it's risky for one's health.

Res: What would you say you have learnt out of that experience?

P1: Of having children at an early age?

Res: Yes.

P1: Sometimes when I look at this thing, it has got advantages and disadvantages. Because if you look at me, my child is a boy and I do not know what would have happened to me if I did not have him. And at my age now, if you do not have a child, people get surprised. They would be surprised that at my age with no child! And also, having a child at an early age it's a problem unless you accept it. And it's not simple, you just have a child and you are young and not aware of things. You see, what would you teach a child because there is nothing you know. So the child would just grow without any guidance. The two of you would just play, the mother and the child playing together.

She has taken the responsibility of being a parent, looking after the child and checking on his school-work.

She does not appear to be enthusiastic about being involved in serious love relationships.

Even though it was not her plan to have a child at an early age, it appears as if the community accepts that one should at least be having a child at her age (31years at the moment). She also indicates that it needs one to accept the responsibilities that go with parenting.

She also gives an indication that having a child at an early age is problematic since one is still young and not aware of things. The child will not receive proper guidance from the mother since the mother will still be a child herself. And this can be destructive of the child's development and future since the child would always believe that his parents do the right things, and do as they do or would want to get approval from them.

What do you teach the child. At least if you have some experience it can be something. You see, a child always look at the parents. My child thinks that everything I do is right. So I must make sure that in front of him I do the right thing. How do I tell him that what he does is wrong if he sees me doing the same thing. He would ask me as to why do I do it. Like my child, when he does his school- work he would want me to help him. If I tell him to let his grandmother help him, he does not trust that she would be in a position to help him. He would always ask me to check if what my mother told him is right. He does not believe that she knows, he wants to get it from me. You see, if I say it is right, it is fine with him, not getting it from another person, No! you see, that's the problem. You see kids are very observant, so you have to be an example. They will ask you why so and so do this or that. When I grew up I liked going to church. My child too, it's just the same with him, he likes going to church.

Res: Ok, so how old is he?

P1: He is 14 years. He is a young man. He sometimes come and check on me at work. And he always likes checking what he does with me. Sometimes he demands that I check his school work. He would say: this month you have not yet checked my books, indicating that parents should check their children's books. And I would say, oh!, I am tired, I was busy at work, you bring homework everyday, I am tired. And he would say: heh!, you are lazy, you are always tired, how was your performance at school? And I would say I have passed, I have passed – that's why I am working (laughter).

Res: So how is the relationship with his father?

P1: He knows because when we separated he knew. But he appears to have lost interest in him. He would

She goes on to elaborate on the importance of being an example to one's kids, because kids would always observe what parents do and would want to be like their parents.

Mother-child relationship is built and the two of them interact smoothly. The child demands the attention and responsibility from the mother.

The separation with her partner has also impacted on the relationship between her child and his father. The child is reported to be having a good relationship with the grandmother, but not the father.

rather go and visit his grandparents,
not the father because he would always
hear him shouting at me, so he did not
like the way he used to treat me. So
even if he goes there, he spends his
time with his grandmother, not the
father.

END

Interview with Fhedzisani

At the time of the interview, Fhedzisani was working as an ambulance attendant at a private ambulance company. She was staying with her partner and the child.

Res: I would want us to start by talking about things that you think might have contributed in you becoming pregnant (events, situation, etc that you may think of).

P2: With me, things just happened. I just started a relationship with this guy. In my mind I had told myself that I would not get myself into sex even if I get into love relationships. It just happened that I fell in love with this guy, I loved him very much. We spent something like six months without sex. It just happened that one day he got me into having sex with him. Because I loved him, I unwillingly slept with him. It just happened that I conceived at that time and it was my first time to do it.

Res: So what about at school, didn't you have problems?

P2: No. I did not have any problems at all. I went to school until I had a child. They did not realise that something had happened. People could not see anything. Even with myself, I did not know. But the guy knew what he did. After the experience of sleeping with him, I never wanted to sleep with him again because I experienced a lot of pain the day we slept together. But he kept on coming to me and I did not want to be with him anymore, thinking about the pain I felt. I think he knew what had happened.

Res: So you were not aware then that you had conceived?

P2: No, I was not aware, I knew nothing. I could not feel that something had happened. I used to play netball at school, but I began to feel unusually tired after playing. I would feel very

She appears to have some information about sex relations but she is unable to stick to her idea of not engaging in sex.

She continues with her usual engagements without being aware that she conceived, and seem to like the idea of not menstruating any more.

tired but I did not know what was causing the problem (tiredness). And it was not long that I had started menstruating, so realising that I had stopped menstruating, I became happy that at least that experience had passed and it will not happen to me anymore, I did not know that it meant that I was pregnant. It used to be a nauseating experience for me , so being out of it made me happy.

Res: So when did you know that you were pregnant?

