
Stakeholders' Contributions on Implementing Re-admission of Adolescent Mothers in the Public Alternative Secondary Education Pathway in Ilemela District, Mwanza, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify the contributions of stakeholders to implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in public alternative secondary education pathways in Ilemela District. The study used a mixed research approach and an embedded mixed-method research design. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative data. Simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and stratified random sampling were applied to obtain a sample size of 111 respondents. Data was gathered using questionnaires, interviews, and a documentary review. The content and face validity of the instrument were checked. Also, the reliability of the instruments was checked, and a correlation coefficient of 0.7 shows that the instruments were valid and reliable. Data gathered from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics aided by Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21, and data collected from interviews and documentary reviews was analyzed thematically. The findings revealed various contributions made by stakeholders in implementing the program, like the provision of teaching and learning materials, paid teachers' allowances and fee compensation, financial assistance, guidance, and counseling. The study concluded that the re-admission program should be improved by constructing more centers, providing the resources needed for learning and daycare centers for taking care of babies of adolescent mothers, and promoting more education about the program to parents and adolescent mothers to encourage many more adolescent mothers to join and reduce the burden of having uneducated mothers in society in the future.

Keywords— educational stakeholder, adolescent mother, alternative secondary education pathway (ASEP), re-admission.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an aspect of empowering women because it gives them the ability to react to challenges, oppose traditional roles that hinder development, and result in development and welfare (Channawar, 2016; Sundaram et al., 2014). Adolescent pregnancy suffers severely from the long-term health and social consequences of pregnancy, which led to school dropouts before completing their studies. As a result,

they become more vulnerable to poverty (UNICEF, 1999). Based on a survey conducted by the World Health Organization in 2015, developed countries such as New Zealand revealed the second-highest incidence of adolescent pregnancies among developed nations. Specifically, the rate was 51 per 1,000 women during the aforementioned year. According to Webber (2018), New York City has implemented a school re-entry policy that

allows young mothers to pursue their educational goals. Trends show that despite this policy, a significant proportion of teenage mothers, namely 70%, continue to have challenges participating in school after giving birth. This lack of participation is mostly attributed to insufficient support from their families and the broader community. There are efforts to combat gender inequality in African countries such as Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Uganda. One of these efforts is the introduction and implementation of a policy allowing adolescent mothers to re-enter official educational institutions (Assey, 2012).

The government of Tanzania has confirmed its dedication to the World Bank regarding the help of students who have discontinued their education in public secondary schools due to various circumstances, such as pregnancy among adolescent females and young moms. The government of Tanzania has decided to implement a plan for the re-admission of pregnant girls and adolescent mothers into the Adult Education Pathway (AEP) Centers and Folk Development Colleges (FDC) settings. These settings are commonly referred to as Alternative Secondary Education Pathway (ASEP) centers or open schools. The reintegration of adolescent mothers into ASEP centers provides them with the opportunity to engage in educational activities alongside peers of the same age. This allows them to take responsibility for their learning, including determining their study materials, learning methods, and preferred pace of work. Additionally, they can access any available supplemental learning support and choose when to take their examinations. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the Institute of Academic Excellence (2022), the curriculum requires a minimum time commitment of two years, divided into three stages: Stage I, which spans one year for studying form one and form two secondary school subjects; Stage II, which also spans one year for form three and form four subjects; and Stage III, which spans one year for form five and form six subjects.

Raymond (2020) asserts that pupils who achieve successful outcomes in their Form 4 or Form 6 examinations possess the opportunity to continue higher education inside the public school or college system, regardless of their institutional affiliation. The discontinuation of the practice of reintegrating pregnant girls and adolescent mothers into regular schools has been enacted by the government, as reported by The Guardian (2020). Conversely, these folks are presently being directed to alternative

education centers where they can undertake their examinations. Consequently, it is anticipated that students will ultimately return to attending state-owned educational institutions.

On November 24, 2021, the Tanzanian government made an official declaration about the implementation of a policy allowing for the re-admission of adolescent mothers. In February 2022, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology released the initial Education Circular No. 2, 2021, which stipulated that the government would permit the re-enrollment of pupils who had been dismissed from school for a range of reasons, including pregnancy, into formal educational institutions (MoEST, 2022). Once again, in August 2022, the Minister of Education Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Institute of Adult Education, released a new guideline. This guideline aims to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive explanation regarding the re-admission of students who have discontinued their secondary education due to various reasons, such as early pregnancies. The guideline emphasizes that these students should be enrolled in alternative education pathways (ASEP) centers (MoEST and IAE, 2022).

