

# TRAVELOGUE OF PREGNANT TEENAGERS IN ILOCOS SUR, PHILIPPINES

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## Abstract

The study explored the journey of teenagers leading to pregnancy. Data is collected from September 2017 to June 2018. This study used the descriptive phenomenological method of research.

The participants of the study were the six teenage pregnant mothers aged 16 years old and below, sought consultation at the Municipal Health Office, and from the First District of Ilocos Sur. An in-depth semi-structured interview using a researcher-made interview guide were used to gather the data needed. Data analysis was done using the Collaizi 7 steps process.

The themes that emerged in the study are reasons of having a boyfriend, in a relationship, and pregnancy. Low socio-economic status, peer, partner influence, and use of social media particularly facebook are the factors/reasons that contributed to teenage pregnancy. While the participants are in a relationship, they went on intimate dating and end up being unexpected mothers. Their boyfriends took their responsibility upon learning that they are pregnant, while

parents became emotional and disappointed, did not lose hope, and encouraged their pregnant teens to continue their studies for better opportunities in life.

Based on the conclusions drawn, it is recommended that: 1) Parents should provide quality time, open communication, love, care, concern, and keep track of the activities of their teenagers. 2) The LGU should empower teenagers to cope with the challenges brought about by their relationship and pregnancy. 3) The DOH and the academe must provide health education classes on how to avoid unwanted sex. 4) The government should provide scholarship programs and support services to pregnant and parenting teenagers.

Keywords: Poverty, Peer influence, Immaturity, Risk Behaviors and Pregnancy

## INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a physiological process accompanied by physical changes and may expose women to a different risk. The ideal age of women to become pregnant is 20-30 years old. However, many women today got pregnant at a very early age.

Teenage year is a period when young girls have tend to be sexually active. The first explanation why they tend to be sexually active during this period is the increase in hormone production activated by brain and body developments that make them powerfully connected in the extreme feelings of sexual attraction and falling in love. Testosterone and estrogen – male and female sex hormones result in intensified sexual urges. Moreover, the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin are associated with attachment and bonding. These hormones have great effects on mood and libido (Moore, 2018).

The second explanation why teenagers get physical attractiveness to the opposite sex is a social one. The development of secondary sex characteristics at puberty (breast development, hair growth, etc.) acts as a signal that the individual has matured and is “ready” for sexual activity. The timing of such events relative to hormonal levels is not known precisely. Nor is the relationship between hormonal levels and sexual motivation known (Hofferth).

Teenage stage is the in-between phase from childhood to adulthood. During this period, teens undergo the process of physical, mental, and psychological development. Teenagers fall in the loving relationship, in which they start to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. Mass media, movies, and information technology influence the teenagers to fall into an intimate relationship (“Teens and Dating, 2017).

III Zeuse (2011) stated that according to the UNICEF, each year there are 13 million births worldwide each year occur to girls younger than 19 years. According to Langham (2015), approximately 750,000 of teenagers become pregnant each year.

The Philippines has the utmost rate of juvenile pregnancies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and is increasing steadily. Data from the Philippine Service Authority revealed that around 24 babies are born by teenage mothers every hour (<http://www.worldvision.org/ph/presscentre/teenage>). The UN Population Fund said that the Philippines is the lone country in the Asia-Pacific region where the rate of teen pregnancies rose over the last two eras (<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016>). May-i Fabros, a Youth Commissioner of the Philippine Commission on Women, said that 600 live births a day are registered as given birth by teenage mothers. One out of three adolescents had sexual intercourse with partners and the numbers are growing (Mendoza).

The UN Population Fund claimed that in developing countries, 20,000 girls below the age 18 give birth everyday which is equivalent to 7.3 million births a year. Teenage pregnancy is generally not the result of a careful choice; early pregnancy is a result of little or no access to school, information or health care.

In a study conducted by Pitso (2013), most (about 79%) of the pregnant teenagers were not aware of the roles and responsibilities of motherhood. In addition to being not ready to face the psycho-social challenges of motherhood. Hence they indicated low level of readiness to motherhood.