P2: I only learned that I was pregnant when I was going to have a child. I did not know. I would just feel tired, but I never thought of anything, I was still a child. And the experience of going to have a child happened when I was at home preparing supper. The veranda at home has a lot of stairs, so I was about to climb the stairs and I was unable to lift my foot, and I started feeling the whole body aching. My younger sister was at home and she thought it was a joke when I told her that I was unable to go up the stairs. So I sat down, it was painful, my abdominal area felt very painful as if some pressure was exerted on it. My mother came and I told her that I was in pain, and I was beginning to see darkness in my eyes. She rushed me to the doctor, who after examining me indicated that I was about to have a child. I was surprised and I asked myself: "me going to have a child, how come? But I quickly remembered that my mother used to tell me that if you sleep with a man after becoming a woman, you will be pregnant and have a child. So I then remembered that that one day that I slept with that guy, I became pregnant. When the doctor was checking me, I did not like it having somebody checking my genitals, but I had no choice because I was in pain. He then indicated that I may have problems with normal delivery since it appears as if I was still a virgin. I began to have

She only gets aware that she was pregnant when she was due to deliver. She is surprised when she receives the information but she quickly remembers that her mother used to tell, but she did not have all the information.

Whilst she was still in disbelief, she quickly remembered that her mother used to tell her that if she sleeps with a man she will fall pregnant. But it seems as if she did not have all the information because she was happy when she realised that she had stopped menstruating. She was not bothered about her missing periods.

problems with that. So my mother left me at the surgery and promised to come and check on me the following day. But I delivered normally. My mother came to see me and found me having a child. My father was told that I had a child. Eh!, he did not want to hear that and did not want to come and see me.

Res: So, when your mother left, did she know that you were going to have a child?

P2: Yes, but she did not believe it. They did talk, but I did not hear what they discussed. So my mother had not told my father what the doctor said. She just told him that I was sick. I think it was because she did not believe the doctor or she was afraid to tell my father. He knew nothing. And as a result when he came, he indicated that he was not taking me with him, I should go to the father of the child. So my mother tried to persuade him, saying that it would be better if they take me home and get a solution when we would be at home rather than leaving me at the doctor's surgery. But my father insisted on leaving me behind. The doctor also tried to talk to my father but he did not want to go with me. So he then asked me if I knew where the father of the child stayed because he realised that my father was serious about leaving me behind. The doctor does provide transport to his patients, so he drove with me to the father of the child's place. When we got closer to the place, I showed him, and it was his relatives' place. So there was no problem because he knew them. So when we got in, he explained to the guy's mother what happened, and the lady indicated that there was no problem since his son had indicated to her that it appeared as if something had happened to me but he was not sure. So I had to stay with them. But I had problems because I was still young and

When her father learns about her situation, he does not want to take her to his house. Both her parents leave her at the doctor's surgery to go to the father of her child. So we see her motherhood bringing problems to her relationship with her parents, especially the father.

The doctor is reported to offer transport service to his patients, but in P2's case, he also has to play a role of a messenger, accompanying the bride to her in-laws.

This gives an indication that she was not ready then to take care of the child

there was nothing I could really do. At home there was a domestic servant, so there was nothing I could really do. And even when the child cried, I would just sleep, not knowing what to do. Laughter (both). The child was born during December holidays and it was moving towards school opening days. So my father began to have problems because those people sent a messenger to inform my family that they accept the child and the mother. My father began to be worried because he wanted me to go back home so that I could go to school, and the father of the child refused to let me go home. And he indicated that if they want me to go to school, I would go staying with his family. And my father wanted to use force to control those people, saying I am his child, but he sent me away.

Res: So didn't you have problems with your new home?

P2: No, I did not have any problem there, not at all. The problem was with my father about the school issue. I did not have any problems, even at school, they could not believe me when I told them that I had a child, even my friends, they only believed me when they saw the child and when they realised that I was staying with the guy's family. By just telling them, they did not believe me.

Res: So when you went to school, what happened to the child?

P2: During my school years, I was not staying at home, I was at a boarding school. So I went to school from the in-laws' place. They looked after the child there. They did not agree to send me back home. And the woman there understood that I was still a child, she started from the beginning with me, teaching basics. She was not rough on me. She treated me like her own children.

Even though the father sent her to her in-laws, he still wants to act like a father to her. He wants to be responsible for her education. This results in some kind of discord between the two families as her in-laws felt responsible.

She is accepted by her in-laws and she does not experience any problems

She accepts the responsibility to be a mother, but she also expresses some regrets.

So now that I have a child, I just have to accept it, my future is disturbed. I had not planned that way, I had plans for good things, but I just took it that it happened and there is nothing I can do about it. But I told myself that I would not have another child immediately. I understand that I am staying with this person (partner), but not another child if it is not both of us working. You see, my family background is different from his background. They were not that well and things were a little difficult. After having the child, there had to be changes in my lifestyle. There was a big difference, life was no longer the same. I understand that had I known that having that kind of a relationship would end up with a child, I would not have fallen in love. You see, I realised that you cannot just say you love the person without sleeping with him. it is not possible. According to me, if it was possible to go back, I would not fall in love with any person until I feel ready to start a family.

