

Teenage Pregnancy in South Africa: A Challenge to Democracy

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ABSTRACT Teenagers continue to fall pregnant despite living in countries which not only guarantee their reproductive and sexual rights but also attempt to protect them. Some have argued that these teenagers are being irresponsible but this is illogical as it reflects a myopic view of society regarding teenage issues. Teenage pregnancy is a result of environment/structural issues and society's failure to protect young girls. Males of all ages make unwanted sexual advances towards teenage girls with impunity. Force seems to be the main contributor to teenage pregnancy, but myriad factors such as gender stereotypes, the efficacy and expansiveness of Adolescent Health Programmes, the inaccessibility of family planning services and inadequate knowledge about sexuality and reproduction cannot be discounted. The present paper, therefore, examines some of the issues which may contribute to teenage pregnancy. It is anticipated the paper would help clarify the problems of teenage pregnancy and also suggest effective ways to deal with the problem.