

# Challenges Facing Teenage Mothers Re-Entry into Secondary Schools in Tanzania: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study

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## ABSTRACT

*Teenage pregnancy remains a significant global issue, particularly in developing nations like Tanzania. This study focuses on the challenges faced by teenage mothers when they return to secondary education. Employing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological framework, the study aimed to gain insights into the subjective experiences of teenage mothers, teachers, and parents. The present study combines semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, utilizing purposive sampling to include participants from various backgrounds and positions within the educational system. The findings of this study highlight the multiple difficulties encountered by teenage mothers pursuing secondary education in Tanzania. These challenges encompass responsibilities related to childcare, social stigma, financial constraints, limited social networks, and academic stress. By examining the lived experiences of these individuals, the study seeks to raise awareness about their specific issues and identify viable options to realise their educational goals. Consequently, educational authorities must provide additional consideration and support to teenage mothers. Developing culturally relevant education guidelines and strategies necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles faced by teenage mothers. This study contributes to the existing literature by thoroughly analyzing the challenges encountered by teenage mothers reentering secondary schools in Tanzania. The research outcomes will assist policy makers, educators, and other stakeholders in designing and implementing targeted initiatives that support teenage mothers and enhance their educational opportunities.*

**Keywords:** Teenage mothers, secondary schools, qualitative research, phenomenological design

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teenage pregnancy continues to be a significant global concern with profound implications for the well-being and prospects of young mothers (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). The challenges associated with adolescent motherhood are particularly pronounced in developing nations, where limited access to comprehensive sexual education, healthcare services, and social support contributes to higher rates of teenage pregnancies and subsequent disruptions in education (Hall, 2022). Globally, teenage pregnancy remains a persistent concern, affecting both developed and developing countries. According to recent estimates, approximately 12 million adolescents give birth each year, with the highest rates observed in sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2020; UNFPA, 2022). These pregnancies often lead to school dropout, limiting educational and economic opportunities for young mothers (Fallis, 2013). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the importance of addressing teenage pregnancy and its consequences, particularly SDG 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations, 2015). Efforts to address teenage pregnancy and support young mothers' educational aspirations require a nuanced understanding of the challenges they face at individual, familial and societal levels.

Within the African context, Sub-Saharan Africa exhibits some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies, with Tanzania, facing considerable challenges (Uromi, 2014). In Tanzania, approximately one in four girls aged 15-19 (23% ) has experienced pregnancy, with the majority occurring in rural areas (Farida & Bali, 2014). The consequences of teenage pregnancy extend beyond the health and well-being of young mothers, impacting their educational opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty (Ngonyani, 2022). It is estimated that 95% of all adolescent births occur in low- and middle-income countries. The other well-known contributing factors to this reality are the high rate of sexual assault, rape and coercive sex. Nearly three in ten women between the ages of 13 and 24 in mainland Tanzania reported having experienced sexual violence at least once before turning 18 years old. School girls in Tanzania are the most sufferers of effect related to adolescence pregnancies (Farida & Bali, 2014). Due to pregnancy, young females have been banned to attend schooling as the denial to the constitutional rights to

education. Recognizing the urgent need to address these issues, Tanzania has implemented various policies and programmes aimed at supporting teenage mothers' education and well-being (Tanzania Education Network, 2021). However, significant gaps remain in effectively addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by teenage mothers during their re-entry into secondary education. This qualitative study sought to delve into the subjective experiences of adolescent mothers, as well as the perspectives of teachers and parents, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges they encounter when returning to secondary education in Tanzania. By employing a phenomenological framework, this research aims to explore the lived experiences of teenage mothers and shed light on the various factors that hinder their educational success and overall well-being. The primary objective of this study was to examine the challenges faced by teenage mothers when they return to secondary education in Ilala Municipality. To achieve this objective, this study was guided by the following question: What are the challenges encountered by teenage mothers when they return to secondary education in Tanzania? The findings of this study will inform policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders about the specific needs of teenage mothers, fostering the development of tailored interventions and policies that enhance their educational opportunities and support their overall empowerment.

