

A Qualitative Study on Single mothers' Experience of Raising their Dependent
Children: A case in Lideta Sub City of Addis Ababa

Rahel Weldegabreal

A Thesis Submitted to School of Social work Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Social Work (MSW)

Addis Ababa University

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Advisor: Fekadu Mulugeta (PhD)

Addis Ababa University
College of Social Sciences
School of Social Work

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Addis Ababa University
School of Social Work
MSW Examining Committee

This is to certify that the thesis entitled as " Single mothers' Experience of Raising their Dependent Children in Lideta Sub City of Addis Ababa" is prepared by Rahel Weldegabreal and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts (School of Social Work) complies with the regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to Originality and quality.

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Abstract

This study is concerned with assessing single mother's experience of raising their dependent children in Lideta sub city of Addis Ababa; Ethiopia. The objective of the study is to find out the experiences of single mothers in raising their children. The researcher has employed qualitative research methodology. The basic research question is; what are the experiences of single mothers in Lideta sub-city, Addis Ababa' in raising their dependent children? For this purpose, the data requirements for the study were collected from 11 single mothers and 11 children of single mother families were selected by using snowball sampling technique. Altogether 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted for the analysis so as to collect relevant data. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis or major idea analysis. The findings from the study revealed that financial problem (difficulty for the mothers to meet the basic needs of children and the family) and psychological challenges (loneliness, helpless and hopeless) were the main stressor for majority of the single mothers, while children of single parents receive little support in their educational engagement form their mothers (that have a negative effect on their performance in school) and single mothers received limited support from community, neighborhood , government and noon government organization. The study also suggests that there is an urgent need to recognize the unique challenges of both the children of single mother families and their mothers (as compared to children of nuclear families) and calls for multifaceted interventions by both government and nongovernmental organizations to help these groups of the society to cope-up with the psychological, financial and emotional problems.

Key words: Single Mother, Children of Single Mother Families, Child Parent Relationship

Chapter One

Introduction

1. Background of the study

Families have a paramount importance for the development of children and their well-being in many ways. The family is the first socializing agent that the child comes into contact with. It has a great influence on the child's physical, mental and moral development. The family also lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the home and the significant others who are found in it (Maduewesi and Emenogu, 1997). Especially, in contexts like in Ethiopia where alternative care systems for children are less developed, families are the main sources of psychological, social, physical and material care and support for children. Hence, this research is premised on the idea that family structure has a number of impacts on the relationship between parents and child and the latter's psycho-social development.

There are three pathways to single motherhood. The first is single mothers who are never married. This category includes women becoming single mothers before marriage. Women may set out to have a baby with the intention of raising it alone or involuntary when mothers are having babies in the hope that the men will agree to a marriage. Besides, women may give birth out of social peer pressure when they are accused being barren. So they will trick a man just to get pregnant and prove they are fertile. The second pathway is divorce. Divorce has continued to be a global threat to families around the world and in Ethiopia. The third pathway to single motherhood is death of husband.

Although, there is paucity of data on single parent families in Ethiopia, mainly because vital statistics registration is yet to be started, a number of observations can be made based on the

available data. First, empirical studies have indicated that the number of single mothers has increased in Ethiopia in recent years. According to the Demographic and Health Survey of Ethiopia, more than one household in every four (26 percent) is female-headed in 2011, increased from 23 percent in 2005 (CSA and ICF, 2012). The 2011 DHS also indicates that 17 percent of children in Ethiopia live in custody of single parents (either their mother or their father). Addis Ababa city has the lowest proportion of children who live with both parents standing at 52 percent while the national average is 72 percent (CSA and ICF, 2012) and hence the highest proportion of children living with only their mother or father in Ethiopia is in Addis Ababa.

It is more likely that single mothers in Addis Ababa are widowed or divorced since only 4% of teenagers in Addis Ababa are engaged in childrearing, according to the DHS 2005. In a way that consolidates this view, Serkalem (2006) indicated that the number of divorce has increased in Ethiopia. Besides “forty-five per cent of first marriages in Ethiopia end in divorce within 30 years, and two-thirds of women who divorce do so within the first 5 years of marriage” (Tilson and Larson, 2000,p.1). Tilso and Larson (2000, p.1) found that, practice of early marriage is widespread in Ethiopia, especially in rural parts, and is a major contributory factor for increasing number of divorce. Similarly, Serkalem (2006) also found that compared with intact marriages, divorced parents went to marriage in their early age and especially marriages based on traditional cultural practices such as; abduction, still being practiced though believed to be declining, are more likely to end in divorce. Getachew (2006) also noted that pregnancy before marriage is on increase in Ethiopia, thereby making the number of single parents to increase.

1.1. Problem Statement

This study explores the experiences of single mothers in raising their dependent children in Lideta area. This research was motivated by my frequent contact with single mothers due to my work. The organization I work for provide support for single parents and my work involves frequent discussion with single parents, usually happened to be single mothers, about their daily challenges to raise their dependent children. This frequent discussion aroused an interest inside me to know more about single mother's challenges and the effect on children through systematic research.

The impact of single motherhood on children wellbeing is reflected through different channels. First, studies indicated that single mothers experience usually high level of psychological distress because they are exposed to more stressful events and more ongoing strain in the form of low income than households headed by Married couples (McLanahan, 1984, p.1; see also Harbest, 2012). Second, many of single parent households earn low income and are disproportionately living in poverty. Single parents, usually mothers, are in a lack of financial support from a father often and are often required to work longer hours there by making children receive less attention and guidance which impede their social development as well as education performance (Kunz, 2014). The relationship between poverty and child outcomes is well established: children from poorer backgrounds generally do less well on a number of measures, such as; health and educational attainment, than children from more advantaged backgrounds (Mooney, 2009, p.12).

The studies reviewed briefly above underline that the effect of single motherhood is not only enormous but also likely varies from society to society depending on the role family is supposed to play in children's well-being. Hence, although the effect of single motherhood on

children's wellbeing is in largely negative, how and in what ways it affects the children's wellbeing should be contextually investigated. Such knowledge of the vivid experience of children affected by negative impacts of single motherhood and how they try to cope-up with it undoubtedly has a paramount importance in informing social work practice and social policy

However, despite the increasing number of single motherhood in Ethiopia, limited research is done on the experiences of single mothers in raising their children. So far little has been done in Ethiopia about the life and experiences of single motherhood on the effect of divorce, from children's wellbeing perspective (Serkalem, 2006). By presenting a qualitative data on the topic, this study therefore aims to fill some identified knowledge gaps which are related with challenges related to single motherhood and its effect on children's development.

1.2. Research Questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

General Question:

- What are the experiences of single mothers in Lideta sub-city, Addis Ababa; in raising their dependent children?

Specific questions:

- What looks to be a single mother raising a dependent child in Lideta sub-city?
- What are the challenges of single mothers in raising their dependant challenges?
- How do children view their single mothers' challenges and their experience of being child of single mothers?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The overall aim of the study is to find out the experiences of single mothers in raising their children and its effect on their children.

Specific objectives include:

- To assess the situation of single mother and their children in Lideta sub city
- To identify the possible challenges of single motherhood in raising their dependent children.
- To explore positive aspects of being single motherhood in terms of raising their children.
- To suggest possible means in dealing with the challenge of single motherhood and its impact on children, and society in Lideta Sub city

1.4. Significance of the Research

The study is meant to provide meaningful significance for policy makers and other stakeholders who are involved in areas of improvement of socio-economic lively hood of individuals and groups in general and single mothers and their children in the in particular. Above all, it will pave a royal road in attracting many resources and intervention ventures which is supported by organizational responses that are guided and shaped by international, regional and national standards. Finally, it will have a room in igniting further researches and mobilizing resources which brings practical utility by ultimately answering questions which are related the two over arching values of humanity that is; considering socio-economic needs as a universal human need which in turn helps to promote socio-economic justice.

1.5. Limitation of the study

The research study was limited by the following conditions. First, it was difficult to arrange times to interview the participants according to their schedules. The interview session may be limited if the participants were preoccupied with their work and their children, which resulted in a less in depth of answers. Second, it could be argued that this study was limited by the research methodology. Although this study explores the challenges of single mothers in

raising their children, it is not a comparative study between intact and single mothers' challenges. Such comparative study could identify the commonality and difference between intact and single mothers. However, this study opted to give exploratory findings about what single mothers and their children believe that their challenges are so as to facilitate a follow up comparative study between intact and single mothers. Thus, the reader should note that while discussing the challenges and experiences of single mothers in raising their children; the argument is not that these challenges are unique to single mothers. However, the study strived to dig more how the challenges single mothers and children identity are related to the structure of the family- that is single motherhood.

