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Practices of everyday life of teen mothers: Their use of habitus and symbolic power in the community

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Article Info

Abstract

In traditional societies, teen mothers often face rejection from the community they live in. This article proposes that although teen mothers face such problems, they do not necessarily surrender to the domination of society if they fight for dignity and identity. The study focused on the use of habitus and symbolic capital in the practice of everyday life by 16 teen mothers living in various communities in Khon Kaen province. The data were analyzed under the framework of the practice of everyday life of Pierre Bourdieu. Qualitative research methods were employed in the study. The data were collected by recording the participants' life histories together with in-depth interviews and observation. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The results of the study revealed that when the teen mothers confronted bias, gossip, discrimination, and rejection from the community, they used certain kinds of habitus, including "not responding" or "responding with irritating actions," or if they were treated harshly, they responded in the same manner in order to handle the situations under their individual capital. This included the use of symbolic capital, including having the father of their child, motherhood, and the prestige of the partner's parents, to negotiate with the community in order to be recognized. It also included the conversion of these kinds of capital into another kind of capital which was beneficial to their everyday practices. Therefore, habitus and symbolic capital were the major forces in transforming the teen mothers from the status of "victim" to one of "agency" that can be used to negotiate for social positions.

Introduction

The phenomenon of "teen mothers" occurs in countries around the world, including Thailand (World Health Organization, 2013). The number of Thai girls who become mothers in the age range 15–19 years has increased steadily. Most of the girls become mothers unintentionally leading to various consequences, including dropping out of school, facing economic hardships, and lacking the maturity to be mothers (Buasri, 2013; Seeda, 2010). In addition, being a teen mother is often seen as "deviating" from the standard of being a good woman according to Thai traditional social norms. Therefore, some teenagers, especially those who become pregnant and give birth without getting married, often face rejection from society (Inthawong, 2009).

Although teen mothers face many difficulties, some do not capitulate to them. Instead they demonstrate their abilities by trying to earn money in order to create stability for their family and a better life for their child. They also plan for their future and their child. The studies of Chaiyasung and Yakasem (2014), Jirawatgul et al. (2011) and Muensit, Thongyou and Lapanun (2017) demonstrated that the teen mothers' effort and determination showed that they were not merely "victims," but rather the "agency" that can fight against social and cultural domination in seeking to improve their social position and that of their child in order to live in society with dignity.

This article presents teen mothers as the "agency" that can deal with the problems or situations of being rejected by society and their negotiation with the social and cultural domination in the community by not being "victims" under the scope of habitus and symbolic capital which were used as the base of the "actions." The interesting question is how powerless teen mothers use habitus and symbolic capital in negotiating within the context of the community to become the agency.

Objectives of the Study

To study habitus and symbolic capital in the practice of everyday life of teen mothers in their communities.

Literature Review

This article is based on research that aimed to understand the use of habitus and symbolic capital in the practice of the everyday life of teen mothers in their communities. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the practice of everyday life was used as a framework for the analysis. In the view of Bourdieu (1977, 1990), the "practice" is the "strategy" that humans use to struggle with rules in pursuit of their social position. This is similar to the teen mothers who want recognition from society. Practice is the result of the relationship among capital, habitus, and field, which is the arena of struggle for control over valued resources (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Swartz, 1997).

"Habitus" in the view of Bourdieu consists of the inclinations that direct or shape a person's actions. They are selected through the process of socialization. When actions are done repeatedly, the inclinations will be rooted deep into the consciousness, making practices automatic as if they followed the regulations (Bourdieu, 1977; Chantavanich, 2011).

"Capital" is seen by Bourdieu as social power which can be classified into four categories: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. This article focuses on symbolic capital, referring to certain features that are socially recognized legitimization which create value and contributes to symbolic power for those who possess it. However, although there are various forms of capital, they are not entirely independent of each other, as they can change from one form to another. For the practice of individuals pursuing a social position in the field, the agency will be in the position which is set by the kinds of capital they possess. However, the selected practice is the result of the influence of the driving force within the field under the individual habitus (Bourdieu, 1986; Swartz, 1997).