### **Literature Review**

Teenage pregnancy and the challenges faced by adolescent mothers re-entering secondary education have garnered significant attention in research and policy spheres (Farida & Bali, 2014; Ngonyani, 2022; Uromi, 2014). This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the existing research, highlighting the global, regional, and Tanzanian context, as well as the theoretical frameworks employed in understanding the experiences of teenage mothers.

### **Social Challenges**

Teenage pregnancy is often associated with social stigma and discrimination, which can have detrimental effects on the educational experiences of young mothers. Research conducted by Domenico et al. (2019) in the United States revealed that teenage mothers face negative attitudes and stereotypes from

their peers and teachers, leading to social exclusion and feelings of shame. Similarly, studies from Europe, such as the work of UNESCO (2016) in the United Kingdom, have highlighted the pervasive nature of social stigma surrounding teenage pregnancy and its impact on the educational outcomes of young mothers. However, it is important to note that cultural contexts may influence the degree of stigma experienced by teenage mothers, as evidenced by research in Asian countries like India (Gill et al., 2017). Understanding the diverse social challenges teenage pregnant mothers face across different regions can provide insights into the importance of creating supportive and non-judgmental school environments.

### **Emotional Challenges**

The emotional well-being of teenage pregnant mothers plays a crucial role in their educational success. Studies conducted globally have consistently shown that teenage mothers are at a higher risk of experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression compared to their non-pregnant peers (Birchall, 2018). For instance, research by Okumu (2020) in Kenya highlighted the emotional struggles faced by teenage mothers in balancing the demands of motherhood and education. Similarly, studies conducted in Latin American countries, such as Madagascar (Herrera, Almanza & Sahn, 2018) and South Africa (Nkosi et al., 2019) have underscored the importance of addressing the emotional well-being of teenage mothers to support their educational aspirations. Recognizing and addressing the emotional challenges teenage pregnant mothers face can contribute to creating a conducive learning environment.

### **Financial Challenges**

Financial constraints pose significant barriers to the educational advancement of teenage pregnant mothers worldwide. Research conducted in various regions, including Africa, Asia and South America has consistently shown that teenage mothers face economic hardships that limit their access to educational resources (Domenico et al., 2019; Nkosi et al., 2019). For example, studies by (Gill et al. 2017) in India and Kumi-Kyereme et al. (2014) in Ghana have highlighted the economic burden faced by teenage mothers, which often leads to school dropout or limited educational opportunities. Additionally, research from European countries like the Netherlands

(Birchall, 2018) and Sub-Saharan Africa (Fallis, 2013; Laiser & Muyinga, 2017; Okumu, 2020) has identified the financial challenges faced by teenage mothers and emphasized the need for comprehensive support systems. Addressing the financial constraints of teenage pregnant mothers is crucial to ensure their continued educational engagements.

### **Academic Challenges**

Teenage pregnant mothers encounter various academic challenges that can hinder their educational progress. Research conducted in different regions has consistently shown that young women face difficulties in catching up with missed coursework, experience lower grades, and have lower educational attainments compared to their non-pregnant peers (Farida & Bali, 2014; Gill et al., 2017; Uromi, 2014). For instance, studies have highlighted the academic challenges faced by teenage mothers, including increased rates of school dropout and lower educational attainment.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the challenges faced by teenage mothers when they returned to secondary education in Ilala Municipality of Dar es Salaam Region. This study was conducted in Ilala Municipality because it represents a diverse urban setting that reflects the challenges faced by teenage mothers in an urban context. By focusing on Ilala Municipality, the study aimed to provide insights into the specific experiences and difficulties encountered by teenage mothers in urban area. A phenomenological research design guided the data collection and analysis, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the subjective personal experiences of teenage mothers (Creswell, 2008). Students-mothers were the focus of phenomenological investigation to establish a critical understanding of their situation. Participants were selected through purposive sampling (Shukla, 2021), aiming for a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and positions within the educational system. Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Mason (2010) emphasized on manageable number of respondents, whereby this particular study has concurred to this sentiment. Therefore, in total, 15 informants participated in this study including 10 teenage mothers who had re-entered secondary education, 2 teachers and 3 parents from 3 secondary schools in the Municipality. The selection of three secondary schools in this