The above scenario prompted the researchers to conduct this study on teenage pregnancy in Ilocos Sur since they believed that there should be a close correspondence among professional viewpoints and the teenage mothers as end users of government as a principal component of a socially significant work. Therefore, the results of the study would serve for the Department of Health and Municipal Health Offices to design programs for teenagers to reduce the increasing number of teenage pregnancy. It would also serve as a foundation for the health care workers to align the care needed by pregnant adolescents and their relatives. Moreover, for the academe to integrate into its curriculum how to help teenagers avoid unwanted pregnancy, how to cope with the changes conveyed about by pregnancy, and how to become responsible parents in the future.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study explored teenage pregnancy. It determined: a) why and how teenage pregnant mothers went through their sexual relationship that ends up to pregnancy, b) the initial reaction of their boyfriends towards their pregnancy, and c) how parents dealt with their pregnant adolescents.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK / RELATED LITERATURE OF THE STUDY**

According to the UNICEF (2008), adolescent pregnancy is a teenage girl aged 13-19, who becomes pregnant. Often, the terms teenage pregnancy and adolescent pregnancy are used interchangeably. (Yasmin, Kumar, & Parihar, 2014). Langham (2015), stated that teen pregnancy is defined as an unintentional pregnancy during puberty.

Teenage is a growing and a transitional period wherein physical, mental, and social improvements happen. Due to the production of sexual hormones, longing for sex rises. The manufacture of sex hormones leads to pre-occupation with sexual intercourse and sexual pleasure occurs. It is natural for teenagers to spend much time thinking about the romantic relationship (Teens and Dating, 2015).

Parenting at an early age was feared because it was contrary to the conventional ethical principles with a destructive effect on the concept of family in the public group. Therefore, an extra effort is observed by parents to prohibit if possible their adolescents from engaging in sexual intercourse at a very early age, since it was seen as part of dating. Advice to avoid pregnancy is constantly set because the pregnancy was seen as an embarrassment to the family, signifying a concrete sign of lack of respect to the family and social values. A number of guidelines was specified on the proper behaviour in relationships with men.

Mothers usually are the ones who take the responsibility to direct and supervise the behaviour of teenagers. Adolescents receive guidelines from parents so as not to give in promptly to men's attempts. They keep on reminding their adolescents that intimate relationships should only be started when they are certain about the good intentions of men, a commitment, and a bond. Maintaining virginity is often clearly valued (Hoga, L., Borges, A., Alvarez, E. 2009).