Res: How do you feel now about the experience?

P2: Now I do not have a problem. It has happened and my partner too was not expecting us to have a child then but we have accepted it. So we have to look forward and plan for our future, getting the two us go further with our studies. And he struggled to get me to continue with my studies. And also go through tertiary training. And at the moment, it is not that we do not want to have another child, we would love to. He is working, but his concern is me, I do not have a stable job yet, so he would want both of us to have reliable jobs and we can then plan other children. He realises that it needs both parents to be working to have a decent family.

Res: How does he relate to you?

P2: He does not have a problem.

Maybe it is because he met me when I

She has to adapt to her partner's family background and accept it as her's. There are differences between the two families in terms of their status.

This gives an implication that she did not have information about contraceptives.

Both her partner and herself are determined to work together for a better family.

was young, and he would treat me like a child. Even now he still treat me like a child. He does not believe that I am a grown up person. (laughter)

Res: So, how is the relationship?

P2: There is no problem, the relationship is fine. But I would not have stayed with him if he was not patient with me. You see the problem I had at the beginning when I started staying with him was sex. I did not want us to have sex, thinking about the pain I had the first day. I used to think that a woman would always feel that pain when having sex. I think if it was just some impatient person, he would have left me. But he did not, maybe it was because of love. But the whole experience of having a child early upset me, but at least I did not loose even a single year out of school, maybe that also helped in comforting me. But my father was really upset by this whole thing. And in my whole family, I am the only one who got married in this manner, but I am better settled. All my sisters had weddings for their marriages, but they keep on going back home with marital problems. And I have never been home with problems since I started staying with my in-laws. I have never gone home because of problems, not even a single day. When I had a problem, sometimes there are problems in a marriage, I would just sit down and cry, who would I tell? I would not go home, who would I tell, my mother is also very strict. During that time she also turned her back on me and be like her husband. So when I had problems I would just cry. And when my partner realised that I was unhappy, he would feel bad and stop doing what would be causing the problem. He knows that there is no one I can turn to and I would not want to be a problem to him. I cannot just start telling him what the problem is, but when he realises that there is something wrong he would ask

Teenage motherhood has taught her to be self-reliant.

and I would then tell him what my problem is. And he would then see how to sort it out. But my sisters, they cannot sort out their own problems with their spouses, they went to school and got married the “right” way but problems are always with them. It is difficult for them, they keep on going back and coming home. But with me, I have never been home carrying my belongings.

Res: And it has been quite some time heh!

P2: Yes, it has been sometime, since 1995. it's quite sometime.

Res: Ok!

P2: I was young then but now I am fine.

Res: How old were you?

P2: I was 18 years then, it is history now, there is no more any problem with me. And my father is proud of me now. He always refers to me when my sisters go back home with problems. He would tell them that – your younger sister is better, she does not come home, not even a single day. Now it is like I taught him a lesson that the one who left in the dark does not come back, but those who left during the day, keep on coming back.

Res: Ok.

P2: And even now that my father has accepted me and asked for forgiveness, I do not think I can ever go to him with any problem. The problem that I had at first turned out not to be a problem. I would think that if I sleep with a man, I would fall pregnant again. So I would always think that if I sleep with my partner, I would be pregnant again.

Res: When you talk about this thing, how do you feel?

P2: I have shared this experience with a lot of people, explaining to them what happened and some would guide me.

Res: Do you feel hurt when you talk about it?

She indicates that the relationship is good and she feels in control of her situation as a married woman.

Indicating that she has grown out of the experience. Her father is reported to have forgiven her and being proud of her but; she does not want to go to him with problems.

P2: No, not now. At first I used to feel hurt, but now I no longer get hurt. I used to feel very hurt. I would cry, but now I no longer have problems. I just realised that my partner loves me, that's why we are still together. I think he was also brought more closer to me because of the way that my father treated me. He knew that I had no one to turn to, I had him only. So the two of us had to stand by each other.

Res: You spoke about the medical practitioner accompanying you to your in-laws after your parents deserted you, roles changed, he became a go between.

P2: Ja! He had to take me there, there was no any other way out. He was feeling for me. The way my father was, the doctor just had to help me. One would even think that it seems as if he could feel that the baby was the blood of his people. It just happened. I was lucky. I think my child was lucky. The doctor was not busy at that time so he could take us there. We were lucky.

Res: What is his name?

P2: Wanga (meaning- he is mine).

Res: Who named him?

P2: His father. There were other names suggested by other people, but he indicated that he would want him to be called that, the child is his own.

END.

With time and sharing the experience with other people, she feels relieved and she can rationally reflect on it

The medical practitioner finds himself in a situation where he has to attend to basic social needs of his patient.

Interview with Mulatedzi

The appointment was set for just after 17h00, Mulatedzi's knocking off time. The session was begun by giving the background and aim of the study.