1.6. Operational Definition of Concepts

Single Mother: Single mothers are parents who care for one or more children without assistance from another person. It constitutes four components: divorced, separated, widowed and never married.

Child Parent Relationship: A perception of children above age of 10 about nature of their relation with both parents.

Children of Single-Mother Families: Defined as children who were cared for and raised by a divorced, separated, widowed or never married mother.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter includes: background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study, and operational definitions of the variables. The second chapter deals with the literature review. The third chapter discusses about research methods used.

The fourth chapter presents findings and discussions of the study. And, the last chapter five reveals conclusions, and social work, research and policy implications of the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the existing literature on experiences of single mothers raising children. It begins with a discussion of consequences of single motherhood for the single mothers and proceeds with on their children. It concludes with a section that explores the positive aspects of single motherhood.

2.1. Single Mother Status

In today's society, there are many different types of families. Some include intact, non intact, single families, stepfamilies and a variety of others. Along with these different varieties of families there is one common incident that can cause the family structure to change. One of the most striking changes in family structure over the last twenty years has been the increase in single-parent families. In 1970, the number of single-parent families with children under the age of 18 was 3.8 million in US. By 1990, the number had more than doubled to 9.7 million. For the first time in history, children are more likely to reside in a single-parent family for reasons other than the death of a parent. One in four children is born to an unmarried mother, many of whom are teenagers. Another 40 percent of children under 18 experience parental breakup (Jacqueline, 2006).

Survey data indicate that Americans have become increasingly accepting single-parent families formed through divorce and non-marital childbearing since 1960 (Thornton,1989; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001).The U.S. Bureau of Census reported in 2001 that there are now over 12 million single parent households approximately 10 million of which are maintained by mothers (as cited in Walsh, 2003, p.121).Due to an increase in the numbers of children born outside marriage and the rise in divorce rates, there has been a “three-fold increase in the

proportion of children growing up in single-parent families since 1960 in US (Susan, n.d.). In 1990, of the children who lived with one parent, 39 percent had parents who were divorced, 31 percent had parents who were never married, 24 percent had parents who had separated, and 7 percent had one parent who had died in US. These different subgroups have different rates of employment, income, poverty, and welfare receipt. In general, never married mothers are the most likely to be poor, to receive welfare for long periods, and the least likely to work (Ooms, 1992).

2.2. Consequences of Single Motherhood

Compared to intact families, single motherhood is associated with a number of negative effects. In discussing consequences of single mothers, however, it should be recognized that single motherhood refers to a diverse category of mothers. Single mothers can be never married, widowed or divorced. They may live alone or may live with others. For instance, although, research has generally showed that single mothers are disproportionately among the poor; research also showed that single mothers living with relatives have better socio-economic status than single mothers heading a household (Amato & Keith, 1991).

Nevertheless, there are common challenges associated with single motherhood. McLAnahan and Sandefur (1994) found that “single mothers seemed to suffer more following a divorce, perhaps because they typically experienced a severe loss of income since due to a lack of husband’s support (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). The loss of a husband's income (and the psychological effect on the custodial parent) was one of the most important factors in determining a child’s well-being. Carlson (1997, p.625) agreed noting that in single parent families, parenting abilities are affected by the family's financial status. Carlson also stressed that single mothers suffer higher stress rates due to a loss of economic status, possibly leading to

maternal depression, predicting negative maternal attitudes and ineffective parenting. Besides having to adjust to a lower standard of living, single mothers also experienced less access to occupational training and less access to the higher education needed to pull themselves and their children out of poverty (White, 2004, p.7).

Financial challenges can also affect the possibility of single mothers in developing social network. The low income status of single mothers also means that they have to move frequently in search of (better) jobs and or smaller homes that are more affordable. In addition, single mothers also tend to disengage from family and friends, not taking the time to maintain old relationships or to build new supportive ones. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) asserted that single mothers tend to be so depressed at their lack of status and income following their divorces; they had no energy to maintain relationships. The authors asserted that this lack of family and friendship connections can have a detrimental effect on children's well-being, as they see their old, well-known world fall away (White, 2004, p. 7).

2.3. Consequences of Single Motherhood on Children's Wellbeing

Theoretical explanations about the impact of single motherhood on wellbeing of dependent children have changed over years. In 970s, the dominant model researches on single motherhood followed was the Family Deficit Model. The Family Deficit model views "the nuclear or two-parent family (otherwise known as intact family) as the ideal family structure. According to this model, single-parent families have a negative impact on children simply because they do not have a nuclear family structure. It is therefore considered an aberration, which lacks the capacity to produce a psychologically balanced offspring" (Azuka-Obieke, 2013, p.112). However since 1990s the notion of viewing single parents as inherently deficit is increasingly rejected to be replaced by the Risk and Protective Factor model, which "does not

regard single-parent families as irregular. Risk factors are background characteristics and life events that may have negative impact on child development. Whereas, protective factors are characteristics and events that positively influence children and help limit the impact of risk factors. Essentially, risk factors are the weaknesses while protective factors are the strengths of any given family” (Azuka-Obieke, 2013, p. 112). Rather than viewing single parenting as the cause of negative outcomes for children, the Risk and Protective Factor model views family structure as one of the many risk factors. For instance, Rodgers and Pryor (2001) undertaking a comprehensive review of the research evidence on the impact of divorce and separation on outcomes for children and concluded from the evidence that children of separated parents compared with children whose parents remain together are at increased risk of: Growing up in households with lower incomes and poorer housing; experiencing behavioral problems; performing less well in school and gaining fewer educational qualifications; needing more medical treatment; leaving school and home when young; becoming sexually active, pregnant or a parent at an early age; reporting more depressive symptoms and higher levels of smoking, drinking and other drug use during adolescence and adulthood (Mooney, Chris and Marjorie, 2009, p. 7). Given these obstacles, single mothers tended to feel more overwhelmed in their parenting role, experiencing high stress levels and depression (Carlson, 1997; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). The authors posited that a combination of these factors could lead to ineffective parenting, with the single mother unable to provide the firm, loving discipline that children need to develop a strong sense of security and well-being (White, 2004, p.7).

The role of the father in traditional African settings was considered vital in the upbringing of a child. One of the characteristics of the existing literature on single mothers is its focus on the impact of single motherhood on children’s wellbeing. Besides, there is no single

cause for the declining well-being of children in single parent families, but rather many. No single explanation accounts for the differences, and some scientific support exists for each of the five perspectives: economic hardship, loss of parental support and supervision, lack of community resources, parental conflict, and life stress and instability (white, 2004).

Hilton and Desrochers (2002, p.31) cited the “parental adjustment perspective,” which posits that the parent’s psychological state after a divorce has a direct effect on children’s well-being. Clarke-Stewart and Hayward (1996) found that children had stronger relationships with both parents and a greater sense of psychological well-being when the custodial parent had made a successful emotional adjustment to the divorce -- especially those children in mother custody (White, 2004).

Family disruptions often entail a number of changes which, taken together, can be more stressful than any one considered alone (i.e., moving, changing schools, loss of contact with the noncustodial parent, and a decline in one’s standard of living). (White, 2004)

2.4. Economic Hardships

Beyond the pressure and stress that single parents have to deal with, they are also very much concerned with providing finances to their respective family. Some single parents, specifically mothers who never worked in their entire life, would be forced to work in a full-time basis. This does not only adds pressure to single parenthood but more importantly, it limits the time that the mother has to spend with her children (Walsh, 2003). Financial crises are a standing situation with most of the single parent families. It becomes difficult in meeting the basic needs of children such as food, clothing, school fees, maintaining the previous standard of living and meet personal expense (Nidhi and Bharti, 2009).

Single mothers' unemployment has been stated to be more than twice as much as married women's, and the reason suggested is that single mothers have particular difficulty in finding jobs that are consistent with their family care responsibilities. It has been noted that this high unemployment rate is troubling for families since one fifth of all families with children are headed by working single mothers, and families of single mothers (considering both those who work and those who do not together) have a high poverty rate, 28.3 percent (Susan, n.d.).

Father's historical role in the family has been breadwinner. So the single mothers are plunged into poverty. The economic position of women who live alone with their children remains precarious and single motherhood is a major reason for poverty among women and thus their over-representation among the poor (Problem of Single Mothers ,2012).

Single women with children experience much higher levels of poverty than any other family type. In part, this is due to the prevalence of low paying, female dominated occupations – which typically pay in minimum wage or only slightly higher. Single mothers also face challenges arranging and paying for child-care, which can comprise about 1/3 of the household budget depending upon the age of the child (Christen, n.d.).