## **METHODOLOGY**

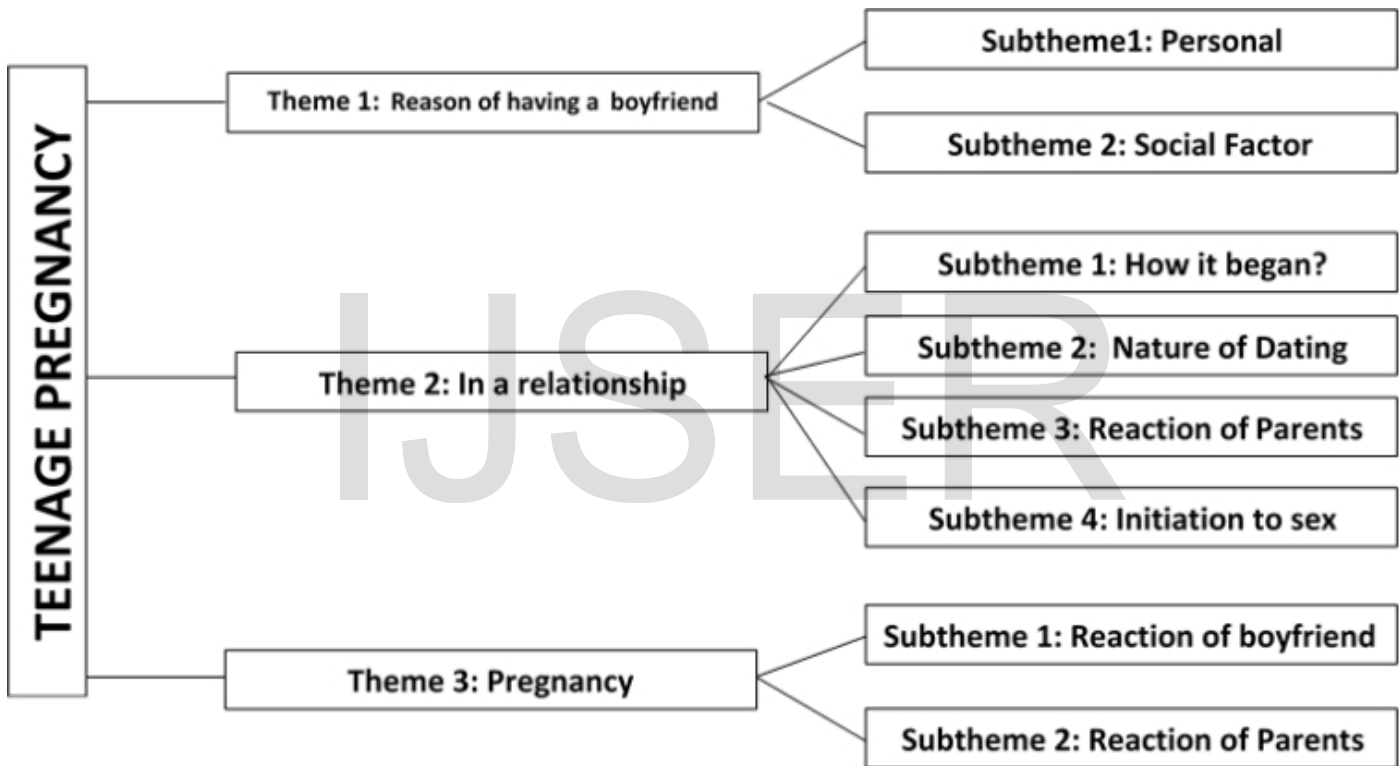
This study used the descriptive phenomenological method of research. It described why why teenage pregnant mothers entered into a sexual relationship, how the sexual relationship developed into a pregnancy, how boyfriends reacted to their pregnancy and how parents assumed their responsibility upon learning that their teens are pregnant. The study is conducted in Ilocos Sur, Philippines from the months of September 2017 to June 2018. The participants of the study were the six pregnant mothers who met the following inclusion criteria: teenager, 16 years old and below, and sought consultation at the Municipal Health Office. To start the data gathering, the researchers sought permission through a letter to the Municipal Mayors and Municipal Health Officers to conduct the study in their area of jurisdiction. To facilitate thematic analysis, the Collaizi 7 steps process enumerated below was used. An in depth interview using a semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data needed. Data were transcribed, coded, and categorized to obtain the result of the study.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researchers sought approval from the Ethics Review Committee of the University of Northern Philippines. Permission was secured from the participants through the informed consent. The researchers were also aware of the risks and sensitive content of each interview and that they instituted measures to mitigate the said risk. The participants are also knowledgeable of their right to withdraw anytime without repercussions. Furthermore, the participants were treated fairly and privacy was ensured. Confidentiality of data was also employed through the use of codes in the transcript file.

The study is subjected for ethical review by the Ethics Committee of the University of Northern Philippines. Principles in ethics was always considered in every step of the research like informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, vulnerability, risk, benefits, and community considerations.

### CONCEPTUAL MAP



The conceptual map of the study details the themes that emerged from the generated data.

**Figure 1**

The conceptual map shows three broad themes: 1) Reasons of having a boyfriend 2) In a relationship 3) Pregnancy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1**

### Profile of the Respondents

| Participant | Age | AOG in weeks | Residence                | Living Arrangement |
|-------------|-----|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1           | 14  | 28           | Caoayan,Ilocos Sur       | Lives with parents |
| 2           | 15  | 24           | Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur | Lives with partner |
| 3           | 15  | 28           | Caoayan,Ilocos Sur       | Lives with partner |
| 4           | 16  | 36           | Caoayan,Ilocos Sur       | Lives with parents |
| 5           | 16  | 20           | Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur | Lives with partner |
| 6           | 16  | 32           | Bantay,Ilocos Sur        | Lives with partner |

The table reflects that half of the respondents are 16 years old and reside in Caoayan, majority lives with their partners, and great percentage are on their 28th week of gestation.

In today's society, teen pregnancy has become an issue, and witnessing a high school pregnant student is no longer a shocking event. Some teenage girls are continually searching for love, attention, and are swayed by seeing their peers having kids because it seems that it is now more acceptable and idealized in today's media (<http://www.divinecaroline.comnd>).

### **REASONS OF HAVING A BOYFRIEND**

This theme focuses on the main reasons why the participants looked for a boyfriend and have two subthemes: Personal and Social Factor.

#### **Personal Factor**



Today's new generation think that engaging into a romantic relationship is the new way of lifestyle. Teenagers get tangled in romance. Being in a loving relationship is one of the things teenagers wish to have. Teens get inquisitive about romance because they watch romantic movies and read romantic novels (Teens and Dating, 2015 ).

Glick (2004) as cited in Schoolworkhelper (2017), found out that teenage pregnancy is more prevalent among families within the lower economic status. Forty percent of women in the lowest socio-economic class gave birth before they reach their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Vincent and Alemu (2016) claimed that the results of their study propose that poverty was an essential factor contributing to pregnancy. Lack of money for school fees led to many girls dropping out of school and sometimes opting instead for marriage. Dropping out of school is supported by the statement of Participant 1 *"I was always absent ma'am because I do not have money."*

The study of Acharya, Bhattari, Poobalan, Teijlingen, & Chapman, (2010) found that risk factors for teenage pregnancy include: socio-economic factors, low educational attainment, cultural, and family structure. Majority of teenage girls are reported with basic knowledge on sexual health. However, very few of them have used the knowledge in practice. Participant 3 shared *"For financial reasons, I do not go to school. My other siblings were not able to finish their studies for the same reason. So, I just helped one of my siblings cared for the children."* Participant 4 disclosed that *"We are economically poor. We are six siblings in the family and I am the 5<sup>th</sup> child. I used to go to school but was dropped out when I was in third year because of my absences for more than a week. I needed a job to cope with poverty so I decided to go to Bulacan with my cousin to work there."*

Teenage girls who belong to the unfortunate families have more tendency to become pregnant. Researchers have found that even in the technologically advanced countries teenage pregnancy occurs most commonly among the underprivileged segments (III-Zeuse, 2011).

### **Social Factor**

Adolescent is the period of forming a group. They tend to look for a group with whom they are comfortable. They tend to experiment on something which they are curious to do. One factor that leads teen girls to become pregnant is peer pressure. Many teens engage in behavior for which they are not yet ready because they want to fit in to their groups. Adolescents tend to explore and join groups which they think can gratify their social needs. Since they wanted to be in a group, they have to follow the group's activities whether it is socially acceptable or not. It is for this reason that young girls can be seen smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, and worst, they also may resort to substance use.

Peer groups are social groups that comprise people of the same age and have similar interests and usually equal regarding the education and social class. Peer groups are crucial as they tend to provide a space to make friends. They also help offer social and emotional support as well as an identity and a sense of belongingness to a social group, especially during adolescence (Peci, 2017).

According to Muscari (1998), pregnancy in the teenager who is 19 years of age or younger often introduces additional stress on an already stressful development period. The emotional level of such teens is commonly characterized by impulsiveness and being self-centered, and they often place primary importance on the beliefs and actions of their peers. It

attempts to establish a personal and independent identity. Many teens do not realize the consequences of their behavior; their thinking processes do not include planning for the future.

This situation holds true among the two participants of the study. Participant 2 said *“I have friends ma’am. We go to different places, roam around, and stay out late at night.”* Participant 3 narrated *“My friends are males and females who usually do not anymore go to school. We usually loiter at the plaza until three o’ clock in the morning.”*

When children grow up, they start spending more time with their friends and less time with their parents. As a result, friends can have more time to influence their friend’s thinking and behavior. Their influence can be positive such as the motivation to pursue studies and to dream big for the future. On the other hand, the influence can be unfavorable such as encouraging the child to be always with the group and do risky activities and behaviors as a way of exploring.

When asked about the participants’ other activities, Participant 2 said *“I have friends ma’am. We smoke, loiter to places, and we usually stay late in the evening outside.”*

Participant 3 narrated *“My friends are not anymore reporting to school. They are males and females. We loiter and drink liquor.”*

Participant 5 also narrated *“My friends are my classmate’s, ma’am. Often when there is nothing to do or when we do not have classess, we drink liquor.”*

Among the adolescents, peer pressure is a leading factor that inspires the teenage boys and girls to indulge in sexual activities. Prompt dating, as early as 12 years of age, is additional influence that increases the occurrence of teen pregnancy (III-Zeuse, 2011).

