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Single motherhood: A growing sociological and economic existential concern for global communities

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Abstract

Single motherhood as a living condition has become one of the greatest alternative family structures in the world, only second to couples living together. For the case of poorer communities, the challenge seems to be greater because women are among the most affected members of society as compared to their male counterparts, when it comes to social and economic privileges. These women who are often left to fend for their families after the death of their husbands, divorced and some never married, struggle with meeting their economic and parental obligation. This causes a lot of challenges that include but are not limited to, homelessness, school dropouts, prostitution, early pregnancies and delinquent behaviors in children, etc. The premise of this article argues the case for single mothers as an express necessity and concern for society, church, and government. The single mothers, being found in these circumstances are exposed to suffering through neglect but also not given due attention as far as economic privileges are concerned.

Purpose: whereas it is clear that the world is rallying on the agenda for couples and marriage as the norm for raising children in an ideal environment, it has become increasingly undeniable as to the number of marriages that are ending some in divorce and other societal challenges. Annually as others have posited, 30% of all marriages worldwide end in divorce, others lose their spouses to death and others have never been married before. This article seeks to create an appreciation of the current situation which is not only conspicuous but also undeniable. For societies faced with challenges of economic inequality between males and females, it has become a necessity to create awareness in bridging the knowledge gap in society and provide solutions for the challenge.

Keywords: Single Mothers; Parenting; Living Conditions; Divorce; Widows

1. Introduction

Growing trend: It is a societal expectation, that if there is a mother, then a father lives with her. A mother is the female parent of a child or children who is the direct opposite of the father, or the male parent. Collins dictionary describes a mother as a female who has given birth to offspring. This dimension is given in a very limited context because there are mothers who have never given birth i.e. adoption and stepmothers. Therefore, the context validates both, on account of the provision of the mother who lives alone with her children. The single mother wears so many hats in her home with the children; She is the teacher, maid, director, mediator, nurse, cook, disciplinarian, father, and mother (Jim and Barbara Dycus, 2007.13)

The American Charter of the Organization of “Parents without Partners” has defined the situation, as a parent family consisting of one parent who is caring for his or her children or home and who is a single parent due to widowhood, divorce, separation, or who is unmarried (Schlesinger, 1996: 96). In this charter it is noted that 90% of one parent homes are headed by mothers, therefore justifiable that the article deals with the single mothers other than the single

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fathers. Unfortunately, the life condition of single mothers has been taken with negativity and often classified as a maladjustment to the general norm of existence.

As Wachege notes, whatever we say against single mothers and however negatively we may portray them we cannot rightly or realistically affirm that theirs is a family style that is saturated with negative elements and satanic (Wachege, 2003:15). This, unfortunately, is a position many have taken to view single mothers as such. Many Christians assume that these broken marriages are a result of a fallen society and that this problem barely affects people in the church but sadly that is not true (Armstrong, 2002: 23). The facts on the ground indicate that Christians suffer the same ills at the same rate as those who do not subscribe to it. Every community on earth will have a single mother either intentionally or dictated by life circumstances.

The normal family is considered to be the immediate group of father mother and children living together. This may be more specifically defined as a nuclear family (Schlesinger, 1996. 131). The subject of single mothers is related to the fact that today's society is dominated by the idea of the nuclear family in a patriarchal system. Despite the indication that the numbers in the alternative families are alarmingly on the increase the notion of society seems to gravitate towards the one father, mother, and children mode alone and ignoring the others.

The question that begs an answer here is, are the single mothers' homes broken or not? Wendy Petersen sheds more light on the subject of single mothers and has various stories of what goes on in their lives. To qualify her point and to demonstrate the reality of the challenge she samples stories and says that, each story is part of the quilt. But we can also view how these single *mothers*, weave together many responsibilities and change the roles of their lives as they fashion their life narratives (Peterson 2001: 36). The rise and success of single mothers and other alternative families across the world demonstrates to us that family is not dead but has certainly changed. In a case study, Judith as a school teacher admitted her stereotypical assumptions about divorced people and children from parents' homes and said the family can no longer be limited to what it used to be (Peterson.2001:36). The contention, therefore, is that these single mothers' homes are not actually broken but should be collectively appreciated as an existential shift in most families.