Mother-only families are more likely to be poor because of the lower earning capacity of single mothers, the insufficient benefits provided by the state, and the lack of child support provided from the nonresidential father (Garfinkel & McLanahan, 1986).

A large body of research has documented the disadvantages of children raised in single-parent homes relative to children raised in two-parent homes. Lower high school graduation rates, lower GPAs, and greater risk for drug abuse are only some of the negative outcomes associated with growing up in a single-parent home.

Nelson (1990), cited in Waruesporn, (2011) argues that family income has effects on a single-mother's life tensions, which may diminish the emotional well-being of parents and have negative effects on children's self-esteem and children's behavior in school. Single-mother families are at a high risk of poverty and a poor psychological health due to the pressure the single-mother has to put up with in working to earn an income to meet the family's needs, leading to fatigue and emotional imbalance, which results in a lack of time spent with children. Parents under economic stress and single-parents often poorly supervise their children and may let them gain autonomy too early. Unsupervised adolescents are more likely to be involved in risky behaviors such as cigarette smoking, alcohol drinking, drug use, early sexual activity resulting in adolescent pregnancy (Richardson et al., 1993; Blum et al., 2000, as cited in Waruesporn, 2011).

Researchers who have compared single-parent mothers to married mothers have documented the lower economic status, higher stress levels, and lack of time for sleep and leisure among single mothers (McLanahan and Booth, 1989; Sanik and Mauldin, 1986).

Summary

The available theoretical and empirical literature posts that single motherhood that raise dependent children are faced with multifaceted challenges. These challenges include financial scarcity, emotional problems,

However, the literature is highly skewed towards quantitative study. Besides, much of the literature is skewed towards comparisons of performance of children of single mothers and intact families on a number of wellbeing measures. Furthermore, the literature coming from sub-Saharan Africa and from Ethiopia is very rare. This study has set a ground for further detail

studies in Ethiopia by taking exploratory approach to highlight important issues worthy for detail investigation.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methods

This chapter includes a detailed description of the research methodology that was utilized in the study. The chapter is organized into several sections that provide a framework within which to describe the research procedures. The chapter begins with a brief description of the study area, followed by the study design. Attention is then given to a discussion of the various components of the method- data source, study population and research participants, data gathering technique and instruments, data analysis, and ethical consideration.

3.1. Study Design

This study followed a qualitative research methods design. Qualitative research is concerned with non statistical methods of inquiry and analysis of social phenomena. It draws on an inductive process in which themes and categories emerge through analysis of data collected by such techniques as interviews, observations, videotapes, and case studies. Qualitative research has been defined in a variety of ways. In one definition, Strauss and Corbin (1998) identified qualitative research as:

“Any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, and cultural phenomena”.

These authors elaborated that qualitative research is best used when the methods are: (a) complementary to the preferences and personal experiences of the researcher, (b) congruent with the nature of the research problem, and (c) employed to explore areas about which little is known. Miles and Huberman (1994) expressed an expanded position and indicated that

qualitative research is conducted to: (a) confirm previous research on a topic, (b) provide more in-depth detail about something that is already known, (c) gain a new perspective or a new way of viewing something, and (d) expand the scope of an existing study.

Hence, qualitative methods allowed going deeper into the research problem providing a more profound understanding of the social phenomenon investigated (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Through qualitative research the researcher has managed to generate a more detailed view of the situation, getting closer to the actors' perspectives aimed at developing "as full an understanding of the case as possible" Strauss and Corbin (1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) stated qualitative research is an exploration, elaboration and systematization of the significance of an identified phenomenon. Strauss and Corbin (1998) also explained that in qualitative research one is interested in process, meaning and understanding. As a result it could suffice to use qualitative method.

3.2. Study Area

The study was conducted in Lideta Sub city of Addis Ababa City administration. Lideta sub city is one of the ten sub cities of Addis Ababa city administration. It has an area of 9.18 seq.km and population of 214, 769 and also has 10 woredas. According to the City council of the Addis Ababa Administration, major source of livelihood in Lideta Sub city are petty trade, daily labor, and sale of firewood, weaving, and some government employees (Addis Ababa City Council, 2004).

3.3. Participant Selection

It is very difficult to have a list of single parents and their children in the study area to conduct random sampling. However, through my office work, I have come to know many single parents who are either current or past beneficiaries of the NGO I work for. I relied on this

network to select single parents and their children to the study. Besides, since community members know each other better, I employed snowball sampling technique to select participants for the study.

3.3. Study population

The study population for the research constitutes children of single parents who are above the age of 10 years and their single mothers. The criterion of 10 years is purposefully selected to make sure children have meaningful experience (for instance interacting with peers in schools) and are realistically be able to describe their experience. However, it should be noted that this might have its own limitations on the study in a sense that the experience of children below 10 years are not included in the study.

3.4. Study Participants

Accordingly, the study participants for this study were two groups: Children and their single parents. Data were collected from children aged above ten years old. Through semi-structured interview children themselves are asked to describe and narrate their life experience of being a child of single mother parents. The focus of data collection is on critical and insightful description of the challenges from children's own perspective and how they make of their experience and why they think their parent's marital status has affected their life. 11 children were interviewed based on the principle of data saturation.

Further information on children's experience was collected from a parent's perspective. Data collection from parents was focused on how their single status is impacting their children's life and how do they try to deal with any of these changes. Respondents include 11 mothers between 30 and 45years old, who where sole mothers residing in Lideta Sub city of Addis Ababa, willing to share their experience of being a single mother and the rest 11 are children of

single mother families whose age are in between 11-16. The single mothers and children, who participated in the study, have been selected from different household units i.e. the researcher did not take a child and a mother in a single household.

3.5. Data Gathering Technique and Instruments

This study employed a face to face interview method to explore the lived experience of participants as a single mother and as a child of a single mother family, living in Lideta Sub city of Addis Ababa. . Interview, is very useful for gaining insight and context into a research topic and it allows respondents to describe what is important to them. Interview also is a very useful tool to generate stories and quotes that narrate connection among interviewees' life experiences, in this research case, as single parent or children of single parent.

The interview format was semi-structured interview. Semi structured interview enabled respondents to talk freely and it allowed me to probe deeper into the primary responses of the respondents and gains a more detailed answer on a particular topic unlike structured interview, semi structured interview allows both interviewer and interviewee flexibility in conversation and an opportunity to probe further on issues that the researcher things need more details. The interview guide first developed in English and then translated to Amharic and back to English to ensure proper translation. The interview were focused on study participant background information, single parenting, factors affecting children of single parent families, effects of single-parent family on children, relationship between single-mother and children, children and mother's social and interpersonal relationships.. During the interview, I conducted an hour interview in Amharic language with each of the 22 respondents, with 11 mothers at their home and with 11 children in their schools.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

All the data from the interviews were collected by hand-written notes. Code names were used to ensure anonymity of respondents is maintained. For the analysis I started with reading through all the interviews to get an overview, whereupon I went back to each interview transcript and read them carefully. Then I created an interview summary for each participants as soon as possible after each interview took place. This summary includes personal information about the interviewees. This way, the data was transcribed, edited, coded and translated in to English before it was analyzed.

To make an important connection to the research question, I employed thematic analysis to identify the most interesting and demonstrative patterns across interview (Merriam, 2002). Thematic analysis aimed at discovering the most common and relevant themes within the data, which were able to represent the whole dataset. This step entails describing and developing the themes from the data to answer research questions as the lens for analysis. Six themes emerged from the data in relations to a research question. After I identified major themes and differentiated significant themes from insignificant themes as according to my research question, I reread my data and revised my themes when necessary.

3.7. Ensuring Rigour and Consistency

According to Kreuger and Neuman, (2005) opportunities for biased, dishonest, or unethical research exist in all research. All social work researchers want to be fair, honest, truthful, and unbiased in their research activity. The researcher has tried to gather a data that gives credibility for her analysis. If qualitative research relies on too little data, the experiences of only a small numbers of interviewees might distort the data. Qualitative social work research places greater trust in the personal integrity of individual researchers, but it includes a variety of

checks on how evidence is gathered. Furthermore, Krueger and Newman (2005) stated it the most important way that a qualitative research ensures rigour and consistency is through the way it narrates and presents evidence. The evidence and discussions were presented in such a way to provide the reader with a sufficient amount of detail and texture there by allowing the reader to trust what he/she is reading.

