

Determinants of Teenage Pregnancy in Urban Low Income Neighborhoods in Colombo Municipal Council Area

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ABSTRACT. Teenage pregnancy, which is more prevalent among the slum dwellers compared to other urban residents, is one of the key health and social problems among slum dwellers in Colombo. This paper intends to examine the determinants of teenage pregnancy from a sociological perspective. This study was conducted among 109 pregnant teenagers living in urban slums in Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) area during 2008 July to 2010 July. A population proportionate sampling method was used to select the participants from 13 Antenatal clinics (ANCs) covering 96 Public Health Midwife areas in CMC. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Qualitative analysis was done using Frame Work Analysis and the quantitative analysis was done using SPSS software. Ethical approval was obtained. The prevalence of teenage pregnancy was 7.8% in CMC during the period of study. Higher prevalence of teenage pregnancy was observed in poorer PHM areas. Study revealed that several factors at individual level, family level and community level determine the pregnancy during teenage. Low education connected to ethnicity, poverty, deprived childhood experiences, family background including alcoholism in the family, having been born to teen parents, parental cohabitation or marital dissolution, frequent family disputes, frequent evacuations of houses, gender stereotypes related to role expectations, cultural parameters on sexuality, fertility beliefs and absence of adolescent friendly services showed a significant effect on teenage pregnancy. This paper highlights the need for multi-sectoral interventions, targeted essentially in the PHM areas which are highly affected by teenage pregnancy.

Key words: Teenage Pregnancy, Low Income Settlements, Social Exclusion, Social Support.

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