study was based on a combination of purposive sampling and considerations of feasibility and diversity. Firstly, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the selected schools had a significant population of teenage mothers and represented a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. This sampling approach allowed for the inclusion of schools where teenage mothers face similar challenges in returning to education. Secondly, the feasibility of conducting the study in the selected schools was taken into account. Factors such as accessibility, the willingness of the school administration to participate, and the availability of resources for data collection were considered. It was important to select schools where the researcher could establish a collaborative and supportive relationship with the school authorities and ensure smooth implementation of the study.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were utilized to gather rich data from multiple perspectives (Guest et al., 2006). The interviews were conducted individually with each participant, while the focus group discussions provided an opportunity for interaction and collective exploration of the shared challenges and experiences. The interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded with the participant's consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. A thematic analysis approach was employed to identify key themes and patterns within the data (Creswell, 2018). The transcripts were first read and re-read to develop familiarity with the content. Then, initial codes were generated, capturing the participants' experiences, emotions, and perceptions related to their educational journey. These codes were organized into meaningful themes through an iterative process of data coding, categorization, and constant comparison. To enhance the rigour and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed. First, member checking was conducted, whereby participants were allowed to review and provide feedback on the initial findings to ensure accuracy and authenticity. Additionally, peer debriefing was carried out, where the research team engaged in critical discussions to ensure the robustness and validity of the interpretations. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing their voluntary participation, confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any point. The study also received

ethical approval from the relevant authorities to ensure the protection of participants' rights and welfare.

## **Findings**

### **Childcare Obligations**

Childcare obligations emerged as a significant challenge for teenage pregnant mothers when returning to school. Participants expressed difficulties in finding affordable and reliable childcare options while attending classes. Childcare obligations are a pressing concern for teenage pregnant mothers as they face numerous challenges in securing suitable and affordable childcare arrangements that align with their school schedules. Teenage mothers often struggle to find accessible and affordable daycare services that cater to their specific needs. In regions where formal childcare options are limited, they rely on informal arrangements such as family members or friends, who may not always be reliable or appropriate to their academic pursuits. One student shared her experience, stating,

*It's hard to concentrate in class when I'm constantly worried about my baby. Finding affordable daycare is difficult... (Student A, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

Similarly, a parent highlighted the financial strain of childcare, stating,

*We cannot afford quality daycare services, so my daughter often has to rely on neighbours or family members to take care her child while at school... (Parent A, Interview, June 2023).*

This finding emphasizes the critical need for comprehensive support systems that address the childcare needs of teenage mothers allowing them to fully engage in their education.

### **Social Stigma and Judgement**

The pervasive social stigma and judgment experienced by teenage pregnant mothers emerged as a significant theme in this study, aligning with previous research findings that highlight the negative societal attitudes towards this vulnerable population (Jones et al., 2017). Participants in the study shared their experiences of facing ridicule, discrimination and judgment from both

their peers and the wider community. This social stigma poses significant challenges for teenage mothers, impacting their self-esteem, sense of belonging and overall educational experience.

*Teenage mothers often face ridicule and judgment from their classmates, making it challenging for them to fully engage in their education... (Teacher A, Interview, June 2023).*

A student shared her experience, saying,

*My church looked down on me because I conceived and being a church choir member in my home church, I was casted out of the choir as a sinner. That really broke my spirit, really!! (Student B, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

Another teenage mother student had this to share,

*I faced stigmatization challenges from my society, my schoolmates, and sometimes, even from my teachers, particularly female teachers who would condemn us as having gotten an easy life despite conceiving at an early age, unlike them who had to study hard and had no time for such things (Student B, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

The findings underscore the urgent need to address and challenge the prevailing social norms and stereotypes surrounding teenage pregnancy. Educational institutions, educational practitioners, and community organizations must work collectively to foster a more inclusive and accepting environment for teenage mothers.