The first way of addressing the question of bias should be through admitting the fact that all research work is influenced by some form of political interest and theoretical construct (Creswell, 2009). The researcher admits such a claim and has exerted her utmost effort to minimize bias to the minimum level possible. But because this is a qualitative research and standardized and numerical methods of ensuring rigour and consistency were challenging, firstly the researcher has relied on her personal integrity. This implies that the researcher refrained from activities such as inserting personal opinion into the data and using data selectively to support preferred personal views and opinions.

In addition to personal integrity, the researcher has used a variety of checks to ensure the rigour and consistency of her findings. These checks include firstly scrutinizing evidence carefully and skeptically. That is, for any statements to be made the researcher has looked for confirming evidence from various sources to maintain internal consistency. Besides, the researcher has checked if his sources have firsthand information on the issue. Another check would be the detailed raw data to be generated in the research. The large amount of data in the form of notes that were generated in this research, with reference to the sources has provided a thick description of the phenomena.

The other possible way of ensuring rigour and consistency of this research is by using triangulation technique, multiple sources of information, developing trust within the study

participants, cross checking information about each other within their neighbors with regard to the experience of both single mothers and their children.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

Ethics and the safety of informants have a very special emphasis in any social work research. Accordingly, maximum care was used to ensure anonymity and safety of participants. Participants in this study were ensured that their identities could not be traced at any point. They were also told, at the initial contact, about the goals of the study and that they could skip questions or stop at any time. Oral consent was obtained from each respondent and participant. Code names used in presenting data to maintain anonymity of the participants of the study.

According to Krueger and Neuman, (2005), anonymity means that subjects remain anonymous or nameless. For example, a field researcher provides a social picture of a particular individual, but gives a fictitious name and location, and alters some characteristics. So the researcher has used pseudo-names in order to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. The other important issue was related to confidentiality, it means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public. The information was not released in a way that permits linking specific individuals to responses and is publicly presented only in an aggregate form (e.g., percentages, means, etc.), Krueger and Neuman, (2005). Hence, the researcher has done all possible mechanisms of preserving the interest, privacy and free will of the participants so as not to disclose the information in a way that violates the principles of confidentiality. Finally, copy of the information sheet has been read to participants who agreed to participate in the study.

Children's own interests, experiences and knowledge have often been excluded from the research enterprise (Hood, Kelley & Mayall, 1996) because they have been perceived as poor

informants, not able to fully understand many of the issues which confront their daily lives (Matthews, Limb & Taylor, 1998). Participation of children is crucial in my study so, I asked parents to talk about the research with their child. And like I did with single mothers I informed study participant children about their right to stop or skip the question.

Chapter Four

4. Finding and Data Presentation

This chapter presents the findings of the study and discusses them. The Chapter begins with a description of the profile of study participants and proceeds with discussion of the findings with the identified themes.

4.1. Brief Descriptions of Participants

This section provides a brief summary of each participant's important life and demographic information to facilitate reader's understanding of their challenges as single mothers in raising their children. The participants are categorized into two sets; single-mothers and children. Each set are described in alphabetical order. In the last section, I have included a summary of my discussion on the background information of the participants.

4.1.1. *Background information of Single-Mothers*

Single mother A is a 30 years old single mother, of a daughter separated from her husband because “she caught her husband cheating and lying” (Interview may 06, 2014). She is originally from Adama, but moved to Addis Ababa before five years after she knew the result of her HIV positive status and currently resides in Lideta Sub city. After separation, she confronted with both financial and health problems because her husband has stopped offering help since their separation. However, she stated that her difficult time was when her daughter was younger. Besides, in the early days of her residence in the current area, she was new for the neighborhood and she had “no one support her and looking after her child” (Interview, May 06, 2014). She and her daughter are living in private rented house which is expensive for them to cover. She is a volunteer in one humanitarian organization.

Single mother B is a 37 years a widowed from Gurage region currently residing in Lideta sub city with her 13 years old son and 10 years old daughter. Her husband died before seven years. She expressed that she was so distressed after the death of her husband and migrated to Addis Ababa. She Manage the family by selling cloths on the street. Single mother C is a 35 years old widowed mother and living with her 14 year old son. She is daily laborer and lives in shelter. Single mother D is a 29 years old sole mother with four children. She is widowed and supports the whole family by selling “*kolo, Injera* and Charcoal” (Interview May 08, 2014). She has serious health problem and because of that she is frightened and distressed about her children future. She believes she has no good relationship with the surrounding community.

Single mother E is a 38 years old and mother of 15 year old son. She is daily laborer. Her husband died before 10 years. She said that she committed herself for her son and she doesn't want to get married because she is “afraid that [her] only child might get abused by my partner” (Interview May 09, 2014).

Single mother F is 40 years old and living with her two children in Lideta sub city. She says she is separated from her husband due to his drinking behavior. She has attended her education until grade three. She is living in a rented house from private owners. She manages the family by selling lemons, and potatoes in the area.

Single mother G and H share common characteristics of never married. Single mother G has three children but never married. She is a 35 years old and support the family by washing other people's clothes. She did not have a chance to get enrolled in school and she can not write nor read. She said that the difficult thing in life is being both a mother and a husband. Single mother H is a 30 years old single mother with her a 10 year old daughter and 3 year old son. She attended education till grade seven. The family lives in a private rented house.

Single mother I is a 40 years old sole mother living in Lideta sub city with her 16 years old daughter and 9 years old son. She never got married and she got pregnancy out of marriage. She is daily laborer and living in a private rented home. The family has serious economic problem and due to this the mother cannot afford to pay for housing.

Single mother J is a 45 years old sole mother with four children aged 9, 11, 14 and 16. She got divorced from her husband due to his drinking behavior. He was irresponsible for the family. She wasn't gone to school in her entire life. The families are living in plastic made house. J says children work after they return from school and support her.

Single mother K is a 40 years old single mother with a 13 years old daughter. Her husband died two years ago after a long period of time of sickness. She is illiterate and she supports her family being a daily laborer. She over controlled her daughter due to fear of losing her because of bad behavior.

4.1.2. Background Information about Children

The researcher supplemented the data from single mothers with data from children. A total of ten children were interviewed. This section presents a summary of the basic information about the children.

Child **A** is the oldest daughter of a single mother experienced a loose of her father when she was 11 years old child. She is 15 years old and has 3 younger brothers. She experienced financial difficulties after the death of her father because, her mother does not have permanent job. On the other hand, child **B** is 12 years daughter of a single mother grew up without the father, since her parent's separation. As per to the story she heard from her mother the reason why they got separated was the due to her father's drinking behavior. Due to the financial

problem in the family participant B is working as a daily laborer “*santim mezerzer*” in taxi station after school and in weekends.

Child C is 16 years old daughter of single mother families living with her younger brother and destitute mother in Lideta sub city. She is grade 8 student in a governmental school. She never know her father since her time of birth because both her father and her mother were not married and the same for her little brother too.

Child D is 13 years old daughter of a single mother experiencing losses of father when she was a baby. She does not have an experience of having a father. She is attending her education in governmental school.

Child E is 11 year’s only daughter and child of a single mother experienced lose of her father due to death 4 years ago. She is attending grade 4 class in governmental school. The child’s mother is daily labor and her income is not enough to cover their expense.

Child F is 13 years only son and child of a single mother experienced parent’s separation since he was 3 years old. The mother did not explain to him why they get separated. He is attending his grade 6 education in governmental school. After school time, he also works with his mother, selling chewing gum and candy around Ambassador theater area.

Child G is 14 year oldest son of a single mother. The child’s parents were separated when he was a small baby. The father does not support the family; the only source of income is his mother. He has a younger sister.

Child H is 15 years oldest son of a single mother experiencing lose of his father due to death 4 years ago. Because, mostly his mother is working in night and weekends and sometimes stayed for two- three days, H is responsible for taking care of his younger sister and for himself too. He is grade 6 student in a governmental school.

Child **I** is 14 years old boy living with his single mother. He does not know his father since the time of his birth because; he was born without a formal marriage. His mother supports the family by selling alcoholic beverages at home.

Child **J** a 14 years old son of a single mother grew up without the father due to his father's death. He does not have an experience of having and living with a father. He told me that because his mother is illiterate, she does not support him in doing his home works.

Child **K** is 15 years old daughter of a single mother experienced losing of a father due to death. She is grade 8 student in governmental school and living with her single mother and a younger brother. She said that, because my mother has financial difficulties I do not dare to ask her to buy me things I want. She supports her mother in doing household chores after school.

