

**INVESTIGATION OF UNDER-AGE SINGLE MOTHERS IN REFERENCE
TO CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION OF FAMILY IN THOGOTO VILLAGE,
KIAMBU COUNTY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original Study and has not been submitted to any College or University for credit.

Information from other sources and my main respondents has been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my Mum Elimeldah Kerubo and in memory of my Dad Isaac Momanyi Mayaka, who passed on as I was about to wind up the study on 3rd June 2018, for bringing me up well and supporting me without counting the cost in my academic progress.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	- African Christian Studies.
AIDS	- Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome.
AMECEA	- Association of Member Episcopal Conference in Eastern Africa.
CCC	- Catechism of the Catholic Church.
CSDC	- Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.
CSM	- Church of Scotland mission
CUEA	- Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
DB	- Dictionary of the Bible.
DBT	- Dictionary of Biblical Theology.
DNT	- Dictionary of the New Testament.
FS	- <i>Familiaris Consortio</i> .
GDC	- Global Dictionary of Theology.
GS	- <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Vatican 11 Pastoral Constitution on the Church).
HIV	- Human Immune-deficiency Virus.
JKML	- Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.
K.D.H.S	- Kenya Demographic and Health Survey.
NACADA	- National Agency for the Campaigns Against Drug Abuse
NGO's	- Non-Governmental Organizations.
NJB	- New Jerusalem Bible.
NJBC	- New Jerome Biblical Commentary.
NRSV	- New Revised Standard Version.
SCCs	- Small Christian Communities.
TPS	- Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.
UaSF	- Under-age Single Father.
UaSM	- Under-age Single Mother.
UaSP	- Under-age Single Parent.
UNICEF	- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Church: The community of those who have committed themselves to the Person and cause of Jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as hope of all men and women. Substantially linked with the Redeemer and Saviour, the Church is no isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others. (Kung: 1972).

Complementary Feminism: It is a mode of feminism which assumes that women and men have essentially different natures that are necessarily intertwined. Like two halves of an apple masculinity and femininity complement each other to make a whole (Fiorrenza, 2001: 60).

Equal Rights Feminism: It is a type of feminism which fights for the rights of women in all societal, cultural and religious institutions struggling to improve women life situations (Fiorrenza, 2001: 60).

Encyclical: A papal document treating matters related to general welfare of the Church sent by the Pope to the bishops for themselves and their respective flocks (Modern Catholic Dictionary, 1981: 529).

Exhortation: An Apostolic Exhortation is a type of communication from the Pope of the RCC encouraging a community of people to undertake a particular crucial activity. It is commonly issued in response to a Synod of bishops, hence known as Post-Synodic Apostolic Exhortation (Catechism of the Catholic Church).

Family: It is a social arrangement based on marriage consisting of recognition of rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife and children with reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife together with their descendants. This is a primary unity comprising of the father mother and children hence forming a nuclear family (Stephen, 1999).

Feminism: It is a social vision, rooted in women's experience of sexually based discrimination and oppression, a movement seeking the liberation of women from all forms of sexism. (Clifford, 2001: 16).

Liberation Theology: It is a theology that does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed, a theology which is open in the protest against trampled human dignity in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the

building of a new, just, and fraternal society to the gift of the Kingdom of God (Gutierrez, 1973: 15).

Maternal Feminism: It is a mode of feminism which promotes all the virtues of nurturing, preservation, growth, acceptance and pacifism developed through child care and mothering (Fiorrenza, 2001: 61).

Parenting or child rearing: Is the method of supporting and upholding the bodily, emotive, communal, and rational growth of a youngster from beginning to maturity. (Brooks, 2012).

Single Mother: A lady or a girl or a woman who has a baby or babies, a child or children, outside marriage living singly or within wedlock when the husband walks out on her – or she out of him- or is unusually confined/distant or dies (Wachege, 2003:71).

Theology: A living and personal knowledge of God as He communicates Himself in and through what He has done in history, a discourse founded on and drawn from the living experience of faith (Martin, 1994).

Under-age: Is a young one who has not attained the age of 18 years and above according to Kenya children's act (revised on 2016), UNICEF, (Agency-Turkish Press and Publishing, 2000: 332–33).

Women Oppression and Exploitation: It is a distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity and self-fulfilment (Wachege, 1992: 22).

ABSTRACT

Under-age single motherhood is a family phenomenon that is hardly or inadequately talked about and the common practice is to merge it with single motherhood *en masse*. The study investigates this mode of parenthood specifically and in the light of Christian perception of family as a case in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County exploring factors like those of the causes, the difficulties such parenthood encounters and the recommended way forward. The study is more theological than sociological or anthropological in intent since it emphasizes Christian perception of Church as the Family of God and Christian reflections on family and parenting as well.

The main objective of the study was to investigate under-age single mothers in reference to Christian perception of Church reflections on family in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County as a case study. This was done by focusing on how these mothers can be understood adequately, be more appreciated and better supported so as to improve their parenting roles and become good parents within the realm of the Family of God. It was enhanced by exploring the causes of the phenomenon, investigating the problems such mothers encounter and examining Christian theological reflections on Church as Family of God image in view of helping the under-age single mothers in addressing the difficulties imbued in such mode of parenthood.

The major hypothesis was that Christian perception of family is useful to under-age single mothers in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County and elsewhere. The assumption was supported by specific hypotheses namely: Different factors have led to the rise of under-age single motherhood; under-age single mothers are bogged down with the burden of bringing up and caring for children by themselves due to some hindrances at a tender age; and that theological reflection on family is useful to under-age single mothers in addressing their peculiar parenting difficulties and realizing their potentialities.

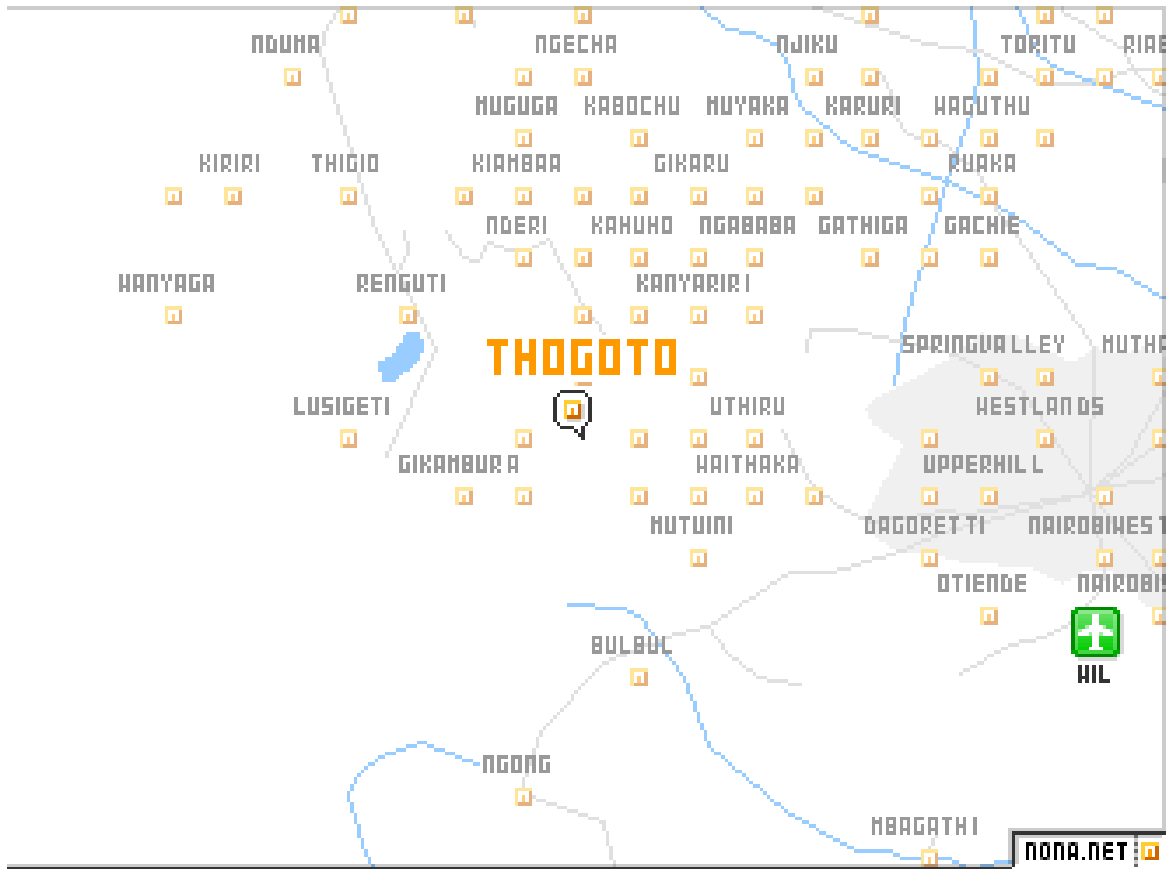
The study which was fundamentally qualitative was guided by three theories which have a close affinity. These are: feminism theory propagated by Wachege and Fiorrenza which provided important illuminations to the study on the diverse categories of single mothers each with its own challenges. It also created awareness that different causes of single motherhood result in unique types of single motherhood categories each imbued with respective challenges and that diverse modes of Feminism bring about different approaches to Christian women liberation theology. The second one is mediation theory by C. Boff and L. Boff, which equipped the researcher with data assortment, scrutiny and future expectations by applying three stage guidelines which are: social-analytical, hermeneutical and praxis/ practical application. The third one is psychosocial theory by Erickson's which assisted in the realization of different stages of human development cycle. The theory was also helpful in identifying the age bracket where the under-age single parents are grouped in relation to the laws and regulations of the country under the children's act of 2016 revised edition whereby the category of under- age single mothers was qualified as those aged 17 years and below. The study thus took under-age single mothers as those who are in the state at an age of 17 and below as biological mothers.

The work, furthermore, explored, identified and explicated some main causes of underage single motherhood in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County namely: kinfolk' s members; desire for sex; drug and substance abuse; and ignorance of utilization of contraceptives. It also identified and explained molestation, anger resulting from frustrating courting, together with financial deprivation as further springboard into the

phenomenon. In addition, more factors were exposed and explained as other triggers to this mode of motherhood like child environment and death of parents leaving the vulnerable descendants as orphans. A considerable number of problems that such mothers are confronted with, to mention just a few we came up with, are: contempt and discernment, childcare difficulties, maltreatment by relatives, rivalry over property inheritance, acute solitude cum loneliness, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) together with the exposure to the dreaded HIV/AIDS.

Having identified the urgency for pastoral concern with regard to the above kind of motherhood which is increasing rapidly, the study recommends that the under-age single ba taken seriously as beneficiaries of God's gratuitous Good News who are entitled to be incorporated and benefit from the Family of God. Another recommendation is that people, especially the ordained priests and pastors, should refrain from grouping this kind of mothers uncritically with the other types like that of widowed single mothers and university students single mothers. They should be handled and appreciated in their specificity with regard to their beingness, respective problems they encounter and positive qualities they may be endowed with which can be exploited for their own good and the common good of the Family of God.

MAP SHOWING THOGOTO VILLAGE, KIAMBU COUNTY.



MAP OBTAINED FROM GOOGLE MAPS: NONA.NET

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides the setting of the study. To accomplish the task, it will examine: background to the study, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives of the study, justification for the study together with scope and limitations. It will also elaborate literature review, theoretical framework spelling out the three guiding theories namely feminism theory, mediation theory and Erikson's psychosocial theory, research hypotheses and methodology together with ethical declaration. All these factors will be invaluable for the overview of the work.

1.2 Background to the Study

Parenting is a way through which children are born, nurtured, cared for and have existential values instilled upon them as they grow. Brisbane¹ attributes parenting to the total care of children to enable them grow and learn with the assistance of their parents and the community. The principal communal primary unit establishment is the family whereby children are begotten within family set up and not among the singles. That is why Wachege asserts that the general attitude towards single mothers in traditional Africa was that they were incomplete and unfulfilled persons.² Amassed studies indicate an escalating rate of single motherhood and its significances for children according to Bobo.³ Therefore children in a good number of instances are taken to be communal affair in taking care of them. This is shown in the study by

¹E. H. Brisbane, *The Developing Child: Understanding Children and Parenting* (California: McGraw-Hill, 1988), p.135.

² P.N. Wachege, *African Single Mothers: Socio-Ethical and Religious Investigations* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 1994), p.72.

³L.D Bobo, "Foreword." In *Black Fathers in Contemporary American Society: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Strategies for Change*. In O. Clayton, R.B. Mincey and D. Blankenhorn (Eds.), (New York: Russell Sage Foundation. 2003).

Gander and Gardiner.⁴ Despite such a parenting principle, more and more families are apparently headed by diverse categories of single mothers in the contemporary society.⁵

This shows that chances of a child being brought up in a single motherhood family before reaching adulthood is reasonably high. A study by Fields⁶ outlines the different percentages of about 16% of white people and 48% of black people, as a representation of children living with single mothers. He further observed that a good number live below the poverty line forcing them to seek commensurate public support more so in raising their children. These children are more likely to face diverse and added problems as compared to those raised by both parents Bumpass⁷, Sandefer⁸, and Kemmerer.⁹ As such, in any structural household there are possibly enormous effects on children's prosperity and economic welfare in life.¹⁰ Such family structural arrangements have been there in history but they are becoming common today.¹¹

The increase of single motherhood phenomenon has become more pronounced in the contemporary society raising a real concern globally¹² with many families headed by

⁴M. Gander, and H. Gardiner, *Child and Adolescent Development*. (Boston: Little and Brown, 1988), pp. 215-260.

⁵Fields, Jason. "Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002." Current Population Reports in U.S Census Bureau. Study pp20-547. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs,2003>.

⁶ Ibid., pp.20-547.

⁷ S. McLanahan and L. Bumpass, "International Consequences of Family Disruption," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94 No.1 (July), 1980, pp. 130-52.

⁸S. McLanahan and Sandefer G.; *Growing Up With Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps?* (London: Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁹P.G.Kemmerer, *The Unmarried Mother: A Study Of Five Hundred Cases* (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith. Reprint of 1918 edition, 1969).

¹⁰C. Moehling, *Family Structure, School Attendance, and Child Labor in the American South in 1900and 1910.*"Explorations' in economic history Vol. 41, No.1 (January), 2004). pp 73-100.

¹¹Morgan et al. "Racial Differences In Household And Family Structure At The Turn Of Century." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.98, No.4 (January), 1993), pp. 799-828.

¹² UNCEF 1999.

single mothers.¹³ Wachege shows the pathways to single motherhood, with examples of their diversified categories which are on the rise among African families.¹⁴ He attributes it to at least 23 causes which, as the author acknowledges, is not exhaustive.¹⁵ He does well also to show and elaborate how they were traditionally treated and mistreated as inadequate incomplete parents.¹⁶ The author, moreover, identifies and explicates the challenges traditional perspectives; perception, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers are confronted with in the Third Millennium.¹⁷ The author, nevertheless, completely ignores under age single mothers category which is a lacuna the study grapples with to complement the above. As such, of interest in the study is this specific category of single motherhood known as under-age single mothers who tends to be habitually merged uncritically within single motherhood as a whole.

These are young people who are faced with early parenthood at a tender age and are bound to experience conflict between their new “pre-mature” status as mothers and their needs as children or adolescents arising from increased responsibilities among other factors. This kind of motherhood occurs at a critical developmental stage of such girls’ life thus having adverse social, psychological and economic consequences that constrains them from proper education pursuit, as the researcher found out, among other disadvantages. Still, due to inadequacies in such under-age mothers the children under their care are likely to receive improper parenting which affects consequent generation – again as the researcher found out. It is common from the existing literature like the aforementioned on single motherhood that under-age single mothers are not seldom forgotten, neglected or ignored since they are assumed to be non-existent while reality has it that they are not only there but are increasing at an uncomfortable rate. Consequently, an academic investigation on their identity, beingness, what triggers their reality, the problems they face and the theological

¹³V. M. Murry,1, M. S. Bynum,G. H. Brody, A. Willet and D.Stephens,*African American Single Mothers and Children in Contex*, A Review of Studies on Risk and Resilience, Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2001), pp.233.

¹⁴ P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-religio philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003), pp.72-126.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp.130-150.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 162-188.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 190ff.

reflections on the Christian Church as family verifying or falsifying the assumption that such theologizing is the gist of the matter in this study is long overdue.

Accordingly in the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), 2014 explains that a good number of Kenyan houses has an average of 3.9 members, just under one of three households are headed by a single mother and 43% of the total families population are under the age of 15. The survey confirms literature on single parents, and to be specific research on under-age single parents is scanty.¹⁸ This is despite the fact that under-age single motherhood is on the increase in Kenya that including Thogoto Village, Kiambu County where the study is based. The enacted Kenyan Law, under Children Act of 2016 (revised edition) outlines the importance that the government places on childcare. The social, cognitive, physical, child support and material enhancement is well outlined in the Act but to some it is just a story.

Christianity for many years has been providing refuge to the less privileged in society and in many communities. The Christian perception on Church as family of God and the accompanying teaching on parenting do not seem to have a place for under-age single mothers despite the realization of their increase both in numbers and geographical spread. Such factors call for a related scrutiny hence our kind of study.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The phenomenon of single motherhood varies due to different factors and circumstances that pertain to each category and accruing respective difficulties. There is a peculiar category of the above which we choose to call “under-age single mothers” that is rapidly growing in the contemporary society which seems to be unrealistically merged with the others types of single motherhood or is virtually neglected as insignificant. The study intends to retrieve this mode of side-lined single motherhood, explore its peculiarities, and establish what triggers this seeming new yet growing mode of single motherhood with its problems and positive aspects as we endeavour to relate the phenomenon to Christian ecclesial image of the Family of God.

¹⁸ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KEBS), *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS)*, 2014, p.11-27.

There are diverse categories of single mothers that have been commendably identified, spelled out and discussed by Wachege. The author did a profound research whereby he not only explains critically who single mothers are.¹⁹ He also identifies and explicates thirty one different categories of single mothers.²⁰ The author did not stop there either but went on to point out and elaborate what he calls “multi-faceted causes” of single motherhood.²¹ He crowns the reflections with a critical African traditional perception and treatment of single mothers and the mutual difficulties such customary scenario encounters in the Third Millennium.²² The author does not, however, include under-age single mothers. This is an area the study endeavours to explore. To the best of our knowledge, no academic work we are aware of identifies, peruses and explicates the subject the study investigates hence the passion to scrutinize and explore it at the level of erudition. It is thus an issue the work seeks to investigate focusing on such undermined kind of single mothers which no doubt merits an academic research. In this connection, let it be appreciated that since the study is not intended to be just sociological or philosophical or even anthropological but mainly theological in intent, an effort will be made to relate it to the Christian ecclesial attribute of the Church as Family of God. With the above in mind, the following main questions guided the study:

1. What triggers under-age single motherhood?
2. What difficulties do under-age single mothers encounter in Thogoto Village and elsewhere?
3. How can Christian theological reflections on the Church as Family of God be useful to under-age single mothers in addressing their reality potentialities and the peculiar difficulties they encounter?

¹⁹P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, pp.65-71.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-128.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-160.

²² *Ibid.*, pp.162-222..

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main goal is to investigate under-age single mothers in reference to Christian reflections on family in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. Below are the specific objectives:

1. To explore the causes of under-age single motherhood.
2. To investigate the problems under-age single mothers are confronted with.
4. To examine Christian theological reflections on family in view of helping under-age single mothers in addressing their reality, potentialities and peculiar difficulties they encounter.

1.5 Justification of the Study

While appreciating that there are authors who have come up with related works, still there is a rationale behind ours. To mention but a few: Cheronoh creates awareness that single parenting includes both the single mothers and fathers and is thus not a confine of one gender.²³ Nevertheless, she limited her work to the widowed and widower single parents based on one ethnic community while ours is all embracing. Mwangi on his part explored the subject from the point of view of Church engagement in ministering to single mothers *en masse* within an urban setting which is multi-ethnic²⁴ but with not even a mere mention of our opted for type. Awour examined the problems encountered by University students single mothers²⁵ which is just one of the categories that has nothing to do with the one of the study since university students are all adults. Mũthoni investigated former single mothers within the context of post marriage parenting difficulties²⁶ which, properly perused has to do

²³ F. Cheronoh, *A Study of Agĩkũyũ Widowed Single Fathers and Mothers in Kĩambaa Village, Kĩambu County through Christian Inculturation- Liberation approach* (Unpublished M.A Thesis : University of Nairobi, 2014).

²⁴ K. E. Mwangi, *The Role of Anglican Church of Kenya in Ministering to Contemporary African Single Mothers: A Case Study of Embakasi Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Nairobi* (Unpublished M. A Thesis: University of Nairobi, 2012).

²⁵ D. Awour, *The Challenges of University Students Single Mothers in the Light of Christian Women Liberation Theology Rooted in Christian Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Education: A Case Study of University of Nairobi's Faculty of Arts*, Unpublished M. A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

²⁶ P. M. Mũthoni, *Post Marriage Parenting Challenges: The Case of Former Single Mothers in Gĩthũngũri A. C. K. Church Parish*, Unpublished M.A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2008).

with adult mothers. As for Ndungwa, the focus is on problems single mothers encounter in parenting boy child²⁷ whereby, a close scrutiny shows that the author hardly gives evidence on the reality of under-age single mothers among the Akamba. The list goes on and on such that it would be superfluous to document other related works. The underlying factor is that none of the above clearly and distinctly interrogates the aforementioned mode of motherhood as if it is a mirage. The bottom-line is that, to the best of our knowledge, no academic work identifies and peruses our aforementioned kind of single motherhood hence the passion to scrutinize it at a scholarly level.

The researcher chose Thogoto village, Kĩambu County being one of the areas where the first missionaries of Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) settled on arrival in Kenya and set Church of the Torch in 1898 being the first indigenous Churches in the region hence one of the contributors of Christian evangelizations and somehow integrated development in the region. With focus on the gradual rise of single motherhood characterised by age and gender, under-age single mothers have been neglected directly or indirectly even by the Christian shepherds who habitually merge them with single mothers as a whole thereby missing the required identity and specificity of the study's opted for category. Consequently, they diminish and impoverish the perception of the Church as the family of God. Moreover, propagation of Christianity among the category does not seem to be pragmatic to perform ecclesial duties in collaboration with the Holy Spirit as intended by the Saviour and Redeemer for inclusivity and gradual significant benefit to the recipients as highlighted by Congar.²⁸ Consequently, the rationale of the current study is valid.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The Study was conducted in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County since, as earlier indicated, the locality is one of the areas where the first missionaries of Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) settled on arrival in Kenya and set Church of the Torch in

²⁷ W. B. Ndungwa, *The Challenges of Akamba Single Mothers in Reference to Parenting the Boy Child in the Light of Christian Complementary Feminism: A Case Study of Mwala District, Machakos County*, Unpublished M.A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

²⁸ Y. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit Vol. 1: The Experience of the Spirit* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983), pp.166ff.

1898 which was the first indigenous Churches in the area that has made remarkably significant development. One could say that it is the birthplace of the Alliance of Protestant Missions founded in 1898. Among the difficulties the researcher came across is that of language barrier which was overcome by engaging knowledgeable research assistants and also employing Kiswahili language where applicable which cut across multi-ethnic communities in the locality. The researcher also witnessed suspicion in the interviews since the subject had elements of delving into the privacy of the respondents. The stumbling block was overcome by establishing rapport with the respondents while persuading them on maintenance of strict anonymity and secrecy as we were pragmatic on ethical considerations.

1.7 Literature Review

In line with the subject of the study, several related works are reviewed here. We selected a considerable number of those which inform the study both from the anthropological and sociological areas as well as those in realm of theology. It is important to note that some of these works are Inculturational while others are liberational in orientation. The works deliberately mixes them since, as Wachege and Nduto explains, the two aspects are necessarily inter-related.²⁹ As we examine them both the areas of enrichment to the study and gaps the work fills up are provided.

In his book titled *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch*,³⁰ Wachege not only elaborates who the African Single Mothers are³¹ but also identifies thirty one different categories as he convincingly explains each one of them.³² A lacuna, which our study endeavours to fill up, is that the author nowhere points out under-age single mothers. It is as if they are either non-existent or that they are unrealistically swallowed up by the other modes of single motherhood. To his credit, however, the author goes on to indicate and explicate twenty four major causes of single motherhood each yearning for

²⁹ P.N. Wachege, and S.N. Syengo, "An Investigation of Blending Inculturation and Liberation Approaches Towards New Evangelization in Contemporary Africa," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol.8, No.7, 26 July 2018, E-ISSN: 2222-6990, PP, 74-88.

³⁰ P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (P.N.Wachege: Nairobi 2003), pp.130ff.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-71

³² *Ibid.*, pp.71-126.

appropriate social and pastoral concern.³³ In this regard, our study coincidentally confirmed some of these causes as applicable to our unique type of single motherhood, namely under-age single mothers. Among them are: rape, naive venture into the world of men, irresponsibility of both gender, antisocial behaviour, permissiveness, cheap sex-oriented mass media, modernization, parents' harshness and unreasonableness, exaggerated feminism and distorted gender sensitivity, labour migration, economic pressure and social strain. The author goes on to examine the traditional perspective, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers among some ethnic communities with particular reference to the Tugen, Maragoli, Kipsigis, Akamba, Luo, Abagusii, Sabaot, Luhya, Taita and Agĩkũyũ together with the underlying philosophy thereby.³⁴ Incidentally, practically all these ethnic communities are found in our study area i.e., Thogoto Village in Kiambu County who we interviewed accordingly. His profound scrutiny of Third Millennium challenges to traditional perspectives, perception, treatment and mistreatment of single mothers³⁵ is informative too.

Another area that adds value to the work is the author's findings concerning single mothers' advice to the Church to appreciate that single motherhood is an inevitable reality in family affairs that needs commensurate ministry and pastoral option.³⁶ Although the author is general in this regard, the insights do inspire our work in interrogating the concretization and applicability of Christian perception of family imbued with the Church attribute of Family of God. This has illuminated the study to counsel the Church to be a listening one since single mothers – in our case, under-age single mothers - have so much to tell, discuss and positively participate in searching for solutions to the many challenges the Church is constantly and persistently facing regarding her family apostolate. However, he does not focus and specialize on a particular region or category of single motherhood.

Another book authored by Wachege titled *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective*³⁷ enables us to understand that “women oppression and exploitation is a

³³ Ibid, pp.130-151.

³⁴ Ibid., pp.166-188

³⁵ Ibid., pp190-222.

³⁶ Ibid.,pp.252-275.

³⁷ P.N. Wachege *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992).

distorted way of life in which women are dehumanized, marginalized and subjugated by being denied their rights as real persons, being treated and mistreated as inferior beings and deprived of growth into human authenticity.”³⁸To the author’s added credit, he explains how men oppress the other gender in these words: “Men exploit women when they abuse and misuse them as their tools for cheap labour, objects of their sexual gratifications and subsequent hedonism, things for self-aggrandizement and means for the promotion of their ego, self-prestige and assertion of their virility and fecundity.”³⁹Wachege further explains that men also exploit women when they arrogantly side-line them from vital human activities thereby excluding them from participating in the making of vital decisions.⁴⁰The author further enlightens that men, furthermore, exploit women because they are of another sex and another gender taking advantage over them in the state, in society, in life and in the Church manipulating and taking advantage of their physical weakness.⁴¹ Our study complements this work by concretizing the principles narrowing down to a specific mode of single motherhood with the specificity involved. Such a limitation does not, however, blind us to the fact that book further assists our study in identifying the main areas in which women are oppressed and exploited – in our case the peculiar category indicated earlier. The author does not only identify but also profoundly explains explicates seven fundamental oppressive and exploitative factors through which women are oppressed and exploited. They are: Traditional; Social; Political; Economic; Sexual; Intellectual; and Ecclesial/Church.⁴²In a commendable way, the author goes an extra mile in showing how to liberate from these characteristics intertwining the effort with a credible way forward.⁴³While the treaty is so beneficial, we chip in narrowing the scope by handling the factors in relation to a particular category mentioned above to be more profound and better rewarding.

³⁸ Ibid., p.22.

³⁹ Ibid., p.23.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.23.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁴² Ibid., pp.45- 102.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.109-140.

Fiorrenza's book titled *Wisdom Ways*⁴⁴ is significant in creating awareness of different kinds of feminism.⁴⁵ It also gives the study different types of theoretical perspectives and their effect thereby in view of sourcing from the Bible through the lenses of women. Among the limitations, however, is that the book is not elaborate on types of feminism nor their real effect concerning Christian women liberation theology – a shortcoming we fill up by sourcing from aforementioned Wachege' contribution. On the basis of feminism, Fiorenzza propagates an engagement of critically sourcing from the Bible from the point of view of women, since exegesis is virtually subjective, for the realization of a feminist Biblical spirituality through the lenses of feminist theory of justice and feminist movement for change.⁴⁶ Such a stance is provoked by what Clifford points out as gender exploitation and discrimination revealed not only in the pattern of patriarchal male dominion but also in chauvinistic behaviour that makes the experience of males central in every area of life.⁴⁷ She outlines a diversity of approaches to feminism as necessitated by areas of interest in terms of dominion and injustice. This challenge to women to do their own exegesis with women as their point of reference, among others, will assist the study to put it to the Church Shepherds to empower Single Mothers in sourcing intelligently from the Bible to ease their problems and enhance their worth. The gap here is that the author does not show how to go about it. Such methodological gap is handled by drawing insights from Leonardo Boff and his brother Clodovis Boff.

Leonardo Boff and his brother Clodovis Boff, in their co-authored book titled *Introducing Liberation Theology*⁴⁸ provided the study with mediation theory. Among the reasons behind opting for this theory is because of its stress on transforming the unjust situation confronting the society in the light of the Good News- in our case, Church teaching on the Family of God and its requisites. We also found it helpful since it assisted with methodological approach with its threefold aspects which the authors call mediations helping the researcher to be on the ground in Thogoto Village

⁴⁴ E. S. Fiorrenza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.61ff.

⁴⁶ E. S. Fiorenzza, *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), pp.6; 56-61.

⁴⁷ A. M. Clifford, *Feminist Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

⁴⁸ L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987), pp.24-39.

to have firsthand knowledge of under-age single mothers thereby making social analysis, relate the data to the Word of God on what it teaches concerning family of God and how applicable the instructions are on the ground and then come up with transforming way forward. This theory is endowed with corresponding steps namely, Socio-analytical aspect; Hermeneutical aspect; and the Practical aspect also called pastoral or Praxis.⁴⁹ The Social-analytical one helped the researcher to insert himself into the situation in life of under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kiambu County for the primary source so as to find out their identity, their categories, how they relate among themselves and others, the kind of life they live and why, the challenges they go through and the rationale behind their beingness together with the social aspects in their life. The second aspect, which is informed by the above social analysis dealing mainly with the why and how of this mode of parenting, is hermeneutical in nature. It assists in relating the above data to the will of God primarily sourced from the Scriptures. The underlying question at this stage is articulated thus: Is it the will of God to have under-age single mothers and should they be subjected to the kind of socio-cultural-religious and economic conditions they live in. As such, the researcher was helped relate the above social analysis to a theological reference since our study is mainly theological, and not just anthropological or sociological, in intent. Such a theological reflection leads to the third mediation which is that of praxis. It is from such reflective action that the study was enabled to enter into the realm of pastoral action thereby coming up with arising recommendations in the light of reflections on Christian perception of family imbued with Family of God characteristics and, indeed, suggested way forward drawn from the work that contributes to the solution to the issue of under-age single mothers.

At this stage, it is important to bear in mind that people who have not attained the age of eighteen years remain regarded as under-age or child as informed in the Resolution on children rights.⁵⁰ According to Booth and Booth 1988⁵¹ parenting is elastic and a

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 24-39.

⁵⁰ The Convention on the Rights of the Child Application Manual Handbook (Ankara: UNICEF, Agency-Turkish Press and Publishing, 2000), pp. 332–33.

⁵¹ T. Booth, and W. Booth, *Growing up with Parents who have Learning Difficulties* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1989).

traversable social process. While Brisbane⁵² views it as a general welfare of a child being helped to mature and acquire, it is worth noting that parenting hence is doing more than just being identified as a mere father or mother. It involves nurturing a child or children to develop right from infancy to adulthood with considerations on their physical, emotional and social growth. Affirmative heroine exhibiting, being fair, loving, and good discipline explains the best of apparent.⁵³ This kind of role becomes challenging considering the parent in charge, where women are the heads to be specific.⁵⁴ The lack of both or one parent in one's life comes with many difficulties in child's welfare getting the single parent struggling singly to better their life and that of the young one.⁵⁵ In our case it is even worse where it involves under-age single mothers who the above authors do not take to consideration.

As earlier explained, the study drew inspirations on the phenomenon of single motherhood from Wachege's profound work previously indicated. The study, however, identifies a gap in that the author does not include under-age single mothers which is a peculiar mode of single motherhood that is rapidly growing in the contemporary society, which the study sought to investigate. The author, furthermore, does not consider a holistic approach to single motherhood in that he does not include the single fathers. The study fills the gap by taking into account Cheronoh's study, which creates awareness that single parenting include both the single fathers and mothers.⁵⁶ In her study, nevertheless, Cheronoh limited herself to one category of single parents namely, widowed single mothers. Furthermore, her work was based on one ethnic community, the Agikuyu. Mwangi fills the above gap in his work which

⁵²E.H. Brisbane, *I the Developing Child. Understanding Children and Parenting* (California: McGraw-Hill publishers, 1988).

⁵³L. Steinberg, *A Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 2004).

⁵⁴N. Kotwar and B. Prabhakar, *Problems Faced by Single Mother* (A Journal of Social Science Vol. 21(3), 2009), pp. 197-204.

⁵⁵S. Brownhill, *Men, Masculinities and Teachings in Early Childhood Education* (London: Taylor and Francis Publishers, 2016).

⁵⁶F. Cheronoh, *A Study of Agĩkũyũ Widowed Single Fathers and Mothers in Kĩambaa Village, Kĩambu County through Christian Inculturation- Liberation approach* (Unpublished M.A Thesis : University of Nairobi, 2014).

examined the role of the Church in ministering to African single mothers.⁵⁷ The study was not based on a particular ethnic community as it was conducted in an urban setting which is multi-ethnic with pluriformity of family values. The author challenges the family of God to pay attention to the plight of single mothers. In so doing, however, the author considers African single mothers *en masse* without paying particular attention to a specific category.⁵⁸ As Wachege notes, diverse issues and needs trigger each category.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Mwangi based his study on a particular Church, the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), yet the area of research is urban which is not just multi-ethnic but with diversified faith affiliations.

Mũthoni⁶⁰ on his part enriches the study with post marriage challenges encountered by former single mothers. The author observes that some single mothers change their status by getting married at times at old age. He established that various factors lead them to marriage such as rejection by the society, the need for companionship and a partner to raise children with, security and identity among others.⁶¹ Of further relevance to the study are the difficulties that such former single mothers encounter in their parenting responsibilities. Among the major challenges the identified are sexual abuse of the daughter by their step father, interference by in-laws, father's difficulty of being accepted by the children and physical abuse of the children. Nevertheless, the author does not dig further into the resulting effects of such acts as sexual and physical abuse of children, which virtually leads to under-age single mothers. The study fill the above gap by examining, among other issues, the causes of this peculiar yet growing mode of single motherhood, which involves young children being forced to take care of own, or others' children at a tender age.

⁵⁷K. E. Mwangi, *the Role of Anglican Church of Kenya in Ministering to Contemporary African Single Mothers: A Case Study of Embakasi Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Nairobi* (Unpublished M. A Thesis: University of Nairobi, 2012)

⁵⁸Ibid. pp.21-24.

⁵⁹ P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, pp. 126-127.

⁶⁰P. M. Mũthoni, *Post Marriage Parenting Challenges: The Case of Former Single Mothers in Githunguri A.C.K. Church Parish* (Unpublished M. A. Thesis: University of Nairobi, 2008).

⁶¹Ibid,pp.48-53.

Pope Francis, in his Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love),⁶² emphasizes on the significance of the “Joy of Love” upon families. According to him, the joy experienced in a family is a fulfilment to the Church as an institution that is concerned with the well-being of the family.⁶³ For the current area of study, the Church should not discriminate against these under-age single parents but include them in their task of bringing joy into the lives of the people through the God-given gift of love. He encourages individuals in the society to “value the gifts of marriage and the family, and to persevere in a love strengthened by the virtues of generosity, commitment, fidelity and patience.”⁶⁴ Despite the problems that are being faced in this kind of family, these single mothers should not despair but be strong so that they can strive to continue their lives and those of the ones under their care. A lacuna here is that Pope Francis does not seem to have awareness of under-age single mothers. It would not be farfetched to assert that if the Pontiff had the awareness, he would no doubt have addressed them in a candid manner.

Today’s families, that of under-age single parents included, are encouraged to take the “Holy Family of Nazareth” as a model. Just like other families, the Holy family of Mary, Joseph and Jesus experienced some difficulties in their time. They could have felt excepted and deserted by the society but Mother Mary was challenged to face her family’s problems with bravery and tranquillity remembering that entire God had gifted them with.⁶⁵ Her experience, after the demise of Joseph her husband, as a widowed single mother can be used to inspire other single mothers particularly those that the present study is set to tackle. They should learn to accept their status in the community and work hard in their own honest ways to achieve a fulfilling kind of life. Theologians have often involved themselves in understanding families so that they can come up with practical pastoral intuitions to deal with hindrances to a joyous life.⁶⁶ The Pope also explained that Pastors and Priests as shepherds are responsible for guiding family members so that they can grow in love, learn to get over crises,

⁶² Pope Francis, Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), Vatican, 19 March, 2016.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, no. 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 5.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 30.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 31.

raise their descendants and maintain healthy social relationships so as to co-exist peacefully.⁶⁷

He goes on to elaborate that children raised by single mothers lack a father figure who is viewed as a source of provision and security. It is even worse among the aforementioned category. Often, the mother who has to work extra harder to earn an income for their upkeep leaves them behind. In such an instance, the children lack the warmth of the mother and are occasionally exposed to risks such as physical assaults and sexual abuse by relatives and caregivers.⁶⁸ The Pope then advocates that: “In such difficult situations of need, the Church must be particularly be concerned to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing straightaway a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned by the very Mother called to show them God’s Mercy.”⁶⁹The above then calls upon the Church, family and community at large to embrace the virtue of love since “love is ever ready to be of assistance.”⁷⁰ Furthermore, love enables individuals to be happy in assisting and serving others especially those in need.⁷¹

The Pontiff goes on to instruct that loving these single mothers will enable people to accept them as part of the community, establish harmonious relations with them and most importantly, work with together to liberate them from the problems that they encounter in their day-to-day lives. Though few, there are those that are committed to helping the needy in the society and their service to others is seen as service to God who is pleased with a selfless giver 2 Cor. 9:7. People are thus advised to be with the needy in time of difficulty and also join them in celebrating their achievements.⁷² The shortcoming however, is that the Exhortation generally talks about married, single mothers and family life in general. It has not focused on the category of under-age single mothers which is cropping up at an alarming rate not just in Thogoto Village but in other localities too in today’ s society. The study intends to fill the gap by

⁶⁷Ibid., no. 37.

⁶⁸Ibid., no. 45.

⁶⁹Ibid., no. 49.

⁷⁰Ibid., no. 93.

⁷¹Ibid., no. 94.

⁷²Ibid., no. 110.

investigating this mode of parenting to understand the reasons behind their status, the problems that they undergo and come up with the way forward

Pope Francis' Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)⁷³ stresses on the significance of family in every society. He comes up with diverse problems those families in the modern society encounter and the need to look into these difficulties that have been overlooked and the accompanying way forward. Some of the problems discussed in the Exhortation include oppressive cultures, greed, segregation and arrogance. The mistreatment of certain groups of people like the single mothers is constant in the community because of the existence and continued application of unjust cultures in dynamic society. The Pope calls upon individuals to be flexible and be ready to accept change but critically. The mentality of mishandling others because that is what has been happening in the society over the years should be eliminated.⁷⁴ By implication then, though not pointed out, oppressing and undermining under-age single mothers because of going against the norms of the traditional society that forbade the birth of children out of wedlock, and worse still, having children with children, should be done away with. Individuals should recognize that the society has changed over time and diverse modes of families ought to be understood and their plight taken with the seriousness they deserve as members of the Family of God.

The Exhortation further advocates for a new way of reaching out to a large number of people in the society without discrimination – by implications, even under-age single mothers. He explicates that the messengers of the Gospel should concentrate on the key situations in the life of the people in the present society, which is not static but vigorous. Where the Gospel is concerned with the needs of individuals in the community, then it becomes more acceptable, applicable and thus will easily be embraced by many.⁷⁵ One may rightly here say, under-age single mothers are among the many to be embraced. Additionally, the Exhortation articulates the need to inculcate the Good News to the people with varied cultures and localities. The Pope recommends a new strategy of evangelization that will guarantee that cultures of the propagators of the Gospel do not dominate the receivers but so that their cultures are

⁷³ Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*), Vatican, 24 November, 2013.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 33.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 35.

also respected as long they are not harmful to others. The above would thus focus on the emancipation of individuals from oppressive traditions that block them from living a comfortable life in God.⁷⁶As such, he rules out implantation method of evangelization which imposes “a dominant culture” and suppresses the recipients’ cultures terming them repugnant to Christianity.

The Pope takes his treatise on Family of God a notch higher. He explains that today, a number of people tend to withdraw from the others and prefer living their life privately and in seclusion. It happens because of factors such as urbanization, pursuit of job opportunities and the current economic hardships that one cannot be in a position to take up the responsibility of caring for others even when they badly need their assistance. That is why one is often left wondering why these children with children single mothers are left to suffer even by their own very close relatives. Individuals are, therefore, encouraged not to lose the value of healthy relationality and communality. The in thing should be that of living together, serving the needy and reconciliation will aid in the quest to bring an end to state of individualism, which often interferes with family life.⁷⁷ The concept of embracing a communal living would go a long way in reaching out to the mode of single mothers, indiscriminately, to help them overcome their problems.

Something else the Pontiff affirms is that: “Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence, and wounded by widespread individualism which divides human beings, setting them against one another as they pursue their own well-being.”⁷⁸ It is important therefore for people to stick together so as to do away with the tendency of isolating especially the less fortunate in the society. The Church and members of the community ought to endeavour to share their possessions with those experiencing difficulties in their state of life. Just as Jesus Christ was passionate to the poor, people should emulate Him so as to reach out to these single mothers. He emphasises that: “We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious

⁷⁶Ibid., no. 69.

⁷⁷Ibid., no. 88.

⁷⁸Ibid., no. 99.

wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.”⁷⁹ People are thereby called upon to accept the reality of the existence of the under-age single mothers, understand their situation in life and toil with them so as to derive valuable measures that can be useful in changing their condition for the better. With the above, they will feel part and parcel of the community and hence will be encouraged to overcome their problems. Whereas the Exhortation is inspirational to the current study, the researcher opted to focus on a particular category of single mothers to come up with a deeper understanding and outcome.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This Study was guided by three theories which have a close affinity. These are feminism theory, mediation theory and Erikson’s psychosocial theory.

In his profound monograph titled *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows*,⁸⁰ Wachege and Fiorrenza give light into feminism theory. The author provides important illuminations to the study on the diverse categories of single mothers each with its own challenges. Admittedly, Wachege’s book assists by providing insights into the understanding, definition and the complex nature of single motherhood helping us appreciate the diverse causes and categories whereby he identifies thirty one categories of single motherhood imbued with twenty four causes of single motherhood.⁸¹ The author further enriches the study by bring to awareness two important theories namely: Theory of different causes of single motherhood resulting in unique types of single motherhood categories each imbued with respective challenges⁸², and the theory of diverse modes of Feminism bringing about different approaches to Christian women liberation theology.⁸³ Fiorenza is more

⁷⁹Ibid., no. 198.

⁸⁰ P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Publishers, 2003), pp. 80ff.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.71-124.

⁸² Ibid., p. 64.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.80-83.

elaborate in this feminism theory identifying a pluriformity of feminisms each, according to Wachege, result in peculiar modes of women liberation⁸⁴ in identifying very interesting kinds of feminism. The following, among others, are the common kinds of diverse and diverging categories of feminism each with respective challenges namely: Complementary Feminism; Maternal feminism; Relationality feminism; Eco-feminism; Lesbian feminism; Post-Biblical feminism; Religious feminism; Marxist/Materialistic feminism; Third World feminism; Contextual feminism; Postcolonial feminism; and International feminism thanks to the four United Nations Conferences on women that took place in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) together with the conference on population in Cairo (1994) that debated issues on women welfare, equality and women liberation among others.

Social-analytical aspect assisted the researcher to immerse himself into the physical situation and reality of under-age single parents in Thogoto village to enable him obtain the primary data on the happenings with regard to the causes and difficulties associated under-age single parents for critical useful social analysis. This will enable the researcher make about what has made them to be what they are and why the problems they face.

Hermeneutical aspect revolves around the Biblical interpretations of the primary data gathered from the first mediation. The exercise helps to answer the question whether it is the will of God for things to happen as they are with the big Children single mothers. One is compelled to ask questions like is it the will of God for children's lives to be burdened as single parents instead of pursuing their life goals? How would Christ respond to such a situation? This mediation helps the study to have a theological reflection therefore differentiating it from other disciplines like psychology.

The praxis mediation will help the study to come up with way forward to the problems facing under-age single mother. It forms the practical part in the application of the recommendations with the intention of liberating the under-age single parents within a given setting. Therefore it will give practical solutions mainly for

⁸⁴ E.S Fiorenza, *The Wisdom Ways*, pp.60-64

transformation purposes for under-age single parents in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. Though the mediation theory is important for our study, it does not assist in creating awareness of the stages of growth for the purpose of data collection at required different stages. This gap is filled by our second theory known as Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory.⁸⁵

Erikson's psychosocial theory discusses the developmental stages whereby it provides the researcher with a background about human development cycle at different stages with relation to characteristics and duties at each level in entire life span bearing in mind the cognitive part of it as it also forms the human being in full right from birth to death. He outlines eight essential stages namely; infancy (birth to 18 months), early childhood (2 to 3 years), pre-school (3 to 5 years), school age (6 to 11 years), adolescence (12 to 18 years), young adulthood (19 to 40 years), middle adulthood (41 to 65 years) and maturity (66 to death). These stages will help the researcher to classify or categorise the under-age single mother accordingly during the entire study period. The theory too provides the cognitive development and the characteristics as per each level, which in turn is inversely proportional. For any conflict arising from either of the two cognitive or characters a disorientation crisis arises hence consequences leading to the problems faced by under-age single mothers.

1.9 Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis is that Christian reflections on family are useful to under-age single parents in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County.

1. Different factors have led to the rise of under-age single motherhood.
2. Under-age single mothers are bogged down with the burden of in the bringing up and caring for children due to some hindrances accrued to their age bracket.
3. Theological reflections on family are useful to under-age single mothers in addressing their peculiar parenting difficulties and realizing their potentialities.

⁸⁵ j. M. Erickson, *the life cycle completed, erick h erickson extended version* (new york: ww norton and company inc.,1997), pp.32-37, 66-82.

1.10 Research Methodology

This research methodology focused on the area of study, research design, the target population, sample selection, and data collection procedures and data analysis technique.

1.11 Research Design

This qualitative research, adopted the survey research design in its methodology. This is because such a design enables us to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically. Furthermore, through it, a great deal of information about the phenomena under Study can be learned from the few selected examples as confirmed by Kombo and Tromp in their co-authored book titled *Proposal and Thesis Writing: an Introduction*.⁸⁶ since the study seeks to examine under-age single mothers. This is when the researcher wishes to have an understanding on a population by using a sample of the larger community. It gives an account of a section of the population and clarifies occasions as they appear⁸⁷.

This research design was selected because of its purpose of obtaining deep information for knowledge purposes on the consequences of the opted for research issue in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. The researcher will unswervingly gather data that which cannot be openly witnessed like opinion of under-age single mothers, Church leaders and families.

1.12 Locale of the Study

The Study was carried out in Thogoto Village of Kĩambu County. One is, for clarity sake, referred to the two maps earlier provided.

1.13 Target Population

The target population was single biological mothers below 17years, from selected families, and Church leaders in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. Admittedly though, there was no sub categories of under-age based on gender namely; single fathers and

⁸⁶ D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 2006), p.72.

⁸⁷ W.Y. Oso & D. Owen, *A General Guide to Research Proposal and Report*, (Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 2009), p.75.

single mothers. The study focused on under-age single mothers while combining both the single fathers and single mothers.

1.14 Sampling Procedures

Four different samples were drawn from the study population. These are: A sample of 30 under-age single parents aged between 11-18 years, from school age to adolescent categories according to Erickson's psychosocial theory. This sample will be selected using snow balling sampling method; A sample of 10 purposively selected families; A sample of 8 Church leaders, two from each Church i.e., Catholic Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, African Independent Churches; and area administrators.

1.15 Data Collection Procedures

To achieve its objectives For the purpose of this Study, data will be collected from both the field and use of secondary sources. In the event of forming the background information, secondary data contributes much and also is vital. This helped the researcher to constructively build this study to enable the reader to comprehend deeply the result of the study. Secondary data was obtained from the JKML, Wachege's Little Eden library, Hekima library, articles, journals, books and the Internet. Primary data on the other hand the collected information by use of questionnaires and interviews.

Both open ended and close ended questionnaires were used and directed to four groups of respondents namely: under-age single mothers, selected families, Church leaders, area administrators. These data-collecting instruments were suitable since they facilitated the obtaining of the primary information from the respondents. It allowed the researcher to cover a large area guarding oneself from biased data perceptions presentations according to Kombo and Tromp confirm.⁸⁸

Controlled in-depth dialogues were also used to enable in gathering the detailed information from the Church leaders as well as select families to assist in the understanding of the difficulties both intensively and comprehensively which are encountered by under-age single mothers.

⁸⁸ibid. p.89.

1.16 Data Analysis Technique

A descriptive method was applied to analyse the qualitative data collected. The responses of the questionnaires are described using descriptive account. A comparison of study findings was done with literature review for better understanding better research objectives in relation to study. According to, Kombo and Tromp⁸⁹, qualitative research empowers methodical gathering, examination and clarification of data collected to provide expressive interpretations in order to provide of social and theological events any environmental background. The Study thus applied descriptive method in data analysis so as to obtain answers to the research questions and describe the phenomena of under-age single mothers.

1.17 Ethical Declarations

In conducting the research, care will be taken to ensure quality and integrity. Prior to the engagement, the researcher will get consent from the respondents to gather data whether through administering questionnaires or in the form of interviews. Confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed by the researcher to the respondents by not using their names on the instruments unless in circumstances where they give written and signed consent to use one of their names. Participation in the study will be voluntary. The researcher will also endeavour not to cause any harm to the respondents and ensure their dignity is maintained at all times.

1.18 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The current overview Chapter provided the setting of the study. It accomplished the task by examining the background to the study, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives, justification for the study together with scope and limitations. It also elaborated the literature review, theoretical framework spelling out the two guiding theories namely mediation theory and Erikson's psychosocial theory, research hypotheses and methodology together with ethical declaration. All these factors will be invaluable for the overview of the work. It enables us to explore the genesis of under-age single parents in the next chapter.

⁸⁹ibid. p.97.

CHAPTER TWO

CAUSES OF UNDER-AGE SINGLE MOTHERS

2.1 Introduction

Based on the insights provided in the previous chapter, we are now well grounded to explore out the causes of under-age single motherhood in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. To do that, the chapter will focus on the factors that bring about under-age single motherhood that the study came up with namely: baby-sitting for kinfolk members who are young single mothers, enhanced desire for sex, drug and substance abuse and inadequate knowledge of contraceptives. It will also explain molestation, courting anger together with collective financial issue. In addition, the chapter will elaborate child environment and death. The outcome thereby will equip us adequately to discuss the difficulties that under-age single parents encounter while parenting in the next chapter.

2.2 Babysitting For Kinfolk Members Who Are Young Single Mothers

Several respondents were of the opinion that babysitting for kinfolk' s members who are young single mothers occasionally results in the emergence of under-age single motherhood. They existentially observe these relatives and admire their life-style of raising own babies singly and in freedom welcoming whichever temporary male friend they choose in their own terms and at their discretion and they are attracted to this status of motherhood.

The respondents were in agreement that such babysitting for those they have a close affinity with, while observing how they live independently exchanging boyfriends at will with no commitment or royalty to any of them at all, persuade them that being a single mother is not bad after all. Such impressive phenomenon leads them into dropping their guards from sex predators – some of them being their employers' boyfriends - worrying not an iota about conceiving. Their ambition for schooling and education, even among the talented ones, is eventually undermined as they care less about getting pregnant like their “mentors” the relative employers. Under the influence of this pseudo-perception, they view giving birth as no big deal some evidently embracing it as a signification of self assertion and femininity pride cum actualization. The researcher found out that a good number of such young girls

became carefree readily preferring hedonistic life of sexual intercourse on demand and with whoever pleased them at their tender age, as some respondents disclosed, ending up in the state of under-age single motherhood accompanied with miserable premature parenting. The respondents were emphatic in revealing that involvement in helping their relatives in babysitting job psyched them that it is good and normal to have own children irrespective of one's age since their mothering relatives they worked for were apparently happy and proud of being single mothers seeming to have no real problems bringing up their children.

East confirms the above sentiments concerning the genesis of the aforementioned mode of single motherhood.⁹⁰ Jacobson reiterates that some of the young ones like sisters who assist in babysitting their sibling's child or children offering such services end up jeopardising their lives to an extent that a good number of them get pregnant while still under age.⁹¹ East further found out that when an older sister gives birth to a child, parents tend to cop and accept the situation as time passes by⁹² perhaps indirectly promoting that kind of motherhood out of their parental sympathy and unconditional generosity. The bottom-line is that babysitting of children belonging to young single mothers with whom they have a consanguineous relationship creates a kind of wedge reaction whereby the relative employees yearn to take after their kinfolk single mother employers notwithstanding their tender age. As days go by, on the basis of the respondents' confession, more than a few of find themselves in the aforementioned category of motherhood.

2.3 Enhanced Desire for Sex

A considerable number of respondents brought to awareness that they were overwhelmed by enticing sexual allures. They disclosed that , armed with cheap smart phones which they easily acquire, they gradually became addicted to phonographic

⁹⁰East P. L, "*Do Adolescent Pregnancies and Childbearing Affect Younger Siblings?*"Family Planning Perspectives, vol. 28 No.4, 1996, pp. 148–153.

⁹¹L. J Jacobson, East P. L, "*The Younger Siblings of Teenage Mothers: a Follow-up of their Pregnancy Risk*". (Dev Psychol. Vol.37 No.2, 2001). pp 254–64.

⁹²East, P. L. (1998). "*Impact of Adolescent Childbearing on Families and Younger Sibling: Effects that Increase Younger Siblings' Risk for Early Pregnancy*". (Applied Developmental Science. Vol.2, No. 2, 1998). 62–74.

material, juicy blue movies and suggestive commercial sup operas through which their gods the actors converted them into the trend of sex appeal and belief that being single mothers is “cool” parenting and fabulous life style. They were candid enough to explain that their ITC exchange with known and unknown friends through Facebook posts, WhatsApp, Twitting, Emails, Gmail and diverse YouTube contents accelerated their erotic passion. Then induced erotic emotions cropped up resulted in their involvement in sexual intercourse at a very tender age which later became habitual in some cases leading to pregnancy and “pre-mature” motherhood as the men responsible casually walked out on them. These sentiments are also supported by various secondary sources. Wachege and Rūgendo are quite elaborate on the impact of contemporary innovations upon the morality of the youth.⁹³The consequence of the practice, in some instances, is unwanted pregnancies leading to underage single motherhood status. Such findings reflect the reality in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. One respondent candidly confessed:

My friends have been speaking and talking on how enjoyable having sex with their companions is. They even managed to initiate me into consuming internet dirty sexual material and blue movies. I was introduced to erotic material exchange via WhatsApp forwarding data, Facebook posts, Email transmissions together with twits – a scenario that made my sexual urge uncontrollable. Under the circumstances, I had to quench my strong sex inclinations. I opted to have first- hand experience by myself via masturbation. Later, I graduated to indulging into full pledged conjugal affairs with fellow teenage boys and available adults – some old enough to qualify as my dad. Since I was unable to control and kick out the habit, I inevitable conceived. You can now see the evidence. I have these two babies here with me rejected by those I bore them with and I am still under 18 dejected single mother.

The Kaiser Family Foundation 2005 study of United States found out that among the under-age, only 71% of who are not described of experiencing the sensation force to engage in sex, 33% sexually dynamic testified of having a relationship through which they felt that things were going on well and were stirring up very fast sensationally, while 76% confirmed having engaged in any sexual act, creating awareness that 24%

⁹³ P.N. Wachege and F.G. Rūgendo, “Effects of Modernization on Youths’ Morality: A Case of Karūri Catholic Parish, Kenya, *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*,” 2017, Vol.7, No.12, ISSN:2222-6990, pp. 691-711.

of the total engaged sexually against their wish. ⁹⁴Past surveys indicate that peer pressure is one of the major causes that engineer the under-age to engage in sex. ⁹⁵Such rise of sexual activities among the under-age has also led to increased under-age pregnancies, sexually transmitted ailments cum parenthood and motherhood at a disturbing tender age. The situation is made worse by drug and substance abuse.

2.4 Drug and Substance Abuse

Another trigger of under-age single motherhood that the respondents had a consensus on is drug and substance abuse. The fight against Drug and substance in the recent and past has been there. Legislature has come up with ways of reducing and regulating the usage of alcohol and other drugs such as Bhang among others. NACADA was established in Kenya in 1996 with the aim of coordinating efforts towards preventing, controlling and mitigating alcohol and drug abuse in country. A research carried out on Alcohol situation Analysis (ASA) in 2012 by the regional office of the Swedish IOGT-NTO movement in collaboration with partners from East Africa found out that 63% of the people had used alcohol and 30% having consumed more than five bottles of alcohol per sitting. Further they found out that among the teenagers of between 14-17 years of age drank at least two bottles of alcoholic drinks per sitting. In Thogoto village, Kĩambu County selected families, Church leaders administrators confirmed that the locality is also hard hit teenagers indulging in alcohol and drug substance some of them being addicts. They painfully informed that, it is under such influence that under-age single motherhood is increasing at a very high rate. A respondent had this to say:

It was sports day. I was with my friends when we were approached by one boy who was a relative to one of us who volunteered to buy us drinks for socialization. As we were taking the non-alcoholic drink, some friends of our host joined us and persuaded us to get high by crowning our conviviality with alcoholic drinks encouraging us to have even more fun by puffing Bhang. When we got high, we had free sex and were shocked to find ourselves naked each with a partner. That is how I became the culprit of sex. I conceived and I had no way to identify who the man responsible was. That is

⁹⁴"U.S. Teen Sexual Activity" (PDF). Archived from the Original on 2008-02-16. (147 KB), Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2005. Retrieved 23 Jan 2018.

⁹⁵The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. (1997). *What the Polling Data Tell Us: A Summary of Past Surveys on Teen Pregnancy*. teenpregnancy.org, April 1997).

how I acquired my under-age single motherhood status together with some of my girl friends I was with.

Church leaders and administrators we interviewed blamed the above misconduct on poor parenting, peer pressure and media propagated hedonism. On the same note, Pudo (1998)⁹⁶ is of the opinