

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION QUALITY  
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SEQUIP) AMONG THE GIRLS  
VICTIMISED BY EARLY PREGNANCIES IN IRINGA  
MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Early pregnancy in Tanzania is the factor led most of the Tanzanian girls dropping out their study either by shying themselves or chasing them out from the form system of schooling. This reason led the word bank with the corroborate with Tanzania government started the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) for the aim of giving girls victimized by early pregnancy another chance to completing their studies. Therefore this study focused in Iringa Municipal to assess the Implementation of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) Among Girls Victims of Early Pregnancies in the region of Iringa Tanzania: the study had two research objectives namely; to examine the community's perception of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls victimized by early pregnancies, and to explore the challenges facing the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls who have been victimized by early pregnancies. The researcher used a qualitative approach, purposive sampling technique employed to gather required information. Targeted populations of the sample involved the Regional Residence Tutor, District Education Officer, students and community members. The researcher also used a case study design whereby interview and focus group discussions were used as a method for data collect. Data were analysed thematically. Trustworthiness and ethical consideration also were observed whereby the names of participants remain confidential. The finding found that the community has a little knowledge about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). Also, it was found that most of the community members and education stakeholders remark Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in different perspectives. Other perceive this project positive while, other perceive it negatively. Moreover, the findings of the current study show that implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among Girls who has been Victimized by Early Pregnancies facing different challenges such traditional believe and lack of family support, lack of education about SEQUIP, insufficient infrastructure, stigma from the community and family regarding young mothers continued education. It was recommended that government and community members should consider much the Implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among Girls who has been Victimized by Early Pregnancies by solving different challenges such provision of education to the community. This may help to diminish traditional believe and lack of family support, building enough infrastructure, to enact strict laws to discourage stigma of the community and moralize girls victimized by early pregnancy.

**Keywords:** Secondary, Education, Quality Improvement, Project, Girls, Early Pregnancies,

## **1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

World Bank (2019) state that SEQUIP means Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project. The aims of this program is to boost and give another chance to the access of education for girls who got a pregnancy before completing secondary schools. Secondary Education Quality Improvement Program (SEQUIP) was introduced as a second golden chance for education access in Tanzania for this group.

Secondary Education Quality Improvement Program (SEQUIP) was vested to secondary school by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) in collaboration with the World Bank by the effort of taking girls back to school after birth. SEQUIP was taken to be as a five years' program plan (2020/2021 – 2024/2025) whereby the donors of this programme provides financial support to increase access of secondary education for adolescence motherhoods across the country (Msese, 2020).

The project was assigned to the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) with the aim of providing education for those who missed or compromised the first chance of education access. Moreover, the Program provide approachable learning environments for girls and improve completion of quality secondary education for girls who give birth before the accomplishment of the formal schooling (Msese, 2020).

The project specifically create a safe, gender sensitive and learner-friendly school environment, provide good quality alternative education opportunities for girls who drop-outs secondary school particularly young mothers, improve the quality of secondary education by improving teacher skills, reducing huge class sizes and providing adequate teaching and learning materials, use innovative digital technology to improve mathematics and science teaching and increase access to secondary education by providing more schools closer to the homes of children particularly girls. Over the project's lifetime, 6.5 million children (3.1 million girls) was expected to benefit from the project's interventions and an additional 900,000 children are expected to successfully complete their secondary education (Msese, 2020).

SEQUIP as a new project implemented in Tanzania, it faces a dilemma on how to expand secondary education coverage in a way that meets growing demands and still provide an education which is relevant to the students. There is also a limited support to motherhoods school programmes within the society. The majority of the society members have a negative perception and attitudes toward the programme. This study then aimed at making an appraisal of the implementation of the SEQUIP among girls' victims of early pregnancies in Tanzania.

## **2.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The general purpose of this study was to assess the implementation of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls' victims of early pregnancies in the region of Iringa Tanzania. The study specifically aimed to:

- Determine the community's perception of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls victimized by early pregnancies

- Identify the challenges facing the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls who have been victimized by early pregnancies.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic way to solve a problem through describing work, explaining and predicting a phenomenon (Zheng, 2015).

This study was conducted in the region of Iringa particularly Iringa Municipality in Tanzania. Iringa Region is found in the southern highlands zone which is constituted five regions: Njombe, Mbeya, Songwe, Rukwa and Katavi. Iringa Region is bounded by Dodoma, and Singida in the North, Morogoro in the East, Njombe and Mbeya in the West and Ruvuma in the South. The selection of the study area based on the fact that Iringa region is among the region with the highest rate of early pregnancies that keep young girls out of schools and denies them their basic right to education. This is evidenced from examples by a large number of young girls from the region of Iringa who work as house girls in big towns and cities in Tanzania. The reason behind this has been shown to be poverty and ignorance of the parents on investing on girls' education.

The study employed the qualitative research approach. Qualitative approach is a field of inquiry that cross cuts disciplines and subject matters in social science (Kothari, 2014). The approach involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons governing their behaviour (Donalek, 2014). Therefore, the study reached the respondents' personal world in their natural settings for the sake of getting first-hand information (Creswell, 2012).

In this study, a multiple case study design which is associated with qualitative approach was employed. A multiple case study examines the social unit like a person, family, a social group, a social institution, or a community as well as organising social data for the purpose of viewing social reality (Kothari, 2005). Moreover, since case study design relies on multiple sources of data collection techniques, the study used triangulation technique whereby various methods for data collection such as focus group discussion, and interviews used to help offset of the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strength of the other.

The population of this study were comprised 6 education stakeholders, 1 Regional Resident Tutor, 3 District Educational Officers, 5 teachers, 5 parents as well as 10 students involved in the project as a total of 40 participants.

Study was employed purposive sampling to gather adequate information. In qualitative research, purposive sampling is largely dominant (Gay, 2012). It is a process of choosing key informants in the field work for in-depth study. Based on this assumption and getting deeper understanding of the problem under investigation, purposive sampling was adopted. This is necessary when the researcher is interested in certain specified characteristics (Nkpa, 1997). Regional and district tutor and officers will purposefully be selected since they are the informant in the sample who by the virtue of their managerial position had pertinent information required by the study on the implementation of the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in Tanzania. Stakeholders, and teachers were involved

because they are implementers of the project from family level to the school level. While Students are directly affected by the project.

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as the methods of data collection. In overcoming the weaknesses of the data collection instruments, and as it was guided by qualitative approach, a variety of data collection methods should be employed. Cohen et al. (2018) points out that no single method can act in isolation because it can bias or distort the whole picture of reality that the researcher is investigating. Therefore, multiple methods were used to cross-check accuracy of the data.

Data analysis is a process that implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data (Kothari, 2004). In this study, data were analysed thematically and manually by providing a summary and direct quotations from the respondents focusing on the objectives of the study. Thematic analysis fitted the study because it is used to analyse classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the questions. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) provided the following steps to be considered during Data analysis:

**Familiarisation with the data:** This phase involved reading and re-reading the data, to become deep and well familiar with its content. This stage helped the researcher to be familiar with data in relation to the questions.

**Coding:** This phase involved generating and summarizing of the main themes of data that might be relevant to answering the research question. It involves coding the entire information, and after that, collating all the codes and all relevant quotations, together for later stages of analysis.

**Generating initial themes:** This phase involved examining the codes and organizing data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning (potential themes). It then involves organizing data relevant to each candidate theme, so that researcher can work with the data and review the viability of each candidate theme. This stage helped the researcher to generate the general themes and organize relevant data to the related questions.

**Reviewing themes:** This phase involved checking the candidate themes against the questions, to determine that they tell a convincing story of the data, and one that answers the research questions. In this phase, themes are usually developed, which sometimes involves themes being split, combined, or rejected. This stage assisted the researcher to determine the relevant or irrelevant themes as provided by participants through checking or reviewing them again.

**Defining and naming themes:** This phase involved developing a detailed analysis of each theme, working out the scope and focus of each theme, determining the story of each. It also involves deciding on an informative name for each theme. This stage helped the researcher to analyse themes according to the scope of the content.

**Writing up:** This final phase involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts, and contextualising the analysis in relation to existing literature.