Measuring by their monthly income, educational attainment, and occupation, socio-economic backgrounds of the single-mothers and children correspondingly fell on lower socioeconomic status. A majority of single-mothers held at least a primary education and the rest four are illiterate. All single mothers are having not permanent job, they are daily laborers. Majority of single mother and children have not get support from their relatives and kin. From the interview, almost all children have good relationship with their single mothers. Due to their mothers educational status and lack of enough time to spend together, all children does not have support in doing their homework from their mothers.

4.2. Findings

During the interview session several issue related to single mother and their children were discussed. The issues which were considered to have significant effect on the children were mainly related are mother-child relationship, economic resources of the family, the role of families in their children's education and the relationship of the children with their peers.

Accordingly, in this section I identified and discussed six themes that emerged from the data. The themes include i) Single Mother - Children Relationship, ii) Economic Problem of single mother headed families , iii) Psychosocial challenges, iv) Family's Role in Children Education, v) Children's Future Relationships, vi) Support Systems for Single Mothers: Role of Community and NGO's.

Single Mother – Children Relationship

At the essence of parenting involves a relationship between child and parent and the quality of this relationship is that determines the effect on child wellbeing. Different parenting styles can be identified according to whether they are high or low on parental command and responsiveness, which reflects different, naturally occurring patterns of parental values, practices, and behaviors (Baumrind, 1991). A typology of four parenting styles includes authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved. Baumrind (1991) describes each type of parenting in the following. Authoritarian parenting is the most highly directive and demanding type. Authoritarian parents are obedience and status-oriented who expected their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Authoritative parents are demanding and responsive as well as assertive rather than intrusive and restrictive. Permissive parents or nondirective parents are more responsive than demanding and are likely to allow children self-regulation. Uninvolved parents are the least responsive and demanding. They tend to be rejecting and neglecting. All of these parenting styles were exhibiting among participant single mothers. However, According to the data, collected from interviewing single-mothers and children, single mother participants described themselves, as they are responsive and serious while being supportive. Some of the parents are aware of their parenting style. Single mother E, for instance stated that “sometimes

[she] feel that [she is] strict and autocrat onto her son, and nagging him for no reason because she get angry easily as well. Others are not conscious about their parenting style.

Despite of the different parenting styles followed by single mothers many single mothers believed that their parenting is very detrimental in the future life of their children. Many single mothers expressed satisfaction with their relationship with children. However, few stated that they have challenges in developing and maintaining good relationship with their children

For instance, single mother G described her relationship with her children:

I am the sole responsible mother for my two children. Thus, it is my responsibility to control and monitor their daily activities and behavior. I do not want my children repeat the life I live when they grow up, that is why I am strict “(Single Mother G: Interview may 14, 2014)

Another single mother explained about how sharing her fears and stress with her children when she was a small child resulted in a widening of the gap between herself and her first daughter:

The relationship between my daughter and me is extremely poor. She does not want to share anything with me. She hide me her feeling and idea. Except to my first daughter, I had nobody else to talk about and share my stress. .. As she grows older this problem may get severe... (Single mother H: Interview May 12:2014).

Similarly, among child participants, child B for instance, stated her relationship between her and her single mother is not satisfactory and explained that “Sometimes [her] mother can not control herself and yell on [her]when [she] have done nothing wrong. She blames me and my siblings for the life we live. (Child B: Interview May 12:2014).

Mothers explain that the tension between having to work and caring for their children was the main challenge to develop strong relationship with their children. Single mother B, who make life by selling clothes stated:

As a sole mother I am both mother and father to my child. I assist her with her homework when time allows but very rarely. I am conscious of the need to be with her when especially in weekends but I have to go to market to sell clothes to get money (Single mother B: Interview May 09:2014).

However, in cases where children support their mothers in income generating activities, this facilitates good relationship between the children and the single mother. Two explanations are observed for this. First, when children engage in income generating activities, they may do the same activities as their mothers such as; selling items in the mini market or “*Sanitim Mazerezer*”, mothers and this creates a chance to spend time together. Child A explains this as follows:

“When I go to the market with my mom... we talk about our house and about our plans for holiday and she give me advices ... I like to go there and I help my mom. Besides, I feel good when I spend more time to talk with her.” (Child G, Interview May 14, 2014)

The second explanation is that when children participate in income generating activities, mothers tend to feel sympathy for their children. One child who assists her mother in “*santim mazerzer*” explains for instance that:

“After I come back from taxi station ... I want to support her at home but she do not want me to help her and she tells me that I am a child and it is enough that I support her at the market.... She is considerate for me” (Child F, Interview May 15, 2014).

These, children's involvement in income generating activities, according to some of the participants, can contribute to the development of good relationship between child and single mother. However, this is problematic in the sense that children are not supposed to do work.

Compared to the significant number of single mothers who expressed dissatisfaction, however, a large majority of children are happy about their relationship with their single mothers. Child G explained that:

I and my younger sister have good relationship with our mother. She is intimate with us and she always asks our opinion as adult before deciding on family matter (Child G, Interview, and May 14, 2014).

Economic Problem of single mother headed families

One common feature of almost all of the single mothers participated in this study was their poverty status. Although coming from diverse background they all shared similar experiences in terms of struggling to meet the basic needs of their family. All mothers involved in temporary and low paying informal jobs such as; selling *injera*, selling local beverage, is washing people's cloth, daily laboring, and the like. The temporary nature of the employment, low pay, coupled with being the only source of income means that are struggling hard to meet the demands of their children and of themselves. Single mother A stated that:

"It is hard to raise children alone...I have financial problem to cover the family expenses. We live in rented house which is expensive...School related expenses are increasing from time to time while our income is almost stagnant...but yet, you have children that you have to care of and struggling to rear them is not an option.(Single mother A, Interview, May 06, 2014).

Single mother B echoed similar sentiments to that of Single Mother A in describing her experience:

As a sole mother, I still need to earn money because of the economic pressures. I am the only responsible person for managing the whole family. It is not easy to be a mother and a father at the same time. It is very difficult to fulfill your children needs. (Single mother B, Interview May 09, 2014)

Children in the study also experienced some changes and face some economic problems while growing up with a sole mother. The amount of income earned following being a single mother is too difficult to figure for the children. However, they recalled the time spent with their mother was decreased as working hours increased, participant H, whose half orphan reported that financial conditions after his father death has altered. He explained:

The cost of living is higher and higher because in addition to our cost she paid for house rent to. She has less time for us. Sometimes when she traveled in another region for work, she may stay for two-three days. So, am responsible to keep my younger sister when my mother is not around.

Participant H explained the situation:

It is hard to work the whole day freely without worries when you have a child who needs to be taken to school and picked up at the end of the day. At times I feel very much alone, unsupported with little chance of a happy future.

The above quotes indicate that financial crises are a standing situation with most of the single mother families. Most of the single mothers have to struggle each day to meet basic needs of their family such as; food, cloth and shelter.

Sometimes, the children themselves have to assist their mother in income generating activities. As stated before, this has created a chance of the mothers and children spend more time together. However, it is also making students not unable to study and spend time with their peers. Single mothers are expected to attend social functioning in their community as both mothers and household heads. However, financial difficulties constrain single mothers from participating in important social happening in their community, both due to shortage of money and shortage of time (Kotwal and Prabhakar, 2009). In an explanation worthy to quote in long, one of the divorced mothers pointed out that economic challenges are not associated with being single mother and can also happen in intact families. She said:

I am single responsible for any expenses of my family since I was still in marriage. I paid for house rent and my children's tuition. My husband was not considerate for anything concerning the household expenses. He drank too much every day. When things unfortunately went wrong, we decide to divorce because I did not want to take care of his behavior anymore. I cannot support and fulfill my children needs beyond covering housing rent and daily need, so my little children working with me after they return from school. We all sleep and spent the night in the floor, we do not have bed and essential household equipments. I cannot also buy cloths, school uniform and materials for my kids. (Interview, Single mother F, May 11, 2014)

While these challenges are true for poor intact families, in case of single mothers the impact is unprecedented. Besides, it is important to remember that the area of the study is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Addis Ababa (Addis Ababa City Administration, 2003).

Inquiry about to whom single mothers turn in for financial assistance indicated that relatives, fellow single mothers and nongovernmental organizations are the main sources of

support. However, single mothers also indicated that requesting for money from other people is not easy as it takes their self-respect and instigate a feeling of bothering others. Although only limited support can be obtained, single mothers indicated that requesting financial assistance from their fellow single mothers is very easy. The dynamics of support to single mothers will be discussed in detail later in this section.

Psychosocial Challenges

Children of single mothers in the study experienced psychological problems associated with the reconfiguration of the family, economic instability, loneliness, stress, and adjustment to work.