Problem-oriented research focuses mainly on the father's absence and not the mother's presence and that the home is unbroken (Peterson, 31). As here identified, one of the biggest challenges of such research is that it is usually focused on the negativity and dwells on the fact that the husbands are not there. Therefore, this effort is to draw society to pay attention to the fact that though it has a level of not being in the conventional nuclear family structure, it must be positively presented as acceptable. In a reaction to this, Prue Rains suggests that, in this sense, the moral career of unwed mothers is like of other persons whose acts are treated deviant and whose selves become publicly implicated (Atherton 1971:61) Yet this censure becomes not only unfair but retrogressive changing trends in family.

1.1. Alternative Family

The existence of this alternative family style whether people decide or they are placed in such a disposition by circumstances is the second largest and most prevalent style of family in America (Barbara Green, 1981:17). Single motherhood at the rate of its growth cannot just be overlooked as a maladjustment on society itself because at least in any family some have fallen into the situation unwitting but across the world the statistics are there to be seen.

This means that the traditional family would not be the only side of family influence. Actually, to a great extent, the family is tilting towards single parents and mothers to be precise. In the year 1982 census, there were about 6,839,000 single-parent households in the United States of America. Mothers were the heads of 6,147,000 of these homes, Divorced mothers 2,841,000, 1,548,000 were separated, and 1,168,000 were never married. On the contrary, the fathers headed 962,000 single parents' homes 386,000 fathers divorced 88,000 were widowed, 68,000 never married and 150,000 were separated (Kinear,1991: 13). This creates a backdrop to the specific needs that single mothers might have, as opposed to single father in that they are between eighty and ninety percent more.

In a sociological study done in Kenya, the following was established, six of every ten Kenyan women are likely to be single mothers by the time they reach 45, one of the highest rates for single-parent families in Africa (Kibengere 2001.21) This is not only brings to light further statistics of the problem but reveals the African challenge. The problem is not for the western developed world challenge alone but is something that an African suffers too. This situation seems to be more pronounced in African families as compared to the Western European and the developed world. Among black people, the single mother household are three times more common worldwide that is 45% against 15% for white Caucasians (Hunter, et.al.2007:293)

In the Zambian Central Statistical Office for 2010, 23% were female-headed households at the national level. The highest province with female-headed households was the Western province with 35 % and the lowest in Lusaka and Luapula rural areas at 19 %. The population distribution of twelve years and above marital status showed that 5% percent were separated or divorced, 5 % were widowed and 46 % were never married. The data shows that the percentage of female-headed households is higher in urban areas than it is found in rural areas. This can be attributed to the high rates of death among males in urban areas (CSO, 2010: 21). It may not be a pleasant site as far as the ideal is concerned but gloomy as it may seem, the numbers tell it all. African society has not been spared by the global trends of family adjustment.

1.2. Challenges of Single Parenting

There are several indicators observed in literature that suggest that the life situation of being a single mother poses on society as a whole. These incredible challenges include some data showing that children born in a single mother's home are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school. (Guest Ziol. 2015:20). So, in many of the single-mother homes the possibility is that at the high school level, the children are overwhelmed with challenges to the point where they opt out of school. Though many single mothers in the given situation try their very best to help their children the numbers are as they show. These same children born in single-mother homes are five times more likely to commit suicide or in other words are very prone to go that route. Even more worrying is the observation of the level of delinquency of the children who are raised in single-parent homes (Jones 1963:91). One such data is that single mothers have raised 78 % of the current prison population in the United States of America. These figures may be more or less the same in Africa owing to the global dynamics and the similarity of life trends across the world. It is no wonder that it is recorded that at least 77 percent of children in single-parent homes have endured and even witnessed physical abuse.

John Knight asserts that ninety percent of the children who are either away or homeless are from fatherless homes (John Knight, 2018:3). This gloomy yet realistic picture provides the backdrop of the necessity not only for further study of the subject but also the need for properly and carefully planned responses. This challenge not only affects secular society but the Christians too who are part of global society therefore it is a cross-cutting reality.

One of the greatest mistakes that many people make regarding the subject would be to suppose that single mothers are all from one aspect of the challenges of life (Wachege:24). The idea seems often to vilify and demonize all of them as unmarried women who did not wait to have their marriages but they went out of wedlock to have children. The facts indicate that they come from varied aspects of life and different experiences that throw all of them into one category of single mothers.