#### **4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the findings based on the research objectives of this study. The findings that are presented and discussed in this chapter were collected through interview and focus group discussion that was administered to the Regional Resident Tutor, District Educational Officers, teachers, parents as well as students.

#### **4.1 Community Perception on the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP)**

The first objective intended to examine the community perception on the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls who victimized by Early Pregnancies. Under this bound the researcher wanted to know the community knowledge and participation on the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). The finding found that the community has a little knowledge about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). Also, it was found that most of the community members and education stakeholders remark Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in different perspectives. Other perceive this project positive while other perceive it negatively. These validations enlightened in details below:

During the interview with the participants on how they know the term Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP), the parents seemed to have a little knowledge about the program. For example, one of the parents said;

Dear friend indeed I don't know about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP), it is my first time to hear this from you. Sorry, I need to know; when you say Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) it means to increase infrastructure to enhance the quality education in secondary school or?

In addition, the parent from the study area was the opinion that:

Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) actually is a new program introduced by the government, I think it aims to enhance education performance and administration activities in all secondary schools. Sometime I heard some rumours that this program used to provide a chance to the motherhoods come back to school. But friendly speaking, I don't know more about it.

In the same content, Regional Residence Tutor was the opinion that,

Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) is an alternative pathway for girl's victims by early pregnancy and family problem and giving them an access to an education. This programme introduced in Tanzania as a release to the girls victimised by early pregnancy and other factors led them to drop out the study. But this program is not known to the community of Iringa municipal and Tanzania at large.

The above information revealed that the community especially parents has the little knowledge about the Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). In fact, it seems that Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) known only for few people expressly teachers and who share different things and ideas with education officers about education matter.

Moreover, the researcher found out that most of the community members and education stakeholders remark the SEQUIP in a different perception even. This is due to the fact that the project is known by the few people. Community's perception elaborated below

During the interview with Regional Residence Tutor, he said:

Though few of the community members perceive Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in negative perception, but most of them have positive discernment about the project because Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) allows all motherhoods another chance in education without any payment.

In addition, the Tutor was of opinion that;

As a teacher as well as parents, we perceive Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in positive way. This program become a bridge between girls who were pregnancy before the accomplishment of the study and the dreams expected by those girls through education. This means that the program brings hope of succeed.

One of the education stakeholder was quoted when he said:

Thank you Samia Suluhu Hassan, you are the hope of victim girls, they denied their right to education after birth. Under your role now there is a friendly program which make the motherhood get an access of education. We are very happy and it is our expectation that Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) will continue to support us as well we are ready to support it.

During focus group discussion, teacher from secondary school was the same idea that: "There is no doubt that Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) is like a backbone to the motherhoods. It helps them to fulfil the education dream. In another way it is a source of an employment hence we get a part time employment to teach students"

Moreover, district education officer said:

Perception of the community member and education stakeholders about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) seemed to vary according to their knowledge about the project. In 21st century, every person invests in education, people need to see the emphasize in education, equality in provision of an access to education both for girls and boys as well as women empowerment. The programme just gives an answers for considering all young girls victimized by early pregnancy to get an education once again. Those girls who performing better will selected to join advanced level and collage as well as vocation training centre. In other side, few people perceive SEQUIP in negative because they think that getting back the motherhood to school will encourage others to engage in immoral behaviour.

The information provided above implies that, the purpose of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in Tanzania bring hope and arouse positive attitudes to the students, community and education stakeholders hence, it gives an access to education for girls

victimized by early pregnancy due to different incident. This program is a second golden chance though other perceive it negatively by thinking that this program encourages immoral behaviour to the others.

#### **4.2 Challenges facing the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP)**

The results obtained from various participants concerning with the Challenges facing the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among Girls who has been Victimized by Early Pregnancies. The findings from the interview and focus group discussion show that implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among Girls who has been Victimized by Early Pregnancies facing different challenges such traditional believe and lack of family support, lack of education about SEQUIP, insufficient infrastructure, stigma from the community and family regarding young mothers continued education. This challenge stipulated as follow:

Traditional believe

During the interview with Regional Residence Tutor, he said:

*“...The implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) encounter the challenge of poor believes. For example, some community members’ belief that girls who gave birth should remain home for marriage and domestic activities” ...*

Also, one of the students was the opinion that;

Our society has negative believes toward the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). I got pregnant two years ago hence my father chased me away. Last year I returned home through the pastor’s apology. After the introduction of implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) I asked to go back to school. My parent refused it by saying I was supposed to stay home. My mother added that I don’t have a chance for schooling anymore, instead of getting married.

In the same content, one of the Tutor was the opinion that:

Most of the people in this society characterized by traditional beliefs. For example, I head one of the parent said this programme “it goes against our belief, I wonder girl who gave birth going back to school again instead of getting marriage? This programme come to deprive us dowry.

Moreover, during focus group discussion one of the parent said;

Indeed, your program known as Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) helps our girls, however is against the traditions and customs of our tribe. If a girl is pregnant while at school, that kind of person is a prostitution, what should she do when she returns to school? She will go to teach others bad behaviour. These idiots should get marriage.

Regarding to the quotation above, this shows that the community especially the parents of Iringa municipality are still very much government by false beliefs about the right girls who gave birth in the matter of education. Their faith convinces them that girls who get pregnant because of prostitution, so taking them back to school is a mistake and they lose an opportunity to get dowry.

### **Insufficient infrastructure**

Under the line of challenge facing Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). The research has determined that lack of infrastructure like classes, laboratories, learning and teaching materials is among the challenge facing the project. This was confirmed through the dialog with the participants.

During the interview, Regional Residence Tutor he said that:

Lack of infrastructures is among the challenge facing Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). In our centre for instance need more than 10 classrooms but we have only 4 classrooms? We have variety of students like secondary school student from Adult Education program, learners for certificate and diploma in adult education and bachelor degree sometime. It led us to face the challenge of assigning the appropriate place for learning.

Teacher from Adult Education was the opinion that;

Though the introduction of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) has provided a golden chance for girls who got a pregnancy. This program facing the challenge such as lack of toilets, desks, laboratories and staff rooms. Insufficient of these hinder the teaching and learning process.

Moreover, during focus group discussion with students, one of the student supported this when she said that: *“Lack of teaching and learning material is the big challenge facing the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). We have not enough books, laboratory and its equipment. This make us failure to learn effectively and practically”*

Likewise, Long distance is another challenge of the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). During the interview, Regional Residence Tutor said; *“long distances to school and increased physical risks in travelling to and from school. Long distances and lack of reliable and safe transport to and from school are key contributing factors to drop-out and low female transition rate from primary to lower secondary school”*

The reposes of the quotation above, reveal that the challenge of infrastructure hindering the implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). It is true that inefficient of school infrastructure like classrooms, laboratories, and transport challenge make the teaching and learning difficulty for victims of childhood pregnancies and may be multi-faceted reasons for drop-out, but identified distance to school as the top reason.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



## **5.1 Conclusions**

Findings from this study show that community has a little knowledge about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP). They failure to elaborate the project, this is maybe due to the fact that it is a new project to the community whereby most of the people not aware of. The researcher also found that most of the community members and education stakeholders remark Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) in a different perspective due to the fact that the programme just considering all young girls victimized by early pregnancy to get an education once again. It is concluded that Tanzania government should provide different education concerning this project. This will arouse community's positive mentality and engagement in the implementation of SEQUIP.

Implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among Girls who have been Victimized by Early Pregnancies facing different challenges such traditional believe and lack of family support, lack of education about SEQUIP, insufficient infrastructure, stigma in the community and family regarding young mothers continued education. It is concluded that Tanzania society should leave their traditional believe and negative perception about SEQUIP in order to assist the government in a proper implementation of the project.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

On regard to a little knowledge of community members about Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP), the researcher recommends that there is a need for the government to provide education about SEQUIP. This will broaden peoples' knowledge and being able to implement what is well known to them. Furthermore, the government and community members should consider much the Implementation of Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQUIP) among girls who has been Victimized by Early Pregnancies by solving different challenges such provision of education to the community. This may help to diminish traditional believe and lack of family support, building enough infrastructure, to enact strict laws to discourage stigma from the community and moralize girls victimized by early pregnancy about their right of education.

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