Participant I said:

When I thought about my children future I am very worried .I do not have sufficient money to deposit for my children. Even no one support them when I die.

Besides the single mothers psychological stress, children of single mothers also exhibited low self-esteem. Child D explained:

I do not have father and I live with my single mother but I told my friends that I have a father living in another region for work because I do not want to lose their respect and I want to have more friends.

Feeling of lonely is another psychological problem of both single mothers and children of single mothers. Single mother B stated that “Life of a sole mother is a lonely experience. All decisions about how to survive are left to [be made] herself” (Interview May 16, 2014). Another single mother stated that “having financial difficulties, trying to find work ... and just living is very difficult. [She] have no one to share my worries (Single mother E: Interview may 20, 2014).

For some single mothers, the main source of stress is the fate of their children. Single mother D, who is also HIV positive stated:

My daughter's everyday complain about not having a father is a headache. In addition, I am worried about my child future because am HIV positive, I will die soon or late. So, nobody can take care of her (Interview May 16, 2014).

Family's Role in Children Education

One important role of families in children and cognitive and social development is the support they provide when children do their homework and school assignments. To meaningfully support their children, however, parents themselves should be educated. However, as described in the section on background of single mothers, majority of single mother's in study have lower educational level, reached the maximum of eight grades and few cannot read and write at all. This limits the support single mothers can provide when children study and do school assignments.

Participant I also conveyed the sentiment:

Helping my daughter to do her homework is a very difficult task for me because her educational level is beyond mine (Interview May 22, 2014).

Besides, as reported before single mother's in study divided their time between work and home, and consequently devoted less time to their children. As a result, they have little experience of spending with their children on reading, helping with their homework, or by listening to the stories about their experiences at school:

To cover our household expenses ... I always work since early morning to 10:00 PM. So I do not have enough time to support him with doing his homework. (Single mother H: Interview May 21, 2014).

The limited support from families on children's education is likely to reproduce poverty among the children. Though the extent can be debated, education is a viable tool for social mobility where by children's of poor families can become rich. This however, depends on the performance of the children in school which in turn partly depends on the support they receive from their family. As such, the limited support of single mothers for their children educational competency will likely undermine their hope of escaping poverty through education.

Children's Future Relationships

Another issue that single-mothers in the study were concerned about was a child's future relationships. One of the important ways that children learn about relationships is by watching their parents interact.

Single-mothers in the study reported that they wished their children would have a healthy relationship and would not follow in their trend. Whereas, children of single-mother families in the study reported that although their mothers allowed them to make their own choices in relationships, they wanted them to have a long-lasting relationship. While intact family was an ideal for all and they expected not to follow their parent's pattern, they did not have a negative attitude towards single-parent families when they have enough money to handle things.

Participant I hoped that her children would not follow their parent's route and not rush in to relationship. She expressed:

I do not want my daughter to face what I lacked in my life. I wished her to meet with a man who is committed to family, faithful and stable. I told my daughter to get married before having pregnancy.

Single-mothers also had faith that their own experiences could help their children to make a better choice in choosing a spouse. *Participant F* used her unsuccessful marriage to teach her older daughter [14 years]:

I told my daughter to look at my relationship with her unknown father and make a thorough decision in relationships. Children are not adults and cannot see things thoroughly the way I do. I believe that older persons could give some advises or even help them making a decision (interview May 17, 2014). .

Experiencing a problem of being a single mother and having a child without marriage from her mother, participant C learned to know this kind of relationship she would not to wish to happen with her and her own family. She stressed:

I grew up seeing my mother having financial difficulties to cover what we want. This is because of lacking support from the father and illiteracy. I hoped to be educated and earn much more money to cover my future families need (Interview May 15, 2014).

Support Systems for Single Mothers: Role of Community and NGO's

While previous sections focus on the challenges of single motherhood, this section report findings of inquiries about what social support systems are available for single mothers. Social support can take different forms range from receiving a financial aid, emotional support, and so on.

Almost all reported limited financial support from relatives and neighborhood.

Whenever there is a financial support, it was provided from humanitarian organizations in the neighborhood that have programs on economic support. The nongovernmental organizations that provide economic support, as reported by single mothers include Good Neighbors Ethiopia, *Fikir*

Lehitsanat [love to children], and Genet Church including. Participant A explained what she gets from NGO's:

Because of my health condition and poverty I got 30kg Teffe from Genet Church every month, and educational materials, school uniform, and school fee from Good Neighbors Ethiopia. None of my relatives provide me support (Interview, May 14, 2014).

The role of NGOs in helping single mothers meet the demands of their families was also reported as a helpful factor. Many of the single mothers have reported that they have received support from NGOs. Since the neighborhood is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Addis Ababa, many NGOs have programs in the neighborhood. The support includes educational materials including school uniform and school fee, feeding program, medical coverage and refund, and skill training.

Participant E said that:

Our relatives are not close with me and my mom and they didn't support us. Good Neighbors Ethiopia helps my mom with my tuition fee, sanitary materials and medical checkup (Interview, May 16, 2014).

In addition to financial aid emotional support was very important. Single-mothers in the study reported they obtained some emotional support from the surrounding community. Majority of the participant received some emotional support from their neighbors. Participant K explained that "after the death of [her] husband, [her] neighbors encouraged [her] and giving advice to her". However, due to their minimal contact with the community and relatives, few participants do not have emotional support from neighbors and relatives. Participant H described that she "do not have participation in social activities such as *Ikbus*" and therefore, [her] neighbors do not support her financially and emotionally" (Interview May 16, 2014).

Chapter Five

Discussion

In this section, different researches will be consulted and compared to the major results that I have identified in this particular research. Different ideas, assumptions, and theoretical approaches were considered within the literature review and other parts of the research.

As previously mentioned in chapter four six themes were explicated through the process of analysis. So based on the following major themes of this research in general and analysis part in particular, that is the themes includes; i) Single Mother - Children Relationship, ii) Economic Problem of single mother headed families , iii) Psychosocial challenges, iv) Family's Role in Children Education, v) Children's Future Relationships, vi) Support Systems for Single Mothers: Role of Community and NGO's. I have presented the discussion session as follows:

Single Mother - Children Relationship: The result obtained from this research shows that; instead of time poverty both single mother and children have good relationship. Mothers explain that the tension between having to work and caring for their children was the main challenge to develop strong relationship with their children. Similarly Walsh (2003) explained that working in full time limits the time that the mother has to spend with her children. Many of the mothers expressed time shortage to spend time with their children and to assist their children in their homework and other school related activities. This is consistent with the finding elsewhere. For instance, 'Time poverty' was a key feature of the lives of the children and adults living in single parent families. In a study in Cyprus, a child of single mother stated that 'I mind that my mother has to go to work, I stay with my grandmother. When she comes from work she picks me up, then she goes to sleep. I need her to give me a lot of attention.' (Hetherington, E. M. (1999:12)

another boy of a single parent from Greece regrettably stated that ‘It’s utopia to expect more time with my mother. But if we had more time, I would like to talk more with her’ (Hetherington 1999). The data showed that the parenting style single mother practiced fell in responsive and serious while being supportive. The result also showed that children support their mothers in income generating activities; this facilitates good relationship between the child/ren and the single mother. In the study, children also pointed out positive aspects of being live with single mother such as; relief from stress, absence of conflict and tension, stability and emotional security, freedom from violence, having closer family bonds. And this finding leads many to believe that the loss of the father has less impact on the relationship that adolescents have with their mothers (Aquilino, 1994).

Economic Problem of single mother headed families The results of the study revealed that financial problems were the main stressor for majority of the single mothers. It became very difficult for the mothers to meet the basic needs of children such as food, clothing and school fees, maintaining the previous standard of living and meet personal expenses, with the situation of economic problems and limited resources. Struggling to care for their children involved challenges of finding employment, receiving low pay for their work, housing, and caring for their children. Part of the struggle also involved having difficulty in securing finance, in finding a work life balance and securing employment. Garfinkel & McLanahan(1986) explained that mother-only families are more likely to be poor because of the lower earning capacity of single mothers. The amount of income earned following being a single mother is too difficult to figure for the children. However, they recalled the time spent with their mother was decreased as

working hours increased. Due to the severity of the problem children themselves have to assist their mother in income generating activities.

