

**Educational Participation and Achievement of Teen Mothers:
The Case of Vhembe District of the
Limpopo Province, South Africa**T. J. Mudau¹, H. N. Mutshaeni² and T. Runhare³¹*Institute for Gender and Youth Studies, School of Human and Social Sciences**E-mail: Thizwilondi.Mudau@univen.ac.za*²*Centre for Higher Education Teaching and Learning*³*School of Education, University of Venda, South Africa***KEYWORDS** Teenage Pregnancy. Teenage Motherhood. Educational Participation. Academic Performance. School Drop Out

ABSTRACT This paper explores the educational participation and achievement of teen mothers in South Africa with specific reference to the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. The paper is based on a study that investigated school attendance at school and academic performance by teen mothers in the Vhembe District schools. The sample consisted of sixty teenage mothers, eighteen teachers and six principals who were purposively selected. Qualitative research design was used to collect rich descriptive data of teenage mothers on their experiences and attitudes of the phenomenon under investigation, namely, teenage motherhood. Data were collected using in-depth and focus group interviews. The data were analysed thematically by identifying and expanding significant themes that emerged from the informants' perceptions. The paper revealed that teen motherhood has a negative effect on school attendance and academic performance because of multiple responsibilities that hinder concentration on schooling. From the results of the study, this paper recommends that learners should focus more on their studies in order to avoid delays in school completion and dropout due to pregnancy and teen motherhood. It is also recommended that government introduces a new method of disbursing child support grants which do not cause school absenteeism among teen mothers.