This article describes how teen mothers use habitus and symbolic capital in their daily life in their community to seek a social position during a crisis. Bourdieu's concept of the practice of everyday life is significant for understanding the struggle between structure and agency. The structure in this study is the social and cultural structure in the communities in which the teen mothers are living. It includes values, traditions, and cultures related to the practices of women and mothers in Thai and Isan society. Agency consists of the teen mothers who negotiate with the structure within their community in Khon Kaen province. Although these teen mothers faced numerous problems from their position, especially the social stigma attached to their untimely pregnancy, they did not surrender to these problems. Even though they have experienced difficulties

in life because they were not accepted by society since they are teen mothers, their habitus and symbolic capital helped them negotiate powerfully within the context of the community. Consequently, they changed from being "victims" to "agency" with the potential to struggle with the dominant structure in order to have identity in society.

Methodology

The qualitative method and phenomenology were employed in the study. The unit of analysis consisted of three levels: individual, household, and community. The areas of the study were urban and rural areas of Khon Kaen province in northeast Thailand. The main target of the study consisted of 16 teen mothers, purposively selected, aged 15–19 years when they gave birth and not more than 24 years old at the time of the study. The data were collected by recording the life histories of the informants in order to learn about their life experiences and perspectives from childhood until the present, as well as the turning points in their lives. Next, in-depth interviews were administered regarding the use of capital and habitus in the practice of motherhood in the community related to the everyday life of each teen mother. Both participatory and non-participatory observation were employed to study the behaviors of the teen mothers and the persons associated with them as well as the relationships between the teen mothers and others in the community. Life history guidelines, interview guidelines, and observation guidelines were used as tools to collect the data. The data collection was conducted from January to August, 2015. Triangulation—the method used for checking the accuracy of the different data, including time, places and persons—was utilized to verify the accuracy and the reliability of the data. The data were analyzed using content analysis.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in three parts: 1) the characteristics of teen mothers, 2) the problems of teen mothers, and 3) the practices of teen mothers in the community.

Characteristics of Teen Mothers

The teen mothers faced bias, gossip, and discrimination from people in the community. As new members of the community, they had to face the problem of being "strangers." Thus, in order to understand the problems and different practices, the teen mothers were classified according to two types of living situation: those living in their own community and those living in their partners' community.

Teen mothers living in their own communities

These mothers were familiar with the circumstances and people in their communities. There were 13 teen mothers in this group (Ann, Bow, Fon, Kai, Koi, Maew, Mali, Min, Mod, Ning, Ploy, Ying, and Ploy). They were 15–19 years old when they gave birth. Ten of the girls became pregnant before getting married and were studying in junior high school, high school, or vocational school. Nine had jobs and an income of their own.

These teen mothers were living with their own families. Some of them were living only with their husbands and children, and some were with their husbands' family in the same community. The parents of four teen mothers were separated and three of their mothers were widowed. The economic level of each family was fair to poor. There was only one teen mother whose economic level was quite good as her father was a government official. Although his position was not high, he earned extra income in various ways, such as from rent and informal loan services.

Teen mothers living in their partners' community

There were three persons in this group (Bua, Preaw, and Wan). Their partners' communities were small communities where people were familiar with each other. These three teen mothers were new members, so they had to learn to adapt themselves. All of them became pregnant without getting married and they were 17–18 years old when they gave birth. These teen mothers and their partners had no careers or incomes of their own. Moreover, the partners of Bua and Preaw were in prison because of drug abuse. All of their parents were separated. The economic status of two families was fairly good as they were general workers and merchants, and that of the other family was also good as they were merchants. This group of teen mothers tended to quarrel with their mothers because of pressure from the expectations of their mothers. The mothers also did not accept their sons-in-law, so the teen mothers were in a state of isolation and loneliness in their new community, especially in the early stage of becoming a mother.

Problems of Teen Mothers

Because they changed their status and became mothers without being prepared, the teen mothers had to face criticism from people in their community. This article presents these problems in terms of three issues.

Discrimination and gossip from people in the community

Teen mothers in Thai society, especially those who become pregnant without getting married, often face rejection from society because they are viewed as "deviating" from the standard of being a good woman according to social norms. They are often stigmatized by the society as bad women behaving badly and are punished by the society in various ways. In the area of the study, complaints and gossip from neighbors in the community were forms of punishment from the society that the teen mothers often faced whether in their own community or in that of their husbands or partners. One of the informants said, *"Some people blamed me and said, 'Oh! She got pregnant without getting married'...and 'She has a child even when she has not graduated.'"* This kind of problem was also found in other studies of teen mothers (Archavanitkul & Vajanasara, 2014; Inthawong, 2009).