According to the government report of 2021, Tanzania has 151 government Adult Education Pathway (AEP) centers and 30 Folk Development Colleges (FDC), which provide secondary education in mostly peri-urban and semi-rural areas (Sembono, 2022). Mwanza region has opened 14 Alternative Secondary Education Pathway centers where about 241 adolescent girls and mothers who previously dropped out from school have already re-admitted to continue with their secondary education, as reported by the representative of the director of the management board of the adult education institution on June 14, 2022. In the Ilemela District of Mwanza, there are 7 Alternative Secondary Education Pathway (ASEP) centers. These centers provide a secondary education program specifically designed for students who have been re-admitted after dropping out of school due to various circumstances, such as pregnancy among adolescent girls. Despite having this guideline in place, different stakeholders have been required to offer different contributions to the implementation of re-admission of adolescent mothers in ASEP centers and schools. Therefore, this paper aimed to identify the stakeholders' contributions in implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in public alternative secondary education pathways in Ilemela District.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature

This paper was guided by the theory of Liberal Feminist Theory adopted by Naomi Wolf in 1993. This ideology advocates for equitable access to education and employment opportunities for both women and men, achieved through a more equitable distribution of resources. This theory applies to this study because it holds significance in the context of this study as it provides insights into the involvement of female students and brings attention to the dynamics of gender relations within the school environment. The theoretical framework facilitates the interpretation of the negative aspects inherent in family dynamics, liberating female students from various forms of violence and mistreatment. Additionally, it enhances societal consciousness regarding the disparities caused by gender and the socially constructed nature of gender roles. Also, the principles of liberal feminist theory are relevant to the study. Those principles are the principles of participation, non-discrimination, equality, and accountability (Gruskin et al., 2010).

Empirical Literature Review

Stakeholders' contribution to the implementation of re-admission of adolescent mothers in ASEP centers and schools

The successful implementation of re-enrolling adolescent mothers in school depends on the contributions of educational stakeholders. Previous research has indicated the contributions made by stakeholders in implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in alternative secondary education pathway centers or schools.

Christine's research in Zambia (2020) highlighted that the worldwide implementation of re-entry policy guidelines faced challenges due to stakeholders not adequately fulfilling their roles. This deficiency was attributed to the lack of well-defined guidelines within the policy framework, which hindered efficient execution. To ensure the successful reintegration of teenage mothers into secondary schools, policymakers and the government must establish comprehensive policy guidelines that clearly outline the roles and contributions of all involved parties. The admission guideline is very crucial to be known and read by stakeholders to help them get in-depth information and instructions on how to effectively implement the program.

Furthermore, Kurgat, (2016); Kapasule and Kumar, (2020) explored the impact of administrative support on the re-admission of adolescent mothers to secondary schools in Kenya and Malawi. Both studies found that some school principals went above and beyond to support pregnant teens who had dropped out by inviting them back and offering necessary accommodations. As a result of these efforts, many parents who had initially denied re-admission to their teenage daughters are now receiving much-needed support. This highlights the effective implementation of re-admission policies at schools.

In addition, Mbugua's research (2013) suggested that, despite the availability of re-admission policy guidelines, many pregnant girls in public schools were not benefiting from them due to a lack of awareness and action from key stakeholders. It is essential for all relevant parties to actively engage with and understand the re-admission rules outlined in detail. This understanding enables them to participate effectively and adhere to the rules, ensuring the proper implementation of the government program. Without such awareness and engagement, the re-admission process may not be carried out effectively, and young mothers may continue to be denied access to higher education.

Likewise, Tarus's study (2020) found a lack of awareness among stakeholders regarding the re-entry policy for young mothers in public secondary schools in Kenya. This lack of knowledge extended to the rights and responsibilities associated with the policy. While the re-entry program showed partial success in reintegrating teenage mothers into the educational system, it fell short of addressing the overall dropout rate resulting from pregnancy. The government holds the contribution of providing education and disseminating comprehensive re-admission guidelines to relevant stakeholders, which is crucial for the program's successful execution.

Also, Chigona and Chetty (2008) pointed out that the lack of support from key stakeholders, such as parents, head teachers, and other teachers, significantly hindered the academic success of adolescent mothers. This lack of support was evident in their failure to provide advice, counseling, material assistance, and academic monitoring. It is crucial for parents to take responsibility for the care of their children and collaborate with educational institutions to offer guidance and counseling to adolescent mothers, enabling them to balance their academic pursuits with the demands of child-rearing.

Wamahiu et al.'s research (2020) emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts among stakeholders in integrating adolescent mothers into secondary schools in Samburu, Kenya. This collaboration involves providing guidance and counseling services, allocating additional resources, raising awareness, and offering training programs to personnel involved in the initiative. Comprehensive sexual education for both female and male students was highlighted as crucial to mitigate the involvement in detrimental sexual practices that may lead to educational discontinuation.

Wanjiku's study (2015) revealed that none of the four participants received counseling services upon their reintegration into the educational system following childbirth. This was attributed to financial constraints related to employing professional counselors at schools. Effective guidance and counseling services in both school and home settings can mitigate adolescent pregnancy and facilitate the academic persistence of adolescent mothers.

The Center for the Study of Adolescence (2008) emphasized the need for substantial support from peers, educators, administrators, parents, and the broader community to help adolescent mothers navigate their new circumstances and continue their commitment to academic pursuits. These efforts should also involve garnering support from the local community and require individuals to acquire knowledge and collaborate with other relevant parties to effectively administer the program.

In the Tanzanian context, the government introduced the re-admission of all school dropouts, especially pregnant girls and adolescent mothers, into alternative secondary education pathway (ASEP) centers or schools. To ensure the successful implementation of the program, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, through the Institute of Adult Education, provided guidelines specifying the roles of various stakeholders (MoEST, 2022). These guidelines are designed to facilitate the effective reintegration of adolescent mothers into the education system and cover contributions from ward educational officers, heads of schools, parents and guardians, and adolescent mothers themselves.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach that involves the collection and analysis of data using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies within a single study (Tashakkori and

Creswell, 2007). The researcher applied a mixed-methods approach to gain in-depth insight into the study. Also, it allows for the mitigation of the weaknesses of individual approaches while emphasizing their strengths, leading to more robust and accurate findings (Bryman, 2006). Again, an embedded mixed-methods research design was used to simultaneously collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data, with a larger qualitative segment than a quantitative section (Creswell, 2014). The target population of this study was 272, including ward education officers (WEOs), heads of schools, teachers, parents of adolescent mothers, and adolescent mothers found in seven public secondary schools known as the Alternative Secondary Education Pathway (ASEP). The sample size was 111 respondents, and it was convenient for the study as it produced the required information. The study employed both probability sampling (stratified and simple random sampling procedures) to select 32 teachers and 67 adolescent mothers and students and nonprobability sampling (purposive) to select four (4) WEOs, four (4) heads of schools, and four (4) parents of adolescent mothers. The basis for using purposive sampling for those respondents is because they were the relevant and knowledgeable people intended to provide more detailed information since it was assumed to have ideas on the required information and experience as well. In order to determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments, the study used content and face validity and the split-half method based on even and odd numbers (coefficients of 0.80 and 0.74 showed good reliability of instruments), respectively. A sample of 20 adolescent mothers and five teachers in a selected school was used for pre-testing. Data were collected using questionnaires and an unstructured interview. Also, the qualitative data from interviews and documentary reviews was analyzed thematically (words), that is, statements, explanations, and discussions, by using content analysis. On the other side, quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) Version 21. The demands of ethics and directives on the research were considered. Proper acknowledgment and citation of all the sources of information used in the study was done throughout this document, adhering to APA Manual 7th in order to avoid plagiarism.

IV. FINDINGS

The researcher collected demographic information from respondents to study their mixture in terms of gender, age, level of education, and work experience

since information from those demographic characteristics of respondents is suitable for the study. Table 2 below presents information on teachers' demographic characteristics:

Table 1 Teachers' Demographic Information (n-29)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	62
	Female	11	38
	Total	29	100
Age	25 years ad below	03	10
	26- 35 years	08	28
	36-45 years	12	41
	46 years and above	06	21
	Total	29	100
Highest level of education	Diploma	09	31
	Bachelor's Degree	16	55
	Master's Degree	04	14
	Total	29	100
Working Experience	5 years and below	03	10
	06-10	07	24
	11-15	12	41
	16-20	02	08
	21 years and above	05	17
Total	29	100	

Table 1 displays the gender distribution of the respondents involved in data collection. The results showed that 62 percent of respondents were male, while 38 percent were female. The study revealed an imbalanced gender distribution, with a majority of male teachers and a minority of female teachers. Gender diversity was important for understanding the perspectives of both male and female teachers on the implementation of re-admission policies for adolescent mothers in ASEP centers and schools. However, this gender disparity did not significantly impact the findings, as the 38 percent of female teachers who participated provided sufficient information for the study.