1.3. Economic Challenges

A survey and Christian's assessment done 1990s indicated that family relationships suffer from industrialization (Johnson, 1979:14). This is in the light of the many families that are often neglected because of economic challenges and sometimes proximity of two working parents from each other thus the gap begins to form. The sense in which single mothers are usually economically and financially disadvantaged as compared to their male counterparts is a matter of concern. Though divorced moms have made significant strides as far as economic gains, single mothers as a whole group have maintained a stubborn likelihood of living in poverty (Wolfinger, 2015:24). One of the reasons why single mothers as a group struggle to come out of poverty is the fact that some in the majority give birth out of wedlock, never been married and get pregnant in their teens. This group is challenged because they are often not ready to face life professionally and financially at the time that they have children, let alone bring up these children single-handedly.

Of the types of fatherless families that prevail, the never-married never completely overcome their challenges all at once. Families headed by never-married females are likely to experience the most severe financial difficulties and suffer the lowest self-esteem. The mother is also likely to be younger than other mothers of other fatherless and absent children (Fustenberg,1976:106). Younger mothers usually take much longer to get over their economic and even social misfortunes because of the challenges that they go through from the very beginning.

Young mothers are still in the transition from childhood which implies dependence on parents or others to adulthood and eventual self-sufficiency. Usually, these depended on their families, parents, and relatives. One-third of the young mothers in the CPS sample still lived with their parents and not their relatives (Diop,1989:14). With such a challenge then it becomes a double challenge for the parents of these mothers to find a way to help their child and also their grandchild at the same time. On but rare occasions would parents be willing to provide a babysitter for their daughter to allow her to attend school. The implication is simply that she loses a very important time in her life for proper concentration in school.

One of the facts about this situation is that young mothers appear to be less able to support themselves and their families than older mothers who delayed having children. They generally had fewer years of schooling, more limited job skills, and less work experience all of which led to lower wages, which compounds the problems is their responsibility for caring for their children and further constraints on employment. Almost half of adolescent mothers had family cash incomes below the poverty line (Fagerstrom, 1988:17).

The economic challenges of single mothers compel them to develop different living arrangements 'In the past policymakers demonstrated their concerns about single mothers living arrangements by prohibiting those cohabiting with unrelated men from receiving welfare benefits (London, 2000:17). The statement, in other words, indicated that the welfare department favored the single mothers whose living arrangements were with their children only. Those who were living with men even though they were not necessarily married were denied the privileges of the Department of Welfare. The understanding or assumption is that they are in a situation where the man would provide for them (Ibid).

Ethnographic research has shown that among certain groups of single mothers, living arrangements change regularly and these changes affect the resources available to the family. Most of the mothers in the leaving arrangements all have one thing in common and that is the fact that they are not permanent in nature. They are not the fixed arrangements like those in the marriage situation who may change the location of the house but they may have the same people in the circle. The single mothers leaving arrangements often are forced into different situations, often with strangers until they are in an independent arrangement which is more permanent in nature.

Categories of single mothers can be divided into four living arrangements; Independent, living with parents, cohabiting, and sharing with others. Mothers live independently, meaning that they live in one-family households with their children alone. The second group is those who live in their parents' households in which the single mothers and their children comprise a sub-family. The third group is those that are single but prefer to cohabit with some male who are not their husbands and the fourth and last one is the shared. Shared implies that the mother identifies a home where there are people already and joins them to share the cost of survival as a unit.

Of all these living arrangements the one that seems to be more appealing is the independently organized because living independently is the living arrangement associated with the least fluctuation over time, it may be the most favorable arrangement for children (Heatherington, Cox and Cox 1985:57). The independent living arrangements have an element of stability than those who prefer to share their habitation with other people who may also have bigger families. The others may be having other adults who may jeopardize the safety of younger kids. The point to remember is that single mothers are mostly those who have dependent children. To this end, it seems preferable the idea that many women prefer to be in an independent situation with their children.

The fact that custodial mothers usually prefer to live alone for the sake of the children often then suggests more responsibilities. Because of the obligations of paying rent, providing food, and often school fees for their children, they are forced to do extra work and find better methods of sustenance. The Heatherington research indicates that "For custodial mothers' loss of income is accompanied by increased workloads: high rates of job instability and residential moves to fewer desirable neighborhoods with poor schools, and high levels of crime (Heatherington, Cox, and Cox. 1985:57).

Mothers living independently are the most likely to live in public housing and receive a subsidy. They are also the most likely to be working, although the cohabiting mothers and those sharing with others have only a slightly smaller probability of working. The preference for this kind of approach to single motherhood has been greatly attractive to most women because of the help the governments and sometimes civil society organizations would be willing to give them when they leave independently.