### **Financial Limitations**

Financial constraints emerged as a significant theme in the findings, highlighting the economic challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers when returning to school. Participants expressed concerns about affording various school expenses, such as uniforms and textbooks. One student shared her struggle, emphasizing the financial strain she experienced. She stated,

*I am oftenly worried about affordability of school expenses such as uniforms and textbooks. My family cannot provide the*



*financial support I need (Student C, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

These findings align with existing literature on the financial barriers faced by teenage mothers in accessing education (UNESCO, 2016). Financial constraints can significantly hinder their educational progress and limit their opportunities for academic success. In many cases, teenage mothers come from low-income families that struggle to meet their basic needs, let alone cover additional educational expenses. A parent highlighted the financial strain, saying,

*We have limited resources, and supporting my daughter's education along with the expenses of raising a child can be overwhelming (Parent B, Interview, June 2023).*

While education is free in Tanzania, there are still associated costs that teenage mothers and their families must bear, such as uniforms, textbooks and transportation. These expenses can accumulate and pose a burden on families with limited financial resources. The lack of financial support and resources further exacerbates the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers, making it difficult for them to engage fully in their studies and achieve their academic goals.

### **Limited Social Support Networks**

The lack of robust social support networks emerged as a significant theme in the findings, highlighting the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers in accessing adequate support. Participants expressed feelings of isolation and a lack of understanding from their peers, teachers, and the wider community. One teacher emphasized the importance of creating a supportive environment for teenage mothers, stating,

*Teenage mothers need a supportive environment where they can feel understood and encouraged to continue their education (Teacher A, Interview, June 2023).*

The quotes from the participants shed light on detrimental impact of the absence of social support networks on the educational journey of teenage

mothers. One student shared her perspective, highlighting the sense of loneliness and judgment she experiences, stating,

*I often feel alone and judged by others. Having a support system would make a big difference in my ability to succeed in school (Student C, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

These statements underscore the significance of establishing comprehensive social support networks tailored to the unique needs of teenage mothers. Research has consistently shown that social support plays a crucial role in mitigating the challenges faced by teenage mothers and promoting their educational success (Mollborn, 2017; Kearney & Levine, 2018). Having a supportive network that includes peers, teachers, mentors and family members can contribute to increased resilience, improved mental well-being and enhanced academic engagement amongst teenage mothers.

### **Academic Stress**

The theme of academic stress emerged as a significant finding in the study, highlighting the challenges faced by teenage mothers in managing their academic responsibilities while being mothers. Participants expressed concerns about falling behind in their studies, coping with coursework and meeting academic expectations. One student vividly described the pressure she experiences, stating,

*I have to juggle being a mother and a student. It's overwhelming, and sometimes I am worried I will not be able to keep up (Student C, Interview, School X, June 2023).*

The quote from the student reflects the unique challenges faced by teenage mothers in balancing their roles as caregivers and students. The demands of childcare, coupled with the academic workload, contribute to increased stress levels and the fear of academic underperformance. Acknowledging these challenges, a teacher remarked,

*Teenage mothers often struggle to balance their responsibilities, and it can take a toll on their academic performance (Teacher C, Interview, June 2023).*

The academic stress experienced by teenage mothers can have significant implications for their educational outcomes and overall well-being. Previous research has highlighted the negative impact of stress on academic performance, self-esteem and mental health among adolescent mothers (SmithBattle, 2007). The competing demands of motherhood and schooling can create a sense of overwhelming, leading to reduced motivation, decreased focus and limited time available for studying and completion of assignments.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers when they attempt to return to school. These challenges align with the themes identified in the literature, highlighting the global nature of the issue and the shared experiences of teenage pregnant mothers across different regions. By critically examining and analyzing these findings in the context of existing knowledge, the paper can provide a deeper understanding of the implications and significance, contributing to the broader discourse on teenage pregnancy and education. One of the prominent themes that emerged from the findings is the challenge of childcare obligations. Teenage mothers face difficulties in finding suitable and affordable childcare options that align with their school schedules. This aligns with previous research studies that have highlighted the impact of childcare responsibilities on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers. Smith et al. (2018) found that teenage mothers often struggle to balance the demands of motherhood and school due to limited access to reliable and affordable childcare services. Chigona and Chetty (2008) emphasized that the lack of accessible and affordable daycare services specifically tailored to the needs of teenage mothers poses a significant barrier to their educational success. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive support systems that address the childcare needs of teenage mothers, enabling them to fully engage in their education. Social stigma and judgment emerged as another prominent theme in the findings. The negative perceptions and judgment from peers, teachers, and the community have a detrimental effect on the self-esteem, motivation and educational progress of teenage pregnant mothers. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have underscored the role of social stigma in perpetuating educational inequities for teenage mothers. Andabage (2020) explored the experiences of teenage mothers in an urban