Table 1 indicated that 10 percent of the teachers were aged 25 years and below, while 23 percent were aged

between 26 and 35 years. Another 41 percent fell within the age range of 36 to 45 years, and 21 percent were aged over 45 years. This data suggests that approximately 62 percent of the teacher respondents were aged between 36 and 45 years and above. This indicates a mix of respondents, comprising both mature and energetic individuals capable of working effectively and providing suitable information for the study on stakeholders' implementation of re-admission policies for adolescent mothers in public alternative secondary education pathways in Ilemela District, Tanzania.

Table 1 shows that the highest level of education among teachers was an important factor to be determined in the current study. The researcher examined the educational level of teachers to find out

their capacity to think critically about the various issues concerning the implementation of re-admission programs in ASEP schools. Also, the researcher intended to seek the suitability of teachers to teach adolescent mothers in alternative secondary education pathway schools. Table 1 illustrates that 31 percent had a diploma in education, 55 percent possessed a teacher education degree, and 14 percent had a Master's in education. The findings revealed that the majority of teachers, 69 percent, had graduate degrees. This implied that the teachers used in this study had good education levels and were thus able to educate adolescent mothers in ASEP schools. Also, the result showed that 31 percent of teachers having a diploma education level had an opportunity to be mentored by highly qualified teachers to generate valuable ideas that could help in the effective implementation of re-admitting adolescent mothers in ASEP schools.

Distribution of Teachers by Work Experience

Teachers' work experience is as shown in Table 2 above, where 10 percent of the teacher respondents had experience of 05 years and below, while 24 percent

had experience of 06 to 10 years. Again, 41 percent had work experience of 11 to 15 years, and 8 percent had experience of 16 to 20 years. Others—17 percent—had work experience of 21 years and above. Their experience has a great role to play in dealing with various issues affecting education, such as adolescent motherhood. The data showed that the majority of the teachers in ASEP schools and centers, 70 percent, had work experience of 11 to 21 years and above. This means that they are active groups with enough experience who can generate new ideas on the implementation of the re-admission program. Moreover, the data indicated that the remaining group of teachers had a good experience in the school setting in which they can work in joint with the energetic group to promote effective implementation of re-admitting adolescent mothers in ASEP schools.

Demographic Information of Adolescent Mothers

Demographic information of adolescent mothers covered three areas, such as gender, age, and class level, as represented in Table 3.

Table 2 Adolescent mothers' demographic information (n = 67)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Female	67	100	
	Age (years)	15 years and below	17	25
		18-18 years	35	52
		19 years and older	15	23
		Total	67	100
Class Level	Form I	14	21	
	Form II	47	70	
	Form III	06	09	
Total		67	100	

Adolescent Mothers by Gender

Table 2 shows that the gender of adolescent mothers was important as far as the implementation of re-admission of adolescent mothers was concerned. The targeted gender on the part of adolescent mothers was only based on females who take advantage of the re-admission program, as listed in Table 3. The findings revealed 67 adolescent mothers involved in this study.

Adolescent Mothers by age

Table 2 above indicates the ages of adolescent mothers. 52 percent of the adolescent mothers were aged 15–18 years, while 25 percent of the same adolescent mothers' population were aged 15 years and below, and about 23 percent were aged above 19 years old. Thus, the results revealed that most of the adolescent mother respondents (77 percent) were young, not more than 18 years old. This indicates that the majority of adolescent mothers are very young, and they

probably lack motherhood experience due to early pregnancy, which leads to school dropouts.

Class Level of Adolescent Mothers

Table 2 above shows the class levels of education of the adolescent mothers, where about 70 percent of the respondents were in Form II. Also, in the same population, 21 percent of the respondents were in Form I, and 9 percent of the respondents were in Form III. According to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) (2022) and the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) (2022), the class level of education for all dropouts, especially adolescent mothers, pass through three stages. Stage one involves form one and form two learners; stage two involves form three and form four; and stage three involves form five and form six. Therefore, according to the findings of this study, as Table 4.3 above indicates, the majority of the adolescent mother respondents, 91 percent, were in

stage one, and a few of them, 09 percent, were in stage two. This indicates that the majority of the adolescent mother students are in stage one of their studies. However, this type of studying can be an obstacle for adolescent mothers to move forward due to the limitation of time since using a single year of one stage for two classes is not an easy task.