At the time of the interview Mulatedzi was working as a receptionist at a health practitioner's consulting rooms. She was also studying part-time at a university. Her child was 10 years old.

Res: I would want us to start by talking about situations or events that you think have contributed to you falling pregnant.

P3: Friends influence – when we were at school being free or on weekends when we were not at school, we would talk about boys. So I ended up being influenced. And unfortunately for me, my mother was very strict. She did not tell me anything about – or if you have sex with boys you will fall pregnant or even to use contraceptives or something. So I did not know anything about that.

Res: so you only had information from friends?

P3: Yes!, influence from friends – that heh, being in love is good.

Res: so when you discovered that you were pregnant, was it immediately or after sometime?

P3: Ja!, the first month, but I was on denial, I told myself that no!, I was not pregnant. I kept on telling myself that I would menstruate the following month because I knew my dates, even though I could see that there were some changes. Like in the mornings I would be sick. By then it was during exam time, so I finished writing exams and went to Johannesburg to visit my aunt (father's sister). That was because I was afraid that people would realise how I was.

Res: So at home they were not aware yet?

She indicates that peer influence does play a role in getting one into sex relations. Also, lack of sex information and knowledge from parents do contribute to getting one in to teenage pregnancy.

She realises some physical symptoms of pregnancy but she denies it.

P3: Yes, they were not aware, they became aware immediately when I came back in January. I had just passed standard ten (10) and was supposed to go and look for admission space. That was the time that they realised that there was something wrong because I had gained weight.

Res: Oh!, ok, so when they realised, how did they react?

P3: eh—

Res: where there any conflict may be?

P3: Like my mother, she saw me in the morning. We were at my uncle's place (he is our neighbour), I had a towel wrapped around my waist. So she could see that there was something wrong, then she left and went home to sleep. But it was still in the morning just coming from bed, and she went back into the blankets. So when I got back – around 1 o'clock, she called me to her bedroom and asked me. So I did not dispute it because I was already six to seven. Eh!, six.

Res: Ok.

P3; So I told her the truth that I was pregnant. She started as if she wanted to shout at me but she ended up admitting, like, most kids in the community, most teenagers were pregnant. So she just said there was no problem, “in fact so and so is pregnant, your cousin is pregnant---“ so she did not become somehow.

Res: So what about other people at home except the mother?

P3: Ja, like my aunt (mom's younger sister) did not believe, mom's elder sister could not take it. Like my younger sisters, it affected them.

Res: So you had to stay for some time without going back to study?

P3: No, my mother was supportive, she said to me that I would not stay because of a child, I have to go to school. So, fortunate enough at Venda (university) they had replied saying I should come. So I went to school and

The mother realises the changes with her and she could not handle it at discovery.

She told her mother that she was indeed pregnant. It is a blow to her but she accepted it as some other kids in their neighbourhood were also pregnant.

Some members of the family were not ready to accept it

The mother is supportive to her and offers to look after the child as she continues with her studies.

she indicated that when the baby is born, I should bring it home she would look after the baby - She did not have problem.

Res: So what about prenatal visits?

P3: You know!, I did not go for any check ups. I was afraid of people. But when I got to the university my friends insisted that I should go for check up. For sure I was seven when I went. I did not want to go to the clinic at home because I did not want people to know. The other thing is that I was in Johannesburg for two months so people at home were not aware, so I did not want them to see me.

Res: Ok, when you had started going for prenatal care, how were the health professionals?

P3: Oh, the Sisters were so rude, like when they see that your card shows that you were still young. They were so rude. They would tell you "do like this girl!!, hey, do like this.

Res: So what about the partner, what happened when he learned that you were pregnant?

P3: You see, at home they asked me and I told them who it was. His mother is my mother's friend and they are from a rich family. So my mother was afraid that maybe I did it purposefully because I know they are rich. But they told them and it just ended in the air.

Res: So the two of you?

P3: It just ended because my mother was afraid that people would say that she sent me to be pregnant, that's why she sent me to school, I would bring the child back so that we can get the monies from the partner's family, all those things. But it was hurting because it meant that my child and her father would not have any contact because of my mother's fears of what people might say.

Res: So now?

P3: No!, he is just my friend!

Res: The child, does she know about her father?

Friends are also supportive, they insist that she attends prenatal classes.

Health attendants are reported to have been rude to teenagers.

Relationships with family friends are tempered with. And the fear that her mother has of the community makes it difficult for her child to know about her father.

Res: I mean- does she know who her father is?

P3: No, she does not know.

Res: But how do you handle it, or she has not yet reached a stage that she can ask?

P3: No, she has not asked yet, because, when we grew up at home, there was no father. She does not know of a father figure at home. So she does not have a problem with that.

Res: Ok!

P3: But maybe when she grows she would ask, but so far--- there is nothing. She knows that we grew without a father, he passed away when we were still young. She knows that there is no father at home. She does not have a problem.