Langham (2015) stated that during adolescence, teenagers frequently feel pressure to gain friends and blend in with their peers. Several times these teens allow their friends influence their choice to have sex even when they do not fully know the effects related with the act. Teenagers have sex as a way to appear relax and fashionable, but in some cases, the result is unplanned teen pregnancy. Langham (2015) further stated that according to the Kaiser Family Foundation above 29 percent of pregnant teens narrated that they felt pressured to have sex.

### **IN A RELATIONSHIP**

This theme focuses on how the relationship started, the way of dating, the response of the parents to the relationship, and how the relationship led to sexual relationship. It is divided into four subthemes: How it Began, Nature of Dating, Reaction of Parents, and Initiation to Sex.

The immature and irresponsible behavior arising due to complex teenage psychology is another important cause of teenage pregnancies. Teenagers often go through some emotions because of their transition from childhood and peer pressure. Also, weak family relationships fail to provide the emotional support that teenagers require. This lack of attention and affection from family forces them to seek love and support from other people, especially members of the opposite sex (Speedy Remedies.com. nd).

#### **How the Relationship Began**

When the researchers asked the participants “How did you get into a relationship?” All the participants disclosed how they met their boyfriend.

Participant 1 related *“He came to our house before. He introduced himself to my parents with the intention of courting me.”*

Participant 2 described *“I have a best friend who lives somewhere in their place which introduced me to him. We were texting and sending messages since then.”* Participant 3 said *“He is my younger sister’s friend ma’am. He keeps texting my said sister. I sometimes read his messages when I borrow the phone which made us know each other and get acquainted. So it is in text that we were acquainted with each other and became close.”* Participant 5 also narrated *“We are acquainted through facebook ma’am.”*

Nowadays, teenagers meet with the use of up-to-date technology. They meet via telephone, computer, or meet in person (Wikipedia, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating>).

Participant 4 said *“I went to my cousin to help me look for a job. It was not long when I was hired. This is where I met my boyfriend”*.

Participant 6 described *“I met him when I went to my father’s place ma’am. He was introduced to me by his friend.”*

### **Nature of Dating**

Dating is a stage of intimate relationships in humans whereby two persons meet socially. The usual aim of dating is to assess the other’s appropriateness as a future partner in an intimate relation. It is a form of courtship, comprising of social activities done by the partners, either alone or with others. Dating may also consist of two or more people who have already agreed that they share romantic or sexual feelings with each other. These people will have dates on a

steady basis, and they may or may not be having stimulating relations. Some cultures necessitate people to wait until a definite age to initiate dating. Nowadays, this form of courtship is usually seen among teenagers which is sometimes lead to teen pregnancy (Wikipedia, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating>).

In an interview with Dil Dhungyel, he stated that teenage period is the most disturbing stage of one's life. He claimed that practices of teens are changed and are exposed to more tasks of a household, having children at a young age which make them become hard up to pursue an education that leads to frustrations. He further stated that frustrations occur because of a minor error of dating, however, for him, dating is not a frightful activity as many think so. It is a delicate phase activity which can twist the pathway of life. He concluded that therefore, teens must be sufficiently be cultivated to comprehend the actual implication and purpose of dating. When one performs dating with a clear understanding, it can bring confidence on parents about their children's decision for a fruitful life (Teens and Dating, 2015)

Bhattarai and Kathmandu said that one cannot completely stop dating in teens. Prohibiting dating is a hard work for parents and learning institutions (Teens and Dating, 2015)

Shah, Balkumari, and Lalitpur claimed that teenagers should not be permitted to date since teenage period is a crucial stage in life to get ready for future life. At this moment, one can

fall in love or go on dates. But she/he should regulate his/her emotion as much as possible (Teens and Dating, 2015).

With the beginning of adolescence, teens devote a reduced amount of time with family and more time with peers. In the early teen years, mixed-gender groups prevail. About two-thirds of high school mid-teens report they have dated or are in a romantic relationship. Teenager's social development and personal identity is affected by having a boyfriend or girlfriend in high school (Kilpatrick, 2018).