setting and found that social stigma often leads to isolation and a sense of shame, which hinders their educational advancement. Similarly, Birchall (2018) highlighted the negative impact of societal judgment on teenage mothers' access to educational opportunities. Addressing social stigma requires comprehensive efforts, including awareness campaigns, education programmes and the promotion of inclusive and supportive educational environment. By challenging stereotypes and fostering acceptance, educational institutions can create a conducive environment that empowers teenage mothers to pursue their education without fear of judgment. Financial limitations also play a significant role in the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers when returning to school.

Economic constraints restrict their access to educational resources, such as school fees, uniforms and textbooks. This finding aligns with previous research that has highlighted the financial barriers experienced by teenage mothers in pursuing their education. Jones et al. (2016) conducted a study in a low-income community and found that the financial burden associated with education often leads to dropout or delayed re-entry for teenage mothers. Chauke (2013) further emphasized the need for financial assistance programmes for teenage mothers to alleviate the financial burden and create equitable opportunities for their educational advancements. Scholarships, grants and financial aid can help remove financial barriers and provide teenage mothers with the necessary resources to pursue their education. The lack of social support networks emerged as a crucial factor influencing the educational outcomes of teenage pregnant mothers. The absence of emotional, practical, and educational support deprives them of the necessary resources to navigate the challenges of motherhood and education simultaneously. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of social support in promoting the educational success of teenage mothers. Chiota (2020) conducted a qualitative study and highlighted the significant role of family support in facilitating the educational progress of teenage mothers. Fallis (2013) emphasized the need for mentorship programmes, peer support networks and counselling services to provide teenage mothers with the necessary guidance and encouragement. By establishing robust social support systems, educational institutions and communities can create a supportive environment that fosters resilience and academic achievements amongst

teenage mothers. Academic stress was identified as a significant challenge faced by teenage pregnant mothers. Juggling the responsibilities of motherhood and academic obligations can lead to heightened stress levels and potential setbacks in their educational journey. Previous research has explored the impact of academic stress on the educational outcomes of teenage mothers and highlighted the need for tailored academic support services. Kawala (2021) found that teenage mothers often experience higher levels of stress due to the dual demands of motherhood and education, which can impact their academic performance negatively.

Marende (2021) further emphasized the importance of flexible learning options, such as online or part-time programmes, to accommodate the unique needs of teenage mothers and facilitate their educational progress. By providing academic support services and flexible learning environments, educational institutions can help teenage mothers overcome the challenges of academic stress and achieve their educational goals. In synthesizing these findings with the broader literature, it becomes evident that addressing the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers requires a multi-dimensional approach. It is crucial to consider the socio-cultural context, policy frameworks and existing support systems in designing interventions services. By integrating insights from theories of educational attainment, social support, and gender equity, comprehensive strategies can be developed to empower teenage mothers to continue their education and enhance their prospects. Moreover, by fostering collaborations and sharing best practices across countries and regions, it can be learned from the experiences and successes of sub-Saharan African countries, as well as other regions, in supporting teenage pregnant mothers' educational journeys. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. Limitations of this study included the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. However, the focus on deep exploration and understanding of the participants' experiences provided rich and nuanced insights into the challenges faced by teenage mothers in the Tanzanian context. The findings are based on a specific geographical context, and the experiences of teenage pregnant mothers may vary across different regions. Future research should consider conducting comparative studies across diverse settings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the

challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers and the effectiveness of interventions. Additionally, exploring the long-term impacts of educational support on the well-being and socio-economic outcomes of teenage mothers would contribute to the existing knowledge base. Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a deeper analysis and synthesis of the challenges faced by teenage pregnant mothers when they attempt to return to school. By contextualizing the findings within the broader global perspectives and drawing upon theories and previous research studies, this study offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and practitioners involved in supporting the educational aspirations of teenage mothers. Efforts to address these challenges should be rooted in an understanding of the unique experiences and needs of teenage pregnant mothers while considering the broader socio-cultural and policy contexts in which they operate.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