Res: So it means your mother took care of the child, and you went to study, how did your friends take it? Realising that you had a child and you had gone to school.

P3: My friends just thought that maybe the way my mother was doing would make me to be pregnant again.

Res: Ok!

P3: Ja, because she took the child and has given me another freedom.

Res: How did you feel then.

P3: When she took the child?

Res: No, the experience. How did you feel?

P3: Hey!, I do not know how to explain it. I felt frustrated. I thought of doing abortion. I would ask friends and they would tell me to drink this and that, try this and this. So when I was in Johannesburg, I would try to drink but realising that they do not work. So it was frustrating.

Res; So now, how do you feel? I understand some years has passed.

P3: Oh, now I am proud of myself and my child, she has grown and she is wise. So at the moment I am ok.

Res: Oh, is a girl

P3: Yes, she is a girl

Res: How old is she?

It appears that the way in which people are raised or socialised in the family do impact on what they become (family structures). She reports that her daughter (10years old) has not yet asked about her father and she attributes that to the fact that they grew up without a father at home, so her daughter does not know of a father figure and she would not ask about a father.

She indicates that other people might think that if her mother looks after her child and let her go to study, that would make her get the freedom and have another child.

She admits having felt frustrated and having thought of doing abortion.

Now that the child has grown, she feels good and she appreciates having her.

P3: She is twelve

Res; So what future plans are there?
Now you have a child. So what about relationships – life has to go on.
Another child or settling down and have a family? How do you think about such things?

P3: Like with me, my mother says if I get married or I go somewhere, I will not take my child with me. She says she is her last born. So I do not think that is going to work because I will also need her.

Laughter (both researcher and participant)

P3 continues: So about having other kids I do not know. I have not yet thought about it. I am not prepared yet. I want to see her at 15 years at least. You see, there will be a gap because I do not want others to suffer like her.

Res: For the child, things like clothes?

P3: Ja, you see my mother was the one looking after her. Like things like preschool – I was just surprised to hear that the child was attending preschool. So my mother would just decide and I would not even know who was paying for her. They just buy clothes for her like my younger sisters, when they are at universities, they would just bring her clothes when they come back so I do not want a child of the whole family. With other kids to come, I want the child to be mine! .so they would just buy, not that it should be a must because the child does not have clothes, she does not have school uniform, she does not have school fees. Like even now, you may find that I do not have money, some times my sisters have to help out.

Res: Ok, other things generally that you might think of about that experience for other people to learn or that which you have learnt.

She feels that she is not ready to have other children. She would want to be prepared to afford the responsibility and be in a position to look after them on her own.

Her mother took the responsibility of parenting her child and she feels that she would want to be responsible and accountable for the coming ones. She would want to feel that they are her own kids, not the kids of the whole family. Other members of the family can do things for the kids if they want to, but it does not have to be doing it because the mother cannot afford.

P3: For other people to learn, you see with me my mother was so supportive so I did not go under eh--- ok, with me, I was stressed but they did not reject me. They looked after me and would give me enough pocket money at school, but after having the child, she reduced it. You see! But she looked after me.

Res: Any other things that you may want to talk about in relation to teenage pregnancy and motherhood?

P3: I think parents should tell their kids the truth, that if you do this, this would happen. Like preventing, my mother told me that she would not have told me that I should go and start using contraceptives, what about if in future I fail to bear children, I would blame her. But I do not think that is the reason. If you do not have a child, you do not have, it is not that you were preventing or what. So I just think parents should tell their kids, when they become 13 or so or when they start menstruating . they should tell them that if you sleep with a man, you will fall pregnant, so the best thing, "you must prevent". They should tell them the truth.

Res: So, when you fell pregnant, was it the issue that you had a relationship that was going on or it was a once –of thing?

P3: No, with me it was happening often and I would say heh! Today I survived (laughter). No it was not one day. I used to do it and I would say today I survived at least. You see, but because they did not tell that you must do this, prevent – if they had told me that I should prevent I would have known that I should protect myself. But they tell me that if you prevent you would not have a child and you would blame us. They did not know!

Res: Maybe it is because we do not know much.

She describes the experience as being stressful, so it needs support. And one should expect to get some of the luxuries and / or allowances reduced.

She indicates that parents should prepare their kids and should provide information relating to sex.

It appears that she knew that she could conceive, but she did not have reliable/true information about contraceptives.

P3: Ja, if you use contraceptives, they do not make you infertile, no!

Res: Ja, it's knowledge that is unavailable. Maybe with time people should come out.

P3: Ja, people should know that if you are not fertile, you are not fertile. I think maybe sometime back, the abortions they used to do would cause one to be infertile because they were not done procedurally. But now, you can do it and the following months fall pregnant. if you go to the clinic and they do it well or you go to the doctor.

Res: Do you have something that you may want to ask me?

P3: No , nothing. Unless if you want to tell me something.

Res: No, not really.

P3: No. I am fine.

END.

She is now knowledgeable about contraceptives, fertility and abortions.