Psychosocial challenges: In the study majority of the single mothers reported that they felt lonely, helpless, hopeless, lack of identity and lack of confidence .Most of the single mothers believed that emotional problems occurred due to condition of economic hardships, adjustment to work, worries regarding children and their future. Researchers have noted that households headed by single mothers are exposed to more stressful life events and more ongoing strain in the form of low income (McLanhan, 1983). Stress and depression is associated with low income, unemployment and family poverty in a sole mother family (Avison, 2002; Bell, 1990). Conger and Chao (1996) also noted that economic pressure, on the other hand, has a direct effect on the psychological well-being of mothers, and probably indirectly effects children's psychological well-being by lowering the psychological wellbeing of their mother.

Family's Role in Children Education: the study showed that due to shortage of time and low educational background of single mothers, single mothers doesn't have experience of spending their time with their children on reading, helping with their homework, or by listening to the stories about their experiences at school. Similarly, Park (2007) explained that single-parents who have a full-time job to meet their family's economic needs or those who have to work extra hours in order to solve financial problems usually have less time to monitor their children's behavior and to supervise and observe the school progress of their children. Participant single mothers' low educational status also constrained the support they could provide in assisting their

children do homework and school activities. However, this challenge can also be true for intact families with low educational status as reported in Astone & McLanahan (1994).

Children's Future Relationships: Single-mothers in the study reported that they wished their children would have a healthy relationship, self dependent so that they may not have to suffer like them and would not follow in their trend. Whereas, children of single-mother families in the study reported that although their mothers allowed them to make their own choices in relationships, they wanted them to have a long-lasting relationship.

Support Systems for Single Mothers: Role of Community and NGO's: Support from kin, community, government and non government organization has crucial effect on the well being of children. Bronfenbrenner, (1991) explained that children of single parents do better when the mother receives strong support from nearby relatives, friends, or neighbors; members of religious groups; and staff members of family support and child care programs. Similarly, Amato (1993); Ham (2003) claimed that single-parent families produce negative outcomes on the well-being of children, particularly on their education because of reduced economic resources occurring after divorce somewhat ignores the truth that financial resources can be replaced by others such as kin. The study showed that single mothers receive emotional support from their neighborhood community and financial support from non government organizations. Financial support ranged from paying school fee for children, provision of school materials, medical refund and feeding items. Emotional support from the neighborhood include advise, encouragement and consultancy.

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Implication for Social Work Practice, Future Research and Policy

5.1. Conclusion

This research has explored the experiences and challenges of single in raising their dependent children. Qualitative data were collected through interview from single mothers in Lideta sub city and their dependent children.

The findings showed that the experience of single mothers in Lideta Sub city in raising their dependent children is full of challenges.

Lack of adequate income to cover expenses is one of the major challenges. The study area is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Addis Ababa. Besides income poverty, time poverty (lack of adequate time to spend with children) is a common experience of single mothers. Such lack of time to spend with their children, in turn, found to be contributing to lack of good relationship between children and their single mothers. In contrast, when children spend time with their mothers, assisting them in generating income, both develop a very positive attitude to another.

Single mothers also reported psychological problems such as anxiety and stress as a result of lack of adequate resources, difficulties in developing good relationship with their children and feeling of guilty for not able to meet the needs of their children.

Besides, the experience of single mothers, this study also explored how children view their single mothers' challenges and their experience of being child of single mothers. While children reported problems such lack of time to spend with their mothers, limited resources to cover their needs and so on, many of the children, particularly the older ones found to be understanding to their mothers challenges. This suggests that the impact of raising a child as a

single mother is dual directional; the impact is both on the children and their single mothers. For instance, single mothers tend to suffer from feeling of guilty shame, resentment, anger and anxiety about the future. What was important findings is also that children of single mothers do understand these challenges and have developed outlooks to their mothers expressed with comments like “ she is raising me like both mother and father”, she would have provided me all I need had she has the financial capacity” and so on.

This research also highlighted the role of community and nongovernmental organizations in supporting single mothers. Significant number of single mother reported to have received financial and material support from nongovernmental organizations in the study area. However, the focuses of these NGOs have been on economic challenges of single mothers and their children while the psychological problems of children of single mothers are neglected.

5.2. Implications for Social Work Practice, Future Research, and Policy

The findings of this research have a number of implications for social work practitioners, policy makers and researchers. Firstly, a national policy level, there is little recognition of different family constellation and the family is defined, both legally and normatively, as a nuclear family consisting of both mother and father. Policy makers should be cautious about taking ‘narrow narrow’ definitions of the family and should definitions of the family and should consider the roles and significance of extended families, networks and communities. Hence, the first implication of the research is the need for social workers to advocate an increasing recognition of the unique features and challenges of single mother parents and their children.

Secondly, we want children of single mother families to have the same economic and social possibilities as children of the nuclear family. This may involve calling for a positive discrimination giving priority for single mother in interventions aimed at reducing and

alleviating poverty. Although some NGOs are doing exactly the same, the problems and challenges that children of single mothers are enduring through , as the study indicated , are massive that require scaling up efforts to help them.

Thirdly, the enormous psycho-social problems children of single mothers are facing require social work practitioners to give paramount importance for being child of single mothers. There is a need for social work intervention to help children of single mothers cope with these challenges. In addition interventions helping single mother improve their economic resources can bring about changes in their children's life. Both governmental and nongovernmental organizations can play an invaluable role in designing and implementing programs that empower single mothers and their children, psychologically economically, socially and politically. The research therefore calls for recognition of the challenges of single mothers and a coordinated action to help ease these challenges. Such kind of intervention requires collaborative effort among governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

A further implication of this study is to keep in mind that a claim assuming that children are better off in two-parent families may be driven by cultural assumptions. Public policy needs to identify and support the strengths of every type of family, particularly single-parent families. It is important to focus less on comparing children from one-parent families with those from two-parent families and not label single-parent families "broken homes." At the same time, the school system needs to place an emphasis on educating youths to be economically self-supportive and good family members.

This research has pointed out the unique challenges of single motherhood and children of single mothers though qualitative data. Further research can take up these findings as a starting

point and can investigate in detail the effect of single motherhood on children wellbeing through comparative approach of life of children of single mothers and children of nuclear families.

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Appendices

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Code

Date of Interview

Introduction and Consent Statements

My name is Rahel Weldegabreal. I am a Master's student at AAU School of Social Work and currently working my thesis entitled as "Single mothers' Experience of Raising their Dependent Children in Lideta Sub City of Addis Ababa." Therefore, it is your cooperation that helps the researcher to accomplish the research objectives. So, I am kindly requesting you to share your experience and knowledge, and perception.

In the course of our discussion I want to assured you that, the information you will share, will be kept confidential and will be used only for educational purpose. Nothing has the objective beyond this and the data is fully confidential for the purpose of this thesis only. You have also the right to refuse no to answer, and also quit; if you feel discomfort with the questions. You are not forced to make any kind of contractual agreement that will abide you to stay till the end of the research. If you are voluntary to participate in this research, the information you will provide will be recorded by code with.

The finding of this study will be presented and reported to the school of social work AAU.

So, are you voluntary to participate in this study?

Yes_____

NO_____

Thank you very much for your participation!!

Research site _____

Date _____

Time _____

Single Mother Interview

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Number of children _____
4. Total Family Size _____
5. What is your occupation?
6. What is your educational status?
7. How much is the average monthly income or salary you get currently?
8. How would you describe your socioeconomic status?
9. What is your marital Status?
10. Apart from the family's main means of income, is there any economic support from outside for the family? Who is the source?
11. Could you tell me your experience of saving money in bank for the family?
12. What is the basic and serious problem of your family?
13. What kind of parent are you?
14. How close are you with your children?
15. How do you express your relationship with the surrounding community?

16. What are the difficult and challenging things do you think it takes a single parent to raise children alone?
17. In your opinion, what are the factors that help a single-parent/parent succeed in raising children alone?
18. How does you expect your children' future family to be?
19. With whom you spend your spare time?
20. What are the economic and other problems you have faced when raising your children?
21. While you try to solve your problems who is mostly available to help you closely?
22. Where do you go frequently to share your ideas and problems?
23. How is your participation in association and communal self-help organization
24. Do you feel that the respect you had from your neighbors and the surrounding people have been reduced because you are single mom?
25. What are the social problems you have faced?

Interview for Children of Single Mother Family

1. Sex _____
2. Age _____
3. Educational status _____
4. Most of the time, did your mother work while you were growing?
5. How often your mothers punish you?
6. How intimate are you with your mother?
7. When do you spend most of your time with your mother?
8. Can you explain how your mother helps you as much as you need?

9. Would you tell me about the relationship between you and your mother?
10. Can you explain me how further your mother tries to understand what you want?
11. How do expect your own family to be?
12. Does the mother spend more time with you?
13. How do explain your mother involvement/ help with your school work, if there is something you do not understand?
14. Do you mother know who your friends are?
15. How much do your parents try to know what you do with your free time?
16. How much do your parents try to know where you are most afternoon after school?
17. Tell me about your relationship with your friends?
18. What social problems you have faced?
19. What are the economic and other problems you have faced?

Thank you!

መረጃ መሰብሰቢያ ቅጽ

የአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

ማህበራዊ ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ

ሶሻል ወርክ ትምህርት ቤት

ቀን

መለያ ቁጥር

መግቢያ እና የስምምነት አንቀጽ

ስሜ ራሄል ወ/ገብርኤል ይባላል። እኔ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ሶሻል ወርክ ትምህርት ክፍል የድረ-ምረቃ ተማሪ ስሆን፤ በአሁኑ ሰዓት "ልጆች በብቸኛ እናቶች ማደጋቸው በልጆች ደህንነት ላይ ያለው ተጽዕኖ ምን ይመስላል" በሚል ርዕስ በልደታ ክፍለ ከተማ ላይ ጥናት ለማድረግ ስለፈለኩኝ የእናንተ ቀና ትብብር ለዚህ ጥናት ዓላማ ስኬት ዋና ስለሆነ ያላችሁን ልምድ፣ ችሎታና ዕውቀት እንድታካፍሉኝ ስል በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ።

ይህን መጠይቅ በምናደርግበት ጊዜ ማንኛውም ሰው ለዚህ ጥናት የሚሰጠው መረጃ ለዚህ ጥናት አገልግሎት ብቻ የሚወልድ ነው። በተነሱት ጥያቄዎች ላይ መልስ ያለመስጠት፣ በመሀል አቋርጦ የመሄድ (የማቆም) ወይም እስከ ጥናቱ መጨረሻ ያለመቆየት መብታችሁ እንደተጠበቁ ሆነው ከእናንተ ያገኘኋቸውን መረጃዎች ለሌላ ሰነድ ወገን ተላልፈው የማይሰጡ ስለመሆኑ እንዲሁም የግለሰቡን ሚስጢር በታማኝነት ለመጠበቅ ቃል መግባቴን ጭምር አሳውቃለሁ። ስለዚህ እናንተ በዚህ ጥናት ለመሳተፍ ፍቃደኛ ከሆናችሁ የምትሰጡኝን መረጃ በልዩ መለያ(ኮድ)በመመዘገብ የማቀምጥ መሆኑን እገልጻለሁ።

በመጨረሻም የዚህ ጥናት ውጤት ለአዲስ አበባ ዩንቨርሲቲ ሶሻል ወርክ ትምህርት ክፍል የሚቀርብ እና ሪፖርት የሚደረግ መሆኑን እገልጻለሁ።

ስለሆነም በጥናቱ ለመሳተፍ ፍቃደኛ ናችሁ?

አዎ

አይደለሁም

ስለተደረገልኝ ትብብር በጣም አመሰግናለሁ!!!

ለእናቶች ቃለ መጠይቅ

1. የታ _____

2. እድሜ _____

3. የልጆች ብዛት _____

4. አጠቃላይ የቤተሰብ ብዛት _____

5. የስራ አይነት?

6. የትምህርት ደረጃ?

7. በአሁን ወቅት በአማካኝ የሚያገኙት የወር ደሞዝ ወይንም ገቢ ምን ያህል ነው ?

8. የሚኖሩበትን የኑሮ ሁኔታ/ ደረጃ እንዴት ይገልፁታል?

9. የጋብቻ ሁኔታ -----

10. ከቤተሰብ ከመሰረታው የገቢ ምንጭ ባሻገር ለቤተሰቡ የሚያገኙት ሌላ ድጋፍ አለ ?

ካለ ምንጩ ማነው?

11. ለቤተሰብዎ በባንክ የሚቆጥቡት ብር ካለ ልምድዎን ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ?

12. የቤተሰብዎ መሰረታዊ እና ከፍተኛ ችግር ምንድነው?

13. ለልጆችዎ ምን አይነት እናት ነዎት?

14.ከልጆችዎት ጋር ያልዎት ቅርርብ እንዴት ይገልፁታል?

15.በአካባቢዎ ካሉት ማህበረሰብ ጋር ያለዎትን ግንኙነት እንዴት ይገልፁታል?

16.በእርስዎ አስተያየት ሕፃናትን ለብቻ ያለአባት ማሳደግ አለዉ የምትሉት ችግር አለ?

ቢገልፁልት

17.በእርስዎ አስተያየት ብቸኛ እናት ልጅዎን ትልቅ ቦታ ላይ ለማድረስ እንዴት ማሳደግ

አለባት ይላሉ?

18. የልጆችዎትን ወደፊት ቤተሰብ እንዴት ቢሆን ብለዉ ይመኛሉ?

19.በትርፍ ጊዜዎ ከማን ጋር ያሳልፋሉ?

20.ልጆችዎን ለብቻዎ ሲያሳድጉ የገጠመዎት የገንዘብ እና ሌሎች ችግሮች ምንድናቸው?

21.ችግሮችዎትን ለመፍታት ሲሞክሩ ማነው በቅርበት ሆኖ የበለጠ ሊረዳዎት የሚችል ?

22. ችግሮችዎትን ለማካፈል ሁልጊዜ ወዴት ይሄዳሉ?

23.በአካባቢዎ በሚገኙ ማህበራቶች ውስጥ ተሳትፎዎ ምን ይመስላል;

24.ብቸኛ እናት በመሆንዎ ከጎረቤትዎ ወይም ከአካባቢዉ ካሉ ሰዎች የማገኘዉ አክብሮት

ቀንሶል ብለዉ ያስባሉ?

25.በማህበራዊ ህይወትዎ ውስጥ ያጋጠመዎት ችግሮች ምንድናቸው?

ለልጆች መጠይቅ

1. ያታ _____

2. እድሜ _____

3. የትምህርት ሁኔታ _____

4. በምታድገበት ወቅት እናትሽ ብዙዉን ሰዓቷን በስራ ታሳልፍ ነበር;

5. እናትህ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ቀጥታሀለች/ሽ?

6. ከእናትህ/ሽ ጋር ያላችሁ ቅርርብ እንዴት ትገልፀዋለህ?

- 7. አብዛኛውን ጊዜህን ከእናትህ ጋር የምታሳልፈው መቼ ነው?
- 8. እናትህ/ሽ እርዳታዎን በምትፈልግበት ወቅት እንዴት እንደምትረዳህ/ሽ ልትገልፀልኝ/ሽ ትችላለህ/ሽ?
- 9. በአንተና/ሽ በእናትህ/ሽ መካከል ያለውን ግንኙነት ልትነግረኝ ትችላለህ/ሽ?
- 10. እናትህ/ሽ የምትፈልገውን ነገር ተረድታ ምን ያህል ልትረዳህ/ሽ ትሞክራለች?
- 11. ለወደፊት ምን አይነት ቤተሰብ መመስረት ትፈልጋለህ/ሽ?
- 12. እናትህ/ሽ ከአንተ/ቺ ጋር ብዙ ጊዜ ታሳልፋለች?
- 13. እናትህ/ሽ በትምህርት ቤት ስራህ/ሽ ላይ ድጋፍ ታደርግልህለች/ቺ? ብትገልፅልኝ
- 14. ጓደኞችህ/ሽ እነማን እንደሆኑ እናትህ/ሽ ታውቃለች?
- 15. በትርፍ ጊዜህ ምን እንደምታደርግ እናትህ ለማወቅ ምን ያህል ሙከራ ታደርጋለች?
- 16. ከትምህርት በኋላ አብዛኛውን ጊዜህን/ሽን የት እንደምታሳልፍ/ፊ እናትህ/ሽ ለማወቅ ምን ያህል ሙከራ ታደርጋለች?
- 17. ከጓደኞችህ/ሽ ጋር ያለህን ግንኙነት እንዴት ትገልፀዋለህ/ሽ?
- 18. በትምህርት ቤት ወይም በአካባቢህ/ሽ ላይ ምን አይነት ማህበራዊ ችግሮች ይገጥሙህል/ሽ?
- 19. ያጋጠሙህ/ሽ የገንዘብና ሌሎች ችግሮች ይኖሩ ይሆን? ብትገልፅልኝ

አመሰግናለሁ።

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sorts of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by:

Student Name: Rahel Weldegabreal

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Confirmed by Advisor:

Advisor's Name: Fekadu Mulugeta (Dr.)

Signature: _____

Date: _____