Economically single mothers can also be given several categories as mentioned by an article on the different types of single mothers. They can be summarized as follows, 1. Coop mum: who works in cooperation with the father of the child. These get support in the form of time and money for the upbringing of the child 2. Mad Mum this one receives little or no support from the father of the child and has to fight if ever they have to get any help 3. All round mum. This one gets all the help she requires from her family and is not raising the child on her own (Muli, 2018. 4) The above statement is an attestation that single mothers differ economically and survive in different ways.

Custodial mothers may prefer to keep their children protected from other adults who may engage in activities within the household that the mother feels are inappropriate. Mothers often feel that if their children are exposed to other people in the house they may be molested, abused, or even denied the basic privileges of the child. The sharing of the

house arrangement often creates a scramble for space and would not be a better idea to keep the children who have had a problem with their past or with a lack of a father. The freedom to be able to struggle with their mother in the private space makes them feel that they are at home and would have a better chance to heal and move on. On the other hand, the shared home would seem they are all squatting and none of the occupants would be in a position to set the ground rules and the discipline of the children would be difficult. (Muli. 2018: 6).

Single mothers' employment has grown substantially in recent years, with particularly sharp increases in the 1990s. In 1991, just over one-half (55 percent) of never-married mothers with children less than 13 years of age were employed; by 1996, 70 percent were in the workforce (authors' calculations, Current Population Survey, U.S. Census).

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Single mothers' employment especially for the widows and divorcees is much higher than that of the never been married before. The never-been-married category often falls pregnant when they were too young and before they placed themselves well in society while the divorcees could have been well in a stable job or career when they got married. Some widows may have been left by their husbands with enough resources besides their income. The bulk of the economic challenges of the single mothers therefore are more concentrated with the unwed mothers, who would neither claim child support nor their fathers leave an inheritance in the case of death. It is this situation that keeps the categories of single mothers as a block in poverty.

One of the reasons why the mothers are a preferable alternative to the father in the single-parent alternative arrangement is because, of the mother's nature and general care for their offspring if you compare with fathers. This is not in a way to discount the heavy tasks that the fathers take but only to validate at a sociological and comparative level the importance of the mother, as the custodial figure for the children. A woman is also the one who shapes predominantly the character of a child during the tender years up to five. She plants tender gestures in the inner layer of the child's malleable soul during this crucial period like a flower bed with its roots hidden from view (Silvoso, 2021:5)

This is what the author of God's secret Weapons has to say about the mother's lasting contribution to the child the mother's contribution to the child goes into the inner layer of the fabric of the soul to the extent that her influence will leave a very indelible mark in the hearts of the offspring (Ibid). This seems to be the reason why single mothers often find it more comfortable to look after their children as opposed to giving away custody to their fathers. The mother's care for the children usually is an essential part of the child's healthy life and the better the life of the mother the better the lives of the children that they raise.

1.4. Church Community Concern

The church must take a proactive stand regarding the observation of the status of the single mothers in the community of believers. This will help those who belong to this group to know that they are as important as the people that they worship. Singleness and family life are not compatible they need to exist in the same hub, to keep singleness from degenerating into something hurtful. Singles who have no extended family are more emotionally and spiritually vulnerable because of the lack of spiritual support and covering” To some extent even the author's terminology may seem to have a stereotype because the singles who have children exist in families too (Silvoso: 5).

Maggio emphasizes the need for the church to create a proactive well-rounded ministry where both the social and economic needs of single mothers will be met. The emphasis suggests that the church must facilitate budgets and programs in the direction of single mothers (Jennifer Maggio, 2019: 2) The church should be the main sponsor for the activities that are targeted at building a societal framework for the advancement of single moms in the communities where they live.

1.5. Multi-dimensional Causes

The single mother's situation comes about in many ways than one. It is a well-known fact that demands no serious thought to understand that the subject of single mothers is not monolithic (Wachege, 2003: 134). This point attests to this fact from the principle of plurality and the divergence of the categories of single mothers. We discover a wide range of single mothers from various circumstances in the world. The idea of having prejudices is therefore grossly invalid for this time and very unfair. From the statistical data and civil society organizations that take a keen interest in the welfare

of the family, we find mothers who are defiled or raped, those whose husbands divorced them, and those who have been simply abandoned. This is without mentioning the bereft mother by the deaths of their spouses.