Interview with Muofhe

By the time of the interview, Muofhe was working as an assistant librarian at a University library. She was also studying towards a masters degree in library and information science. She was staying with her two daughters in a spacious city apartment. Both her daughters were at high school grades. The interview took place at Muofhe's apartment.

Res: How has been the experience of being a teenage mother?

P4: I did not have knowledge of what would happen. My main concern was what will happen. It just meant that I would no longer go back to school that year. My mother made it clear that I would not go back to school. So, I started contacting friends informing them that I was pregnant and that I will not be at school that year. I was just home the whole year. I wished time could move faster.

Res: So, how has life been?

P4: Responsibilities changed. After child birth, I could not demand things. It's a mistake, so no more favours. Nobody will tell, but you have to sacrifice. My parents were divorced and officially I was supposed to stay with my mother. But after the realisation of pregnancy, I moved to my father.

Res: why your father?

P4: My father was positive. He used to say: it is just a setback, you can still do it. That was the time that I felt that any job could do for me.

Res: You mentioned that responsibilities changed, can we talk more about that?

P4: Ja, you see, after school you have to rush home. You basically manage between school-work and child minding. No sports on weekends. I had to forget about athletics. I was a good athlete. You trade things. Everywhere you go, you go with a child. At one stage my child was sick. I had to arrange with my father that he takes

Lack of knowledge. Beginning to anticipate responsibility.

Disruption of schooling.

She begins to feel responsible as she believes that she has done something wrong. Her living arrangements were also affected.

As she felt she needed support more than ever before, she opted to stay with her father whom she felt was more understanding compared to her mother.

Loosing out on being a schoolchild. No more participating in school sporting activities. She is beginning to juggle with the responsibilities of being a mother and a student. Her father continues to be supportive.

my child to the doctor after school and I will meet him at the doctor's surgery. When we were still waiting for our turn to see the doctor, a woman knew came in and asked my father whose child it is he was holding?

He told her that the child was mine. She asked me the child's name, and I said Mashudu (meaning lucky). She then said: Ni songo ri lwalela rine, ndi mashudu a mini hu mu hwalo (meaning- do not be mad, what luck is it when it is a burden).

From there I made it a case that my child is not a problem / burden to anybody. You get names, responsibilities. You cannot explain, they are not interested. They have already created a child who cannot listen, but you never had anybody to listen to.

Res: Do you think your parents' divorce contributed to your pregnancy?

P4: No. Maybe, maybe my parents would have prepared me. I never really wanted to blame anybody, but myself. Basically, is about changing responsibilities, no more school trips. Social life changes a great, you loose out on mixing out with girls of your own age because things that they do, you cannot afford to do. You just do not have time.

Res: How are you doing now?

P4: fairly happy. There might have been certain choices – If I did not have a child, I would have travelled all of Africa and not here, but outside (outside the African continent).

The relationship with my children is healthy, I tell them that we should decide together. There is no communication between me and their father, I do what I think is good for them. People do come with advices, saying that I should get him to maintain the kids, but I do what I think is right. I allow them to see him. And I always go to my father for advices, and

She begins to appreciate the different interpretations made by people about teenage motherhood. She gets more convinced that she has to love her child even more and to take more responsibility for her upbringing.

She is taking full responsibility of her pregnancy and blaming no one. With teenage motherhood comes life style changes including disengagement from groups of friends that one would have loved to interact with.

It sounds like there is some sense of regret, but the participant has accepted the responsibility and working on developing a good relationship with her daughters.

There is no more any relationship with her partner. She is the one responsible for her daughters and she does what she believes is right for her family. She gets support from her father and her uncle and his wife.

my uncle and his wife support me.

Res: What about dating?

P4: I do date, but if I feel uncomfortable, I let go. I make my expectations and policies clear. Some would expect me to be dependent, For me it is different!

I have to mind my children – assist with homework, attend parent meetings, be at home. I encourage my children to read - I buy books to guide them. I have been in support group for women – need confidence, help me in being open-minded.

I do counselling, even men. People call me for short counselling. I might not be an ideal person- because I stay in a flat, a single parent, and I walk around with my kids. People would say: why don't you leave your children at home? I want my children to know me, I want to build trust with them. My first-born is 15, I decided I should talk to her. If somebody spoke to me then, maybe I would have done things differently. I cannot say everything is 100%, but I could not choose to be anywhere.

My boss was not prepared to work with me at my previous job, because I was a woman and looking after my kids as a single parent. I always had to do a lot more than expected. People will call you names, things! If you try to be nice, they think you want to take their men. So, you have to prove that you are not like that. You set limits.

Res: How do you see the future?

P4: Very gloomy. I wish I could get money and have more children. If I could be rich I would have more children. But at the moment it will be risky – financially and healthwise. If I marry, it will have to be for love, other things will follow. I basically do everything for my children and myself. The other thing is the fear that I have – ‘what if it does not work’, so this fear holds me back. I do not want to be

The need to feel comfortable with one's life is expressed and to be independent as she gets involved in relationships with members of the opposite sex.