Stakeholders' contributions to implementing Re-admission of Adolescent Mothers

The study findings indicated that the government gives support to adolescent mothers re-admitted to secondary school through a program known as ASEP. However, different education stakeholders have different opinions in relation to this idea; hence, it was important to assess the contributions of stakeholders in implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in secondary schools, as provided in Figure 1 below, which presents their responses:

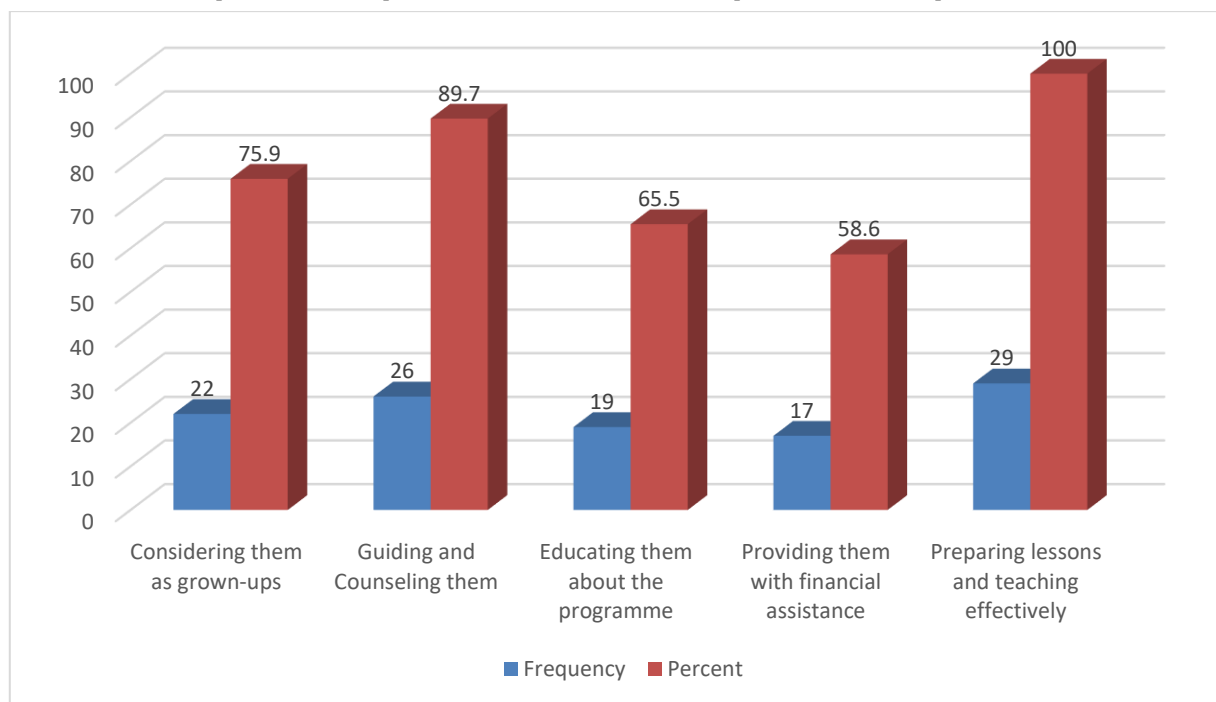


Fig.1: Teachers Contributions to Implementing Re-admission of Adolescent Mothers (n=29)

Source: Field data 2023

Figure 1 indicates that teachers made the following contributions in implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in ASEP: First, all teachers contribute to preparing lessons and teaching, 100.0 percent; guiding and counseling adolescent mothers, 89.7 percent; considering them as adults, 75.9 percent; educating them about the program, 65.5 percent; and providing them with financial assistance, 58.6 percent. This implies that teachers had to make thorough

preparations, including preparing teaching aids, so that they could enable adolescent mothers to understand lessons taught clearly. Again, the findings indicated that teachers and other stakeholders, like WEOs, heads of schools, and some parents, provide adolescent mothers with guidance and counseling as part of their contribution in implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in ASEP. This is proved by the quantitative findings presented in figure 1 above,

showing that 89.7 percent of the teacher respondents said that they provide guidance and counseling to adolescent mothers. Teachers said that they provide guidance and counseling for the purpose of helping them avoid repeating the same mistakes. Further, the findings indicated that teachers considered and treated adolescent mothers as grown-ups, as Figure 1 indicates that 73.8 percent of the respondents said that teachers considered adolescent mothers as grown-up people. Furthermore, the findings from Figure 1 support this view, as it shows that 64.6 percent of the respondents said that teachers provide adolescent girls with education about life skills and the program in general. Lastly, the findings shown in Figure 1 indicate that 55.4 percent of the respondents provide adolescent mothers with financial assistance.