Among the crucial underlying yet overlapping factors and elements affecting differences among single mothers is the uniqueness of single motherhood owing to the multi-faceted causes such as personal endowment in existence and being-ness, ethnical affiliation, denominational loyalty, geographical setting, level of schooling cum education, individual personal efforts in setting ideals and striving to achieve them, generation and age groupings, mental acumen, intellectual potency and achievement, personal vision and confusion, choice of one's lifestyle, contemporary mindset, mode of employment and unemployment, socialization imbued with companionship status, degree of submission or rebellion against the normative elements of the life characteristics inscribed in cultures and perpetuated in traditions and finally philosophical cum religious orientation. Unitary perception of single mothers may thus have to be embraced reasonably and consciously assiduously (Ibid.20)

1.6. Divorce

Divorce still makes up a large part of up to forty percent of all single mother population (Armstrong: 22) and those thirty-eight percent of all single-parent households live with divorced mothers. To this effect the consideration of divorce as a key element in single parenting families is necessary. Nearly one out of every two marriages that are initiated this year will end in divorce (Leman K: ix). The vice of divorce has to a great extent been able to break the marriage system into two. Either you are married or divorced before consideration of other factors that affect the home.

While it may be concluded that those who go through a divorce may be judged to believe in it, Britton Wood as early as 1977 wrote that most divorced people do not believe in divorce but certain circumstances in their lives have caused them to face the reality of their situations and choose divorce as an alternative to the unhealthy marriage (Wood 1977:23). There can be some in the society who look at the divorced with contempt and disdain on account of them. Strong beliefs and ties in marriage and family and conclude that those who opted out of marriage just didn't respect the marriage bond. It should be said here that some of the divorcees in our society were victims of very unhealthy relationships in marriage.

It has often been assumed that divorce or single parenthood is a societal issue, what is meant here is that divorce can contribute to the realities of poverty delinquency, and poor educational performance for children (Glenn and Kramer, 1987.16) The challenges that the problem of divorce brings to society are many. The women who are divorced end up in poverty, and the children that they have custody over may drop out of school and become delinquent. At the level of the statistics mentioned above, the society as a whole is directly and indirectly affected. The levels of poverty rise, crime increases, and other social ills like mental disorders and depression.

In an editorial for guidance and counseling for children who come from divorce homes or single parents' homes, Barbara Green indicates that in every marriage dissolution involving dependent children the children act as the catalyst for some of the major difficulties. These concerns are multiple, worry over adjustment and possible harm because of divorce, custody decisions, and fundamental difficulties regarding financial and economic instabilities (Green 2018, 249) It is in this context that the challenges of the single mother are higher much more than those of the Single woman who is divorced or widowed but without children.

1.7. Dysfunctional Marriages

The problems in single parenting are often severe problems though parenting under any conditions can be extremely challenging. If the alternatives were not to have challenges at all it would be a distinct idea not to go separate ways. The challenges of single parenting are often looked at as out of this world but the reality suggests that in certain cases single parents should be in that position as opposed to having a couple in a dysfunctional and often abusive situation.

Some women choose single parenting to save their children from certain challenges that they may face had they continue with both parents. Those who choose to separate often do so because they have had no option for a better life than to go it alone. Wives and not husbands usually initiate most of the divorces. Many of these women may have a good cause to separate, they or their children may have suffered unbearable circumstances of verbal physical, or emotional abuse. (Armstrong:23)

There are reasons why some women remain in Abusive relationships but the major ones are the economic ones; the social roles of women who remain in the private sphere caring for the home/family have two important consequences 1. Economic relation and 2. Women often need the police or the court's intervention to get away from and be protected from violent men. The violence that women suffer often affects them in the privacy of their homes often due to

communication challenges and other misgivings between husband and wives but more than that it is one of the reasons that causes them to leave their marriage. The fact in societies is that women often are the most vulnerable in that they suffer more than their male counterparts. The woman sometimes experiences life of being battered as a normal way of life (Moore, 1990:131). The fact established here is that some women often face abuse in their homes from their husbands and by so doing they endure to remain afloat as far as economic needs and sustenance of children.

The knowledge that the law protects her can help a woman argue with her husband family pastor or whoever tells her that she must endure abuse (Moore, 1990:133). Often when the women in the battered homes are not aware that the law protects them and they usually are subjected to the pain for as long as the battering can last and often ends in death. It is this phenomenon that drives women to court once they have the knowledge that they can find protection from domestic violence.