Participant 1 related *"We were dating each other before we became lovers and we do that often. It took him four months to court me. It was easy to love him back because of his sincerity and the fact that he supported my studies."*

Participant 4 described *"We usually are together joking and laughing before which made us closer until an intimacy was developed making us girlfriend and boyfriend."*

Participant 3 said *"We got acquainted through texting and we saw each other since then. Sometimes I go to their place, we stay at the plaza, and he too visits me at home. It was after two years of dating before I said yes to him."*

Participant 5 also narrated *"We got acquainted through facebook ma'am. We met personally in two weeks. We usually saw and enjoy each other twice a week for three months, this is how he courted me before I said yes to him."* Participant 6 described *"We started chatting*

*through messenger since we met. We saw each other too, and often we met at their place, and we roam there. It took several weeks before we became boyfriend and girlfriend.”*

The result proves the statement of Spira as cited by Pan (2012) that the new trend in getting acquainted with boyfriends and girlfriends or as a new form of dating is through social media. He considered this to be a big mistake because for him, according to experts fast friends on social media could result in hurt feelings.

Participant 2 described *“I was 15 years old when we became lovers ma’am. It took him three months to court me before I acknowledged his love. It seems it was very easy for me to say yes to him for the thought that I was the only one among my friends who does not have a boyfriend. I have a friend ma’am who was engaged early and got married.”*

Another study (Lewis & Lewis, 1984) as cited in Hoeffferth shows that children are often challenged by “challenges” from peers to engage in risk-taking behavior. About one-third of older children did what they were challenged to do. Among seventh and eight graders, boys were dared to engage in various sexual acts, ranging from a kiss to sexual intercourse.

### **The Reaction of Parents to the Relationship**

Parents should manage teenage relationships it in a friendly way. They should trust their children so they will feel worthy and maintain a friendly connection with them (Teens and Dating, 2015).



Recalling her parents' reactions, Participant 3 narrated *"He brought me home to get acquainted with his mother. Sometimes I sleep at their house and goes home at dawn. I do that everytime he tells me. This made my mother wonder and presumed that we are lovers."*

Participant 3 further said, *"There were no violent reactions from my parents though, rather, they told me to stay with him rather than me going to their place often. So we are now living together in our home."*

The result of the study negates the statement of Hoga, L., Borges, A., Alvarez, E., (2009) that in times parents are made aware of the relationship, there was the possibility of punitive actions, including driving adolescents away from home.

Participant 2 also added and said *"At first, my parents do not like me to be in a relationship because I am still young. They advised me to focus on my studies."*

Parents impose too many limitations on their children, especially girls to keep them from dangers (<http://www.speedyremedies.com>nd).

The result coincides with the practice in Nepali society, that teens who are in a romantic relationship with the opposite sex are not treated positively. Parents are often anxious about their children's grades, future, and are bound to oppose if they see their sons/daughters entered in a romantic relationship (Teens and Dating, 2015)

Also, Participant 4 told the researchers *"My parents just said, "be careful." My parents' reaction was due to the fact that my boyfriend and I are already living together."*

Due to teens' behavior, parents discipline their child. Disciplining the child is a manifestation that parents are very much thoughtful of the teens' situation, that instead of giving the child the needed punishment, they just give pieces of advice to their child.

Participant 1 recounted *"My parents did not know beforehand. I did not tell them, but it was obvious to my mother that we were lovers then. I had no choice than to tell them the truth about us. I was scolded because it was too young for me to get involved in such kind of relationship. I was given pieces of advice afterwards."*

Participant 5 said *"They got mad when they knew it ma'am. They said that I am still young and must prioritize my studies for a brighter future."*

Parents are bound to act bitterly if they witness their sons/daughters engaged in a romantic relationship. They advice their teens not to go on dating (Teens and Dating, 2015)

Participant 6 narrated. *"I was told when they knew that I have a boyfriend that I am still young and life is not that easy. I should focus first on my studies and forget all about having a boyfriend."*

Nepali guardians practice a conservative culture. They usually advice their youngster from being away in a relationship. They are after their self-respect and honour in society and think their child is too immature to be in love. They are also fearful of their child to be involved in sexual activities (Teens and Dating, 2015).

Teenagers should observe friendly relationships, but not romantic. They can date so they will be good friends and can choose a deserving life partner when they are capable of in the

future. They should learn from their good and bad experiences in the relationship. Teenage dating and relationship should not be prohibited, but sexual attraction must be discouraged (Teens and Dating, 2015).

### **Initiation to Sex**

Most teens get pregnant due to unprotected sexual intercourse, a lack of maturity, and a lack of personal responsibility (Saha, 2017).

Mostrom (2015), found that one of the reasons that the teen reports for becoming pregnant are the influence of alcohol or drugs and boyfriend's influence. Participants 3 and 5 agree with this findings. Participant 3 shared *"At first, I was reluctant and refused to do the act with him but eventually, I gave in. He was drunk and insisted me to do it."*

Participant 5 describe *"We were at their house when we did sexual intercourse, ma'am. I was drunk, but he was not. That was the first and only time, but unexpectedly, I got pregnant."*

Aside from problem attitudes, intoxication to alcohol also clouds judgment and weakens resistance to sexual overtures. Excessive alcohol drinking may result in premarital sex. (<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/preparing-for-marriage/why-wait-for-sex/risk-factors-for-premarital-sex>).

Drinking alcohol during the teenage years can cause unplanned pregnancy. Many teens go on experimentation with drugs and alcohol. Drinking alcoholic beverages lowers a teen's capacity to control her instincts, adding to 75 percent of pregnancies that take place between the

ages 14 and 21. Around 91 percent of pregnant teens testified that although they were drinking at the time, they did not initially plan to have sex when they conceived (Langham, 2015).

Alcohol and substance abuse associated with unrestricted interaction with the opposite sex can burst into lust in youngsters leading to teenage pregnancy (<http://www.speedyremedies.com> nd).

According to the United Nations Population Fund and the Commission on Population, the rising quantity of young Filipinos who perform sex before marriage or premarital sex (PMS) do it in their boyfriends' home environment. The report, entitled "State of the Population Report, 2nd Issue," shows that the "the most common setting for sexual debut" of young Filipino females in urban areas are in their partners' homes.

Participant 1 said *"The moment we became lovers, my boyfriend encouraged me to live with him and I am happy for his decision ma'am. I conceived after we lived together."*

Participant 6 told the researchers *"We were with our friends during that time. When we were given a chance to be alone, he told me that he wants to make love with me. At first, I was ambivalent, but I gave in. Because of this, I missed my monthly period."*

Girls believe that they are inferior to boys, they tend to engage in early sexual activities that possibly would result in unwanted teenage pregnancy.

For girls, giving in to the pressure from their boyfriends to make love with them, is way to prove their commitment to a relationship. The girl, desiring to be accepted by the boy, vintages to the pressure that resulted in pregnancy (White, 1994).

As incredible as it seems, many of today's teens become pregnant through sexual ignorance. Their parents find it impossible, through lack of time or embarrassment, to impart correct information about sex to their children (White, 1994).

Participant 2 related *"We decided to have an intimate relationship. We did not plan to have a child, but it just happened."*

Unintended pregnancy is a pregnancy that is either unwanted or mistimed, that is, the pregnancy occurred earlier than desired. Unintended pregnancy mainly results from not using contraceptive methods (<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/index.htm>).

Participant 4 narrated *"We were lovers for about nine months when we decide to live together, then became pregnant since then."*

## **PREGNANCY**

This theme focuses on the response of the boyfriend and parents to the pregnancy and is characterized by the following sub-themes: The Reaction of Boyfriend and The Reaction of Parents.

### **The Reaction of Boyfriend to Pregnancy**

Research revealed that young fathers are concerned about financially supporting the mother and child, completing schooling, the health and welfare of mother and child, and taking care of the child. Most research indicates that fathers do want to be involved with the child (Barret & Robinson, 1990).

The above statements were confirmed by Participant 1 when she said: “ *He made assurance to support and provide all our needs.*” Providing and supporting the needs of the girlfriend and the pregnancy is also true to Participant 3 who narrated “*He was not surprised nor was shocked because he was ready then. He was happy when he knew I was pregnant because he wanted to have a child especially a female one. He was ready to marry me.*” Participant 4 also said: “*He was happy when he learned that I am pregnant.*”

Some young fathers seem to be negligent and surprised when they learn that their girlfriend is pregnant (Barret & Robinson, 1990). They cannot believe that conception happened. This scenario holds true to the three participants of the study. Participant 2 recounted “*He was worried when I told him I am pregnant. He too was afraid to confess to his father band to my parents regarding our situation. He only got the courage when I told him to do so.*”

Participant 5 narrated “*He was shocked ma’am. He did not expect that I will become pregnant. He apologized and assured me of his support.*”

Participant 6 narrated “*I only told him when I missed my monthly period. His doubts drove him to presume that I might menstruate later. After a month, I told him again, and he accepted my situation.*”

### **The Reaction of Parents to Pregnancy**

Revealing to the family the occurrence of pregnancy is often accompanied by fear. Pregnancy occurring during young age led to bigger apprehension because it was a clear manifestation of not following the guidelines given. In some families, pregnancy is kept as a secret up to the limit because there was the fear of being punished. Some adolescents ran away from home which made family members suspicious of a pregnancy (Hoga, L., Borges, A., Alvarez, E. 2009).