On the other hand, qualitative data was also collected to supplement quantitative data, and the findings obtained were that one of the participants who provided his opinion in relation to the contributions of different stakeholders to the re-admission of the adolescent mother pinpointed as follows:

I provide my daughter with assistance for whatever needs she has. For example, I support her financially so that she can get money for school fare and buy school needs such as exercise books, pens, and even some books (Interviewee 9: August 2023).

Therefore, most of the respondents agreed that re-admission of the adolescent mother in secondary school should be enhanced through various contributions offered by stakeholders. Adolescent mothers have a lot of needs compared to ordinary students, they need to be supported in different ways to make sure that they catch up and learn smoothly without any inconvenience. However, all these can be made possible through the implementation of the various roles of various stakeholders (Assey, 2012). This therefore indicates that various stakeholders contribute to giving them advice, teaching, and financial assistance only to ensure that re-admission of adolescent mothers is well conducted (Christine, 2020). Also, it was found that some head teachers support adolescent mothers who dropped out of school due to pregnancy by inviting them back and permitting them to go home whenever it was sought, and this concurs with Kurgat (2016) and Kumar (2020). In general, stakeholders contribution the provision of books, paying teachers and fee compensation as roles played by the government, and teaching effectively as a specific role for teachers (Gruskin et al. 2010). Other roles played by various stakeholders, including

teachers and parents, are the provision of guidance and counseling, considering adolescent mothers as adults, educating them about the program, and providing them (adolescent mothers) with financial assistance (Kapasule & Kumar, 2020).

The study findings also indicated that different stakeholders, including the government, teachers, and parents, have made a lot of contributions to implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in public alternative secondary education pathways in Illemela district. Also, the government offered teaching and learning materials like books, provided money for fee compensation, which implies that adolescent mothers are given fee-free secondary education, brought and paid allowances to teachers who teach adolescent mothers, and paid for examinations done by adolescent mothers (Kurgat, 2016). The main contributions of teachers were to prepare lessons and teach effectively. Other roles played by other stakeholders, including teachers, were to consider adolescent mothers as grown-up people and treat them fairly, not treating them like children, giving guidance and counseling to enable them to avoid repeating the same mistakes and study hard, educating them about life skills as well as the relevance of the program, and providing them with financial assistance for buying school supplies and transport to school (Raymond, 2020).

V. CONCLUSION

Therefore, it is concluded that stakeholders contribute to implementing re-admission of adolescent mothers in public alternative secondary education pathways in Illemela district. The contributions of stakeholders include the provision of teaching and learning materials like books, pens, and exercise books; paying teachers and fee compensation as contributions of the government; and teaching effectively as a specific role for teachers. Other contributions offered by various stakeholders, including teachers and parents, are the provision of guidance and counseling, consideration as grown-up people, educating them about the program, and providing them (adolescent mothers) with financial assistance.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology find ways of providing more help to adolescent mothers, including constructing

study centers with dormitories to remove the challenge of distance and rejecting being re-admitted to study centers because of the costs associated with distance and the fear of being laughed at by former classmates. Furthermore, the government needs to consider the construction of daycare centers for taking care of adolescent mothers' children or babies to help adolescent mothers who have no parents or guardians leave with their babies when at school to be re-admitted and retained at school. Again, the study recommends that policymakers, education planners, and managers think of how to include in the education policy statements or rules that encourage parents and adolescent mothers to see the necessity of being re-admitted to alternative secondary education pathways. This will encourage many more to join and reduce the burden of having uneducated mothers in society in the future. Further, the study recommends that Ward Education Officers, heads of schools, and teachers should think of the best ways of providing education to female students and their parents, emphasizing the importance of re-admitting to school for those who have already been impregnated. On the other hand, student girls should be educated on the disadvantages of being involved in sexual relationships to help them avoid pregnancy and realize the importance of education.

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