Some experts propose that, in some instances, the separation of marriage partners may be healthier for the family. In this idea, marriage is meant to bring joy between father and mother, or husband and wife first before it can spill over to the children. If parents' marriage is so bad that the parents are preoccupied with their troubles with each other or so depressed that they cannot attend to their children as well as their parents are likely to benefit from parental separation (Furstenberg, 1979: xi).

The decision to leave is often a hard one but the biggest challenge is to keep themselves safe from constant peril and stress. The research from Heatherington indicates that, although depression remains higher in divorced women than in non-divorced women by two years after divorce, women show less depression and psychological well-being than those who chose to remain in conflict. (Heatherington, 1987:190) Single mothers may experience stress but as indicated they come out often stronger than they could naturally be without their families and even their husbands.

1.8. Unwed Mothers (Never Married)

“Sexuality and teenage motherhood: Women indeed become single mothers in different ways and some become mothers as teenagers. “Some teenagers conceive without starting menstruation and others conceive when they think that they are just too young, while the other reason why we have teenage pregnancies is that contraceptives are acceptable and available (Jones, 1963:114). It is for this reason that teenagers are pregnant at a very young age because they engage in sexual activity when they are very young. The idea presented here by and large focuses on one of the major reasons why some young people in their time of youth, only wake up to find that they are mothers before they can put it in their minds that they are old enough to be.

This, like other reasons, cause women to have the potential of staying in that position of being single mothers without a plan for a long time. It is clear from the African context that this becomes a difficult path in the life of single mothers especially because men usually have a strange complex in marrying someone who has had a child out of wedlock to be their lifelong partner. Once someone becomes pregnant the men develop a negative attitude towards her such that they will avoid committing to it. This not only happens when men deny to marry but sometimes her parents may decide not to allow their pregnant young daughter to get into marriage before completing her education. This may be a better arrangement in that the young girl who drops out of school may get an education later on to provide her skills for survival and employment.

Much teenage sexual activity results in more pregnancies in poorer countries. This has always been the situation and little notice was paid to it until large populations moved off the land and into the cities and the traditional tribal structures started to break down. “The problem this has created in terms of unsupported young mothers and fatherless infants has scarcely implicated itself on world consciousness, and crime- in Britain 100,000 teenagers go pregnant annually one-tenth of the population (Hudson, 1999: 41) One out of every 10 girls in Britain alone will have the possibility of getting pregnant and then stagger into the mother bracket that they cannot easily be redeemed. If indeed it is true that in the first world and developing countries such is the status of things what must it be for the poorer countries?

Teenagers who are mothers are on the whole unprepared for what lies ahead. The support suggested is seldom available and parents cannot offer their daughter reliable or consistent support. The problem of teenage motherhood seems in this context because the teenagers' parents are rarely available to assist their child to accept and cope with her situation that is, where she still needs the mother's and father's care she lands in a parental bracket. Further, the second problem is that the teenage mother is not psychologically available for what lies ahead. To this end, the challenge of the young mother is simply compounded and might even last her a lifetime if she does not find someone to accept that position and move in with her as a matrimonial partner or life coach.

While most single mothers are not happy with the fact that they are in that position and most get to that place accidentally especially if they are unwed, while others choose to go that way. They may choose to be single parents because their biological clock is ticking and still, they don't have a husband (Armstrong, 2002:23). The thought that if they reach a point where they can no longer bear children it will be too late if a man shows up at a later time. The most important thing therefore becomes the priority of parenthood if at all they missed the opportunity of marriage.

Hudson labors to explain the challenge of teen mothers, that they hardly get the chance to quickly marry (Hudson, 1999:14). The majority of teenage mothers, as we have seen, remain single; marriage has not appealed in the current economic and social climate. From this statement, it could purely be a result of the financial constraints on the part of the father who could be a young person as well, not ready yet to carry the burden of being a father. The odds are generally against the teenage mother in such circumstances.

2. Conclusion

What would be the needs of single mothers in society? is one of the most important questions of our time. Perhaps the greatest need of single mothers is developing the capacity to look ahead, but this is difficult if things behind or to the sides have grasped your attention (Fagerstrom, 2015: 24). This may mean forgetting the dark past or unpleasant place where one found herself grappling with the challenge of singleness. Looking forward may mean closing the door of the past and focusing on what lies ahead. It is at this point that single mothers need a more focused direction so that they may be assisted in picking up their pieces and moving forward. Society as a whole needs to change its systematic mindset to create a more inclusive and user-friendly environment for single mothers to thrive in a patriarchal world.

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