This study aimed to explore the challenges faced by teenage mothers when re-entering secondary education in Ilala Municipal. The findings revealed several significant difficulties, including childcare obligations, social stigma, financial limitations, lack of social networks and academic stress. These challenges impact the educational experiences and outcomes of teenage mothers, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms. The results of this study emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing the specific needs of teenage mothers in the educational system. Educational authorities, policymakers and relevant stakeholders must develop comprehensive strategies and policies that promote inclusivity, support and empowerment for teenage mothers (Chiyota, 2020; Ngonyani, 2022). To address the challenge of childcare obligations, accessible and affordable childcare services should be integrated into the educational system (Fallis, 2013). This will help teenage mothers balance their parental responsibilities with their educational pursuits. Additionally, promoting awareness campaigns and implementing anti-stigma interventions can help combat social stigma and create inclusive school environments that foster a supportive atmosphere for teenage mothers (Birchall, 2018; Farida & Bali, 2014). The lack of social networks and support systems compounds the challenges faced by teenage mothers. Laiser and Muyinga (2017) document

that establishing peer support networks, mentorship programmes, and counseling services within educational institutions can provide the necessary guidance, encouragement and emotional support to teenage mothers, facilitating their educational persistence and success.

Academic stress is a pressing issue for teenage mothers. As urged by Marende (2021), educational institutions should implement comprehensive academic support programmes, including tutoring services and flexible scheduling, to alleviate academic stress and promote educational achievements amongst teenage mothers. Further research is needed to explore additional dimensions of the experiences of teenage mothers and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at addressing their challenges (Farida & Bali, 2014; Ngonyani, 2022; Uromi, 2014). By continually expanding our knowledge and understanding, it is advised to continue to develop evidence-based strategies that positively impact the lives of teenage mothers and contribute to their overall well-being and empowerment. In conclusion, it is essential to recognize the resilience, determination and potential of teenage mothers. By providing the necessary support and opportunities, to empower them to break the cycle of poverty, overcome societal barriers and become agents of positive change in their own lives and society as a whole.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by teenage mothers when re-entering secondary education in Tanzania: *Enhance accessible and affordable childcare services:* School managers and educational practitioners should collaborate to integrate accessible and affordable childcare services within the educational system. This will enable teenage mothers to balance their parental responsibilities with their educational pursuits, ensuring that they can attend school regularly and participate fully in their studies. *Promotion of awareness campaigns and anti-stigma interventions:* Schools and relevant private organizations may initiate awareness campaigns to challenge and change the social stigma surrounding teenage motherhood. By promoting understanding, empathy and acceptance, these campaigns can create a supportive and inclusive environment for teenage mothers within educational institutions and the wider community. *Establish Financial Assistance Programmes:* To

alleviate the financial burdens faced by teenage mothers, educational institutions and government bodies should develop and implement targeted financial assistance programmes and scholarships. These initiatives should specifically address educational expenses, such as school fees, uniforms, textbooks, and transportation costs, ensuring that financial limitations do not impede the educational opportunities of teenage mothers.

*Create Peer Support Networks and Mentorship Programmes:* Educational institutions should establish peer support networks, psychosocial support and mentorship programmes for teenage mothers. These platforms will provide opportunities for teenage mothers to connect with and learn from their peers who have similar experiences. Mentorship programmes can also offer guidance and support from older students or community members, fostering resilience, motivation and personal growth.

*Implement Comprehensive Academic Support Programmes:* Educational institutions should develop comprehensive academic support programmes tailored to the unique needs of teenage mothers. These programmes may include tutoring services, flexible scheduling options and additional educational resources to help teenage mothers manage their academic workload while juggling their parental responsibilities. Providing academic support will contribute to their educational success and overall well-being.



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