A need to be a responsible parent is expressed.

Getting support from a support-group for women.

Teenage motherhood has taught her to be more compassionate towards other people as she is now offering counselling and she is being more available to her daughters.

She spends time preparing her first-born daughter for womanhood – the kind of privilege that she was not exposed to.

Being a teenage mother is also affecting her occupational life as she finds her boss difficult to work with.

Social relations are also presented as being affected. Other people not trusting her, and she has to prove that she is trustworthy.

She perceives her future as gloomy even though she has several wishes that include being wealthy, and obtaining a Phd.

Even though she would want to be married, she expresses fear of the marriage failing, as her expectations and those of her partner may not be the same.

failed by anyone, I would rather fail myself. One guy told me that the way I am, pushes people away. I do have wishes and dreams, but I do not know! Academically, I want to get a PHD.
END.

Interview with Ndifelani

At the time of the interview, Ndifelani was working as a receptionist at the consulting room of specialist medical practitioner.

Res: I would like us to start by looking at situations or events that you think might have contributed to you falling pregnant. What in your situation can you say has contributed?

P5: I would say friends! Friends influenced me. My mother had told me that if I sleep with a man, I would fall pregnant. But you see, that was all she told me, she did not explain to me what exactly would happen. So just my first contact with a guy, I conceived. And I kept on telling myself that it couldn't be, just once!

Res: When was it realised?

P5: Just during the first month. I missed my periods and I was doing standard nine by the time, and we had already covered the section in biology that explains human reproduction. So I kept on asking myself if I were really pregnant, and when I realised that no periods were coming, I then knew that I was pregnant. I began to realise some physical changes, gaining weight and my breasts growing big. I was totally convinced that I was pregnant. People began to ask me if I were pregnant and I would always say I did not know.

Res: What happened at school?

P5: I was no longer interested in anything. I was depressed, I was always quite. When I thought about going to be a mother, it was painful. I started to lose concentration at school. My performance dropped and my teachers were concerned. One of my teachers even asked me if I had problems or if I had a boyfriend, but I would always say no! It was painful. A cousin of mine knew about my

She indicates that she was influenced by her friends, and also that she did not have much information from her mother. So lack of reliable information led to her pregnancy.

She learns about her status on her own since she had already done human reproduction process at school. But she does not want people to know about it.

Realising that she was pregnant affected her performance at school, she lost concentration and ranked lower than before the pregnancy.

She believes that the school failed her because of the changes in her behaviour, not because she deserved to fail. She does acknowledge that her performance dropped but she sees the school as just punishing her since they could not give any reason for her failure.

situation and she encouraged me to study hard so that I could pass at the end of the year, which I did, but the school failed me. I had passed all the subject except mathematics, but they did not promote me to standard 10. My brother went to the school to get an understanding on why I failed, they did not explain, they just told him that I failed. And I still think that they did not want to promote me because they had realised that there was something wrong with my behaviour. Before I fell pregnant, I was among the best students in my standard. So the pregnancy made me to go down a bit, but my performance did not warrant a fail at exams, they just failed me.

Res: What about at home, what happened?

P5: My father chased me away. I had to stay with my aunt. After sometime she suggested that I go to the in-laws. I went there, the child was born when I was staying with the in-laws. When the child was five months, I went home only to find that my father was not ready to accept the child. He indicated that the child should go back to her father, because she was not his legal granddaughter he could not stay with her. So the child was taken away from me when she was five months, and I only saw her when she was eight years I did not know her; she too did not know me. She only knew my name and that the name belongs to the person who is suppose to be her mother.

Res: Why after eight years?

P5: I could not go where she was staying when I was not working, I did not want to go and see her without giving her anything. But it was hard. When I got there her grandmother was furious, she was very angry with me. But she allowed me to see the child, and I began to visit them frequently

She is chased out of home and had to stay with her aunt who could only accommodate her for a shorter period. She had to go to her in-laws until the child was born. When she gets home, her father could not accept his grandchild, so the child had to be sent back to her father. She only manages to see her child after eight years.

She expresses the need to be responsible towards her daughter.

The child's grandmother is upset by her but she later realises that it will be good for the child to be with her mother.

since I had secured some temporal job. In fact my aunt got me a temporary teaching post, so I could afford to buy my child what she needed. At some point I bought her some clothes and fruits. The grandmother threw away the fruits but she gave her the clothes. The child started to learn to know me. I kept on sending her some daily allowance and lunch box through my aunt's neighbour who was teaching at my child school. I sent her these things because it was only the grandmother who was working and her father was not working. And she could not afford some of the things that were necessary for the child. The neighbour reported that the child was not concentrating at school, it seemed as if she was having some problems. I thought of sending her for psychological help but I did not.

Res: Was she still staying with the grandmother?