Refusal of people in the community to help

In addition to being driven by society through gossip as mentioned above, some of the teen mothers also faced bias from people in the community as they did not trust the teen mothers, especially in terms of the responsibility of raising children and working. This was the case of Wan, a teen mother living with her partner's family who appeared not to like her. She was always criticized by her neighbors. *"After I gave birth, someone said they wondered if I can raise my child to be healthy."* Kai faced the same problem although she was still living in her own community. When she asked one of her relatives, who was a government official to sign the guarantee for attending the training as the course required, he was reluctant because of his bias against teen mothers. He believed that teen mothers behaved badly, so he thought that she would not be responsible and would cause trouble for him later. Thus, he avoided helping her. *"He said that he had to ask his boss first."* This action was consistent with the study of Wichaiya (2013), which found that teens who had been involved in sexual matters often faced experienced negativity from the people around them, even from those who were close to them. This attitude reflects society's rejection of them.

Being strangers in the community

Another group of teen mothers moved to the houses of their partners. They were anxious to adapt to the new family and the community, but people in the community would always keep an eye on them and try to investigate their background. One of the informants said, *"I moved to live with my boyfriend without getting married. Most people might think that I am a bad girl (a prostitute). Actually, I did not want to live here. I did not want to be talked about."* It can be seen that being a stranger is another problem that teen mothers have to face, and it also causes embarrassment since it grows out of the discrimination of people in the community.

Practices of Teen Mothers in the Community

The three problems mentioned above were effects from becoming teen mothers. Although the teen mothers were in difficult situations, they had powerful resources, which were the habitus and symbolic capital they employed to deal with the problems or situations. Habitus and symbolic capital were also used to negotiate with social and cultural pressure in the community and to pursue their identity and the dignity. There were two main approaches of habitus that were used in the practice of everyday life of the teen mothers: "not responding" and "responding with irritating actions or responding with the same manners." The symbolic capital used for the practices included three aspects: having the father of a child, motherhood, and the prestige of partner's parents. The details are as follows.

Having the father of a child

This is one of the conditions used to gain prestige and recognition from society.

Teenagers who get pregnant and give birth without being married will usually not be accepted by society. Thus, teen mothers have to face bias, discrimination, and stigmatization from the community because getting pregnant before getting married contravenes beliefs about being "a good woman" in Thai society. These beliefs are created from the myth that women must be well behaved and must not have sexual intercourse before getting married. Consequently, those who behave differently from the mainstream ideology are often

described as "divergent." This situation was consistent with the research of Brown (2014) which studied the linkage between gender, sexuality in Thai society, and the multiculturalism concept. The conservative practices in the Northeast are also presented through *phaya* (Isan proverbs) teaching about the behavior of a "proper lady". For example, *"even a not-so-pretty woman can be beautiful if she acts according to tradition."* -

Isan society also has the same values as Thai society that women are expected to be "proper ladies." If their behavior is not considered appropriate, they will be insulted by society (Komolkitisakul, 1992). Thus, if a woman gets pregnant without getting married, she is inevitably criticized by society, especially if she is a teenager. Kai, who was a teen mother and lived with her parents in a rented house in the same community had a husband and a two-year old daughter. Kai and her family lived together. She was the only child. However, she became pregnant while she was studying in the first year at a vocational school. She said about her pregnancy: "*I told my boyfriend that I felt like I was pregnant and wondered if I should get an abortion. He told me that only a fool would get an abortion... he will work and earn for our child."* With his words, Kai was confident that she would not have to face the problem alone, so she did not get an abortion. Then she told her parents about the pregnancy. She got through the gossip of the neighbors by not responding to them. *"Some people would say 'Oh! She got pregnant and does not have a husband'. But I did not care because I had the father of my child."* Then the couple had a wedding ceremony according to the agreement of both families who wanted to allow people in the community to know about and accept the pregnancy. Other teen mothers, such as Cake, Fon, and Min also experienced this situation. It appears that marriage has implications in that the child has a father and this gradually reduces the gossip. The decline of gossip seems to be one indicator of greater acceptance by the community.

In other cases, however, there were teenagers who did not get married after becoming pregnant. The study found that there were various reasons why teen mothers who lived in their partners' community did not get married. These included not being accepted by the family of their partners or their own family in the early stages of pregnancy as well as economic problems. However, the fathers of their children accepted the unborn children and this recognition indicated that the "children had fathers." It was like a protective shield for the teen mothers that could lessen their feeling of guilt toward their parents and the disgrace to the people around them. The acceptance by their boyfriends or partners was an important condition that teen mothers used to refer to the legitimacy of their pregnancy and to communicate to others that they did not become "pregnant without the father." Although it seems to deviate from the standard of a good woman, teen mothers still have other aspects of being a good woman, particularly being monogamous and not being promiscuous. According to the concept of Bourdieu, "having the father of the child" is the symbol that teen mothers use for negotiating with the social and cultural structures related to values, the gender ideology that the society is trying to dominate the thoughts and the actions of people in communities in Thailand in order to build legitimacy to restore the reputation and the dignity being a

good woman. Even if they are not as perfect as society expects, their child's father is recognized. This has been done in order to allow themselves and their child to live in the community with dignity.

Not caring and not responding to what others said

The teen mothers did not want to have problems with their neighbors.

In addition to the recognition of their child's father, the teen mothers also took different actions to deal with the problems according to each one's habitus. That is to say, some did not respond, while others reacted with soft or harsh sarcastic responses according to their characters, personality, or identity, or the conditions set by various kinds of capital of each person.

Some teen mothers recognized the gossip of their neighbors, but they did not respond to it as they wanted to avoid having problems with their neighbors. Wan was the only daughter in her family and felt pressure from her mother's strict upbringing. Wan became pregnant while she was studying in the first year at a vocational school. She moved to live in a community with her partner's family. Her neighbors always gossiped about her pregnancy. They did not like her because they thought she was harsh. She was dealing with the bias and discrimination of the community by ignoring and not responding to them. "*They definitely gossiped. But I did not care. I tried to let it go. My mom used to say, 'do not care about what others say..."*

Although she was quite a strong person, as "a stranger," Wan chose to follow her mother's advice. She dealt with the problems by staying calm even when she was very angry and upset. Many other teen mothers also faced this kind of problem, even those who lived in their own community with their parents. They tried to ignore their neighbors' gossip in order to avoid fighting. Min, another teen mother, also said that she viewed her neighbors as "the outsiders," who were not important to her life. Since her parents accepted her pregnancy, she did not need to care what others thought.

Not responding to the gossip of the neighbors is the method fostered by the socialization process. This action was used instead of a harsh expression. The purpose of not responding to the gossip of the neighbors is to avoid conflicts. Although not responding is expressed according to one's tolerance, being a new member of the community is a condition of the teen mothers who lack social capital and are trying to live unobtrusively. Although they do not like the rude actions of their neighbors, they try not to respond to those actions in order to avoid conflict.

Responding with irritating actions...or the same actions

The teen mothers did it to protect their own dignity from bias, gossip, and discrimination.

While some teen mothers tried to ignore the bias, gossip, and discrimination of their neighbors, others responded to the negative reactions of the community with a strategy based on their habitus and capital. Some responded with some funny words in order to defuse the anger and embarrassment. They wanted the people who liked to criticize them to stop talking about their pregnancy. Ning, a teen mother, lived with her grandparents in her own community because her mother,

who had divorced her father, had remarried when Ning was studying in elementary school. Ning became pregnant while she was a Grade 10 student. At that time, her neighbors gossiped and criticized her, but she ignored them. Even after seven years had gone by, some people were still trying to talk about her pregnancy. She was frustrated and stopped those people by saying outrageous things to them. She responded with harsh responses in order to regain her dignity. *"The neighbors gossiped and said things that hurt my feelings. I did not care and sometimes I told them that I was proud of being the first girl (of the village) who got pregnant. I just wanted to respond to them in a harsh way..."*

Interacting with such annoying actions is also the result of the influence of the parenting and the interactions of the family. As the teen mothers are familiar with the people who in the community, they dare to respond with irritating actions or words in order to stop others from talking about their mistakes in the past.

Some teen mothers who were characterized as "tough" interacted with the community with fierce satire to protect their dignity. Maew was staying at her mother's house with her husband and three children. Her family was quite wealthy. Her grandfather and father were highly-disciplined soldiers. However, she became pregnant with her first child while she was studying in the third year at a vocational school. Her neighbors criticized her. At first, she did not respond to them. However, they continued to disparage her many times. She had to respond to them. *"Some people said to me, 'Why did you get pregnant while you are still a student?' At first, I did not say anything. But when they talked to me several times, I responded by saying, 'Please, mind your own business and take care of your own family.*

Her strong character her may been a result of her being the child and grandchild of soldiers. Thus, she had developed the characteristics of her father and grandfather. Moreover, she had a family and relatives in the community and her great-grandfather used to be a village leader. She was not afraid of those who criticized her and she wanted to protect her own dignity after trying to be patient with the people who continued to criticize her.