It is considered that the initial reaction of parents upon knowing that their teen is pregnant is intense emotion characterized by anger, disbelief, and rejection.

This scenario holds true for the two participants of the study. Participant 2 narrated *“I had difficulty coping with my parent’s ma’am. I was scolded much because of my young age. I had no choice than to bear the consequences of my actions. I was not beaten by my parents, but my father cried.”*

Participant 5 said *“I am beaten by my mother ma’am. She said: “You told me you were going to school, but this what you did.” I cried, I patiently endured all the hurting words and beating since it is my fault. I was told to call for my boyfriend’s parents for our settlement.”*

The result of this study coincides with the statement of Hoga, Borges, and Alvarez (2009) that revealing to parents the early pregnancy is a hard work. There would be a possibility of a hard and punitive actions. In some families, the mother was the most feared person and, in these cases, fathers performed the role of moderators in the family conflict.

From the very beginning, parents provide not only the material needs of their children but also inspire their children by their own exemplary life. They never neglect to correct their

childrens' faults and teach them to learn from their mistakes. Some parents, when they learn that their teen is pregnant, may become emotional, disappointed but accept and understand their child's situation.

As she tries to recall the situation, Participant 1 said *"They accepted my pregnancy because my boyfriend and I are already living together. I was advised to keep safe and not to neglect myself."*

Participant 4 who narrated *"My parents expected that anytime I would be pregnant because they are aware that I am already living with my boyfriend. My mother advised me to keep safe"*.

Fears were lesser when the couple was in a steady relationship, and there were already wedding plans. Irrespective of the link between couples and the conditions involved, pregnancy led to hindrance because it implied the need to discontinue or change the family project (Hoga, L., Borges, A., Alvarez, E.2009).

The same thought was shared by Participant 3 when she uttered *"I am not scolded when my parents knew I was pregnant. They just told us to get married. I am also advised to be safe and not to lift heavy objects."*

Authoritarian parents form directions and rules that their children are expected to follow. They expect their children to be independent but also set fixed limits on what their children are allowed to do. They are receptive to their children and are eager to listen to queries. When children are unable to meet the expectations, these parents are more caring rather than punishing (Rosenthal, 2009).



The nurturing attitude of parents is also affirmed by the reaction of the parents of Participant 6 who said *“My parents did not hurt me but they scolded me. They told me, what else could be done, it is already there.”*

Parents are equally responsible for providing the needs of their children such as material and psychological needs. They keep their children in healthy environments and rear them to be useful and practical members of society.

Other parents, despite their frustration with their child, did not lose hope and still encourage their teen to strive and continue her education. Participant 2 said *“We were allowed to continue our studies. I asked forgiveness from them.”*

All families provided some type of support for adolescents. Provision of support occurred in several ways, either by having the adolescents that continued to be single and their children in their own house or by monetary sustenance and help in rearing the children ( Hoga, L., Borges, A., Alvarez, E. 2009).

Children should be respectful and must never do anything that will hurt the feelings of their parents. They must be grateful, listen to the advice of their parents, and consult them regarding important decisions and learn to be honest and truthful to them.

## CONCLUSIONS

Teenage pregnancy is related to poverty, fear of being adjudged by the social group they are in, and due to boyfriend's influence. Upon the realization of the teenage mother that she is pregnant, their boyfriends' love predominated , they took their responsibility despite their being

young and unprepared fathers. Parents' value for familism reigned. Despite disappointment, they extended support to their pregnant adolescents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are forwarded: 1) Parents should provide quality time, open communication, love, care, concern, and keep track of the activities of their teenagers. 2) The LGU should conduct health education classes and counselling to teenagers to help them cope with the challenges during in engaging into a relationship and pregnancy. 3) The DOH and the academe must provide health education classes on how to avoid unwanted sex. 4) The government should provide scholarship programs and support services to pregnant and parenting teenagers.

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