P5: Yes, she was still there, but the grandmother indicated that if I wanted the child, I could have her but only if my family apologise to them for throwing the baby like they did. And my father was not prepared to do that, he instead indicated that they are the ones who are suppose to apologise to him. So my brother went to my in-laws and negotiated until they released the child on condition that she would visit them every school holiday. But then my child was not close to me, she would be freer with my mother as compared to me, and she requested to be in a private school. So my brother offered to stay with her.

Res: Ok!

P5: But she is still not close to me, she does not even request anything from me. She is not free when she is with

She is beginning to look after her child, sending her some daily allowance and lunch.

The two families feel aggrieved by each other. Since the father was not prepared to approach his daughter's in-laws, his son negotiated to get the child. P5 indicates that her daughter is not close to her, so her brother takes the child.

The experience of having a child at a younger age appears to be hurting to her and, more so that the child is not even close to her

me. It is really hard to have a child when you are young. It is hurting, it is a bad experience. You are pregnant, you are young, you give birth away from home, your child is taken away from you and, it is hard.

Res: What about during pregnancy, did you attend prenatal classes?

P5: Yes I did, and the nurses were very good to me. They sympathised with me. But at the hospital when I was due to deliver, the nurse in charge was very rude. One lady who was also in labour gave birth just by herself, because she was told that she knew nothing about giving birth and that she was not ready yet to deliver, and the child was just born in front of us. I was so afraid and that made me to be afraid of the nurse and I could not even tell the nurse that I felt like giving birth. The ward was overcrowded and the lady I was sharing the bed with had to tell the nurse that I was in pain. I was just quite and in pain. So, I was examined and taken to labour room. I could not talk for myself because I always thought about my age; I was 16 years when I delivered. I always thought that people would say I was young and why did I become pregnant- what were you doing? That is what I always thought of, and I would be quite most of the times.

Res: What happened to the relationship with your partner?

P5: I did not want to be in love then, it just happened and thereafter I began to hate him because I felt that he was the one who caused me the problems. He gave me the child that I was not proud of. But he was very nice to both the child and me. And he was very close to the child because he stayed with her, and he was looking after her, doing everything for her, even washing her nappies. It is only that I felt bored and hated him, so, the relationship did not go anywhere. He got married to another woman but they separated

She gets terrified by the experience of witnessing a fellow teenager delivering her child without being helped by the health attendants. This experience makes her to think about her age and what people could possibly say. The thought of being young and pregnant keeps on torturing her.

She indicates that she was not really interested in having a relationship at that age, as a result she did not continue with her partner.

The relationship that her partner had did not go anywhere because his wife could not accept his daughter.

because the woman could not accept my daughter. She wanted her to go, so the grandmother told her that the child was not leaving, if she is not interested, she better leave because even when she got married, she knew about the child. That was before my brother requested the child.

Res: Are you now involved with someone else?

P5: It is a problem for me now, I would want to be involved, but when I think of my daughter who is not close to me, I just cannot commit myself. I would want to do what other people of my age do, get married. But when I think of having kids, I think about the one I have now. It looks like there is no any bond between the two of us. So I am afraid that if I have other kids and we are close, she may feel that I do not love her. That is why I deserted her and only came to see her when she was eight years. So this thought keeps me out of any meaningful relationship. I do not even want her to see my boy friend. I am afraid that what if we break the relationship, and the following day she see me with somebody else, she may think of me as a slut, not a good example to follow. So I make sure that she does not see my boy friend.

Res: Ok!

P5: You see, the problem is the thought that keeps on pestering me, the bonding problem with my daughter. I did have a stable relationship at some point. The guy was so kind and caring, but I had to terminate the relationship. The thought of having other kids tormented me. I would be happy, but the moment he mentions kids, I would change and be sad. Even now if I think of the relationship with my daughter, I just become sad. If that thought crosses my mind, I become sad. Even by the time when I went back to school. I used to play netball for under-19 years

Her relationship with her daughter seems to be stopping her from being involved in any meaningful relationship. She expresses the desire to be married, but she is not ready as she is afraid of what would happen to her daughter and other kids she might have if she gets married.

She sees her relationship with her daughter as the problem to her relationships. She even had to terminate a relationship because she was not comfortable with the idea of having other kids

girls. It was hard to say I was a mother, but just thinking about it would make me sad. This experience also hurt my mother. When my father realised that I was pregnant, he beat both my mother and me. I felt bad about it because my mother had done nothing wrong. You see, my father is an instructor, so the way he relates with us is not good. My mother is just holding to the marriage for our sake, the kids.

I love my father but when I think of the way he treated me, I cannot face him. Sometimes feel like just strangling him, I feel angry with him. I know I was wrong, but he should not have chased me like he did. He should have forgiven me. Maybe he felt that I was an embarrassment to the family. The way he treated me made me to be sick for the whole nine months. I even wished I could get a miscarriage.

Res: So what have you learnt out of this experience?

P5: It is hard without support.

Res: How old is your child?

P5: Thirteen years

END.