Even when teen mothers tried to avoid conflicts with neighbors, the pressure on them continued. Consequently, the tough character and the dislike of intrusiveness that had festered were used to respond to those people automatically. In addition, having the social capital of relatives, the economic capital, and the symbolic capital from the status of the family supported such actions of the teen mothers. The responses of the teen mothers who were treated like marginalized people and were not good in the view of the society clearly showed that they had dignity which was consistent with the views of Ganjanapan (2005) and Satayanurak (2012) that in the process of social interaction under power disparity, humans are not only victims, but they may fight in order to achieve recognition of their identity and to live as a part of society.

Motherhood

The teen mothers had to change themselves for their children's better future.

Teen mothers often face problems with confidence in their abilities and responsibilities. But, it was different in the case of Mod. Mod used to misbehave, avoid studying, drink alcohol, smoke, sniff glue, and was a motorbike girl. Nevertheless, when she became a mother, she changed her behavior. She stopped using drugs and all risky behavior. She started to sell things at home during her third month of pregnancy in order to earn for her child. *"I stopped hanging out with friends. I missed my child. I wanted to save money for him as he was going to study in school. I was afraid I could not support his education."* Her realization of motherhood occurred from two conditions. First, she had been taught and reinforced that when having a child, she had to earn money for her child. This was the reminder for her to be aware of her responsibilities as a mother. Second, with regard to the obligations of motherhood, she wanted her child to have a good future and not have to face hardships as she had. Such changes were consistent with the studies of Chaiyasung and Yakasem (2014), Puttapitukpol (2004), and Ratchukul (1998), which found that "motherhood" opens up a new life, making teen mothers think of a better life for themselves and their children. Teen mothers are determined and set their goals of life. This is because they aware that they have their children to take care of.

"Motherhood" is the first priority of Thai society because raising children is not just feeding, bathing, and dressing, but it includes all actions committed to allowing children to grow up with quality of life. In many cases, teens who are still young and not ready to be mothers demonstrate their motherhood by "reforming themselves" and paying attention to raising their children or even being the head of the family by working and earning money for the family instead of their husbands (who still behave like teenagers and are not responsible for any burden on the family). Then they are recognized by people in the community who then are ready to provide assistance to the teen mothers who have changed their behavior. This is the character of Thai people in rural areas. This was similar to the case of Mod. After changing her behavior, she received assistance from her neighbor who allowed her to sell things in front of the house, which was on the main road of the village. She sold grilled chicken in the evening from Monday to Saturday and smoothies on Saturday morning. On Sunday, she studied in the informal education system to get a higher degree for applying for a good job. She also earned extra money by selling products on the Internet. From Bourdieu's view, it can be said that being a good mother can build a network of relationships which is the social capital that brings benefits to the teen mothers in the form of assistance leading to the accumulation of economic capital by increasing their income. This finding was consistent with the research of Thongyou (2014) and Anh (2016), which found that social capital can be transferred into other capitals and also helped people to overcome problems, especially social networks.

Therefore, "motherhood," indicating one is expected to raise the child to be happy and have a good future, can transform someone who used to be badly behaved to become a hardworking and responsible mother. This transformation allows teen mothers to be recognized and even admired by the villagers. For example, the owner of the house who allowed Mod to sell things in front of his house said, *"Mod was very diligent. If only her husband were diligent like her...it would be*

better." The kindness and assistance Mod received from her neighbors was from the recognition of her "motherhood".

Prestige of partner's parents

This was employed for building relationships and recognition in the community.

Moving to live with the partner's family without following the customs of the society makes teen mothers worried about "being kept an eye on and gossiped about" by the villagers. In particular, when first arriving, the acceptance and compassion from the partner's family is the first step toward being confident in living in an unfamiliar community. Moreover, being respected by people in the community of the partner's parents is another important way to deal with the status of being a stranger in a new community. This was the case of Bua, who moved to live with her partner's family one month after giving birth. Her partner was in prison for drug offenses without realizing that his girlfriend was pregnant. Then, when her partner's parents heard about the birth of her child, they asked their son about the story and they decided to bring the daughter-in-law and grandson to live together. Her partner's parents were generous and calm, so they loved and treated her like she was their daughter. In addition, her partner's mother was a former president of the community. Although she had resigned from the position, people in the community still respected her and often asked for help from her. Bua's partner's parents also opened a grocery store in the community, so Bua's new home became the meeting point of people in the community. "*She was the kindest person in the community. Our house was a grocery store where people in the community liked to get together*" It was not only Bua, but others also thought the same way about her partner's parents. Preaw, another teen mother who lived in the same community, said, in regard to the parents of Bua's partner, "*while I was pregnant, I worked with them at the grocery store. They always bought me things and food. They were very generous. I loved them like my family members. When I had problems, I always talked to her. I trust in her.*"

The fact that the parents of Bua's partner were respected by the people and ran a grocery store in the community allowed the people to come to their house on a regular basis. Thus, Bua had the opportunity to meet other people and build relationships with them while selling things or having meals together. Sometimes, she sat nearby while the adults were having a conversation, so she had a chance to talk with other people in the community and felt more familiar with them. "*She got along well with all people in the community. We taught her how to socialize with others. At first, she looked displeased. So we told her to talk and smile more to others and she was more cheerful in the end*" It can be said that the prestige of a partner's parents is a key resource which can be used by teen mothers who come from other areas to interact with other people in the community to be recognized from the new community. Despite having the partner's parents as an intermediate in being a part of the community, learning and adaptation of a new member by changing one's personality and being friendlier are important parts in building a good relationship with others in the community. Bua tried to adapt to the community and follow the advice of her mother-in-law.

Although she was not as recognized and respected as her partner's parents, such prestige affected Bua's feelings about living in a new community in which she was transformed from being "a stranger" to "an acquaintance" whom the people recognized as a daughter-in-law and a mother of a child whose partner's parents were very respected in the community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Because becoming a teen mother was seen as a deviation from the norms of social morality, the teen mothers in this study faced bias, gossip, and discrimination from society. Although they had to face these crises, they tried to fight such problems for their dignity. Some resources—habitus and symbolic capital—were used to negotiate on being a mother. The habitus and the symbolic capital were the power sources of the teen mothers which helped to transform them from "victims" to become "agency" in order to negotiate with the members of the community who criticized them and to deal with the problems and the situations causing stress and embarrassment. The habitus, including "not caring and not responding to what others said" and "responding with irritating actions or the same actions" as well as the symbolic capital of having the father of the child, motherhood and the prestige of the partner's parents were used to negotiate and deal with people's bias and discrimination. In this way they rejected being dominated. In addition, economic capital can be accumulated through these three aspects of symbolic capital. For example, "motherhood" can be used to change the mother's behavior. The teen mothers worked hard to earn money for their children. Consequently, they were accepted by the neighbors as expressed through the assistance given to them. This was the way to change symbolic capital into social capital, leading to an increase in economic capital, which allowed them to live their lives. However, the study found that both teen mothers living in their own community and those living in the community of their partners also experienced rejection by the community. Nevertheless, using habitus and symbolic capital for the practice of everyday life differed, depending on the position of the teen mothers in the community. Nonetheless, habitus and capital are essential to the teen mothers as they give them power to negotiate to resolve the problems from being teen mothers and to be recognized and have identity in the community.

Moreover, raising awareness about teen mothers in order to reduce social stigma should be taken into account by the people involved in this issue. Campaigns are needed to encourage the family, school, and community to change attitudes towards teen mothers and to understand that a teen mother is not a criminal. The phenomenon of teen mothers is the result of weakening family and community systems that cannot raise these teenagers to be aware of their changes and the social changes which cannot protect them against the temptations around them. Therefore, the teenagers should not be punished by society. Moreover, the children born to them are precious resources and should be taken care of and offered a better quality of life.

If family, school, and community, or society in general continues to show bias against teen mothers, assistance cannot

be administered. Thus, they must think positively about the teenage mothers. In particular, parents, teachers, and the community should provide love and understanding and also listen to a teenage mothers' problems in a friendly manner and stop stigmatizing or condemning them. They must allow teen mothers to stand up and be ready to develop into qualified persons of society under the strategy of "understanding, approaching and helping."

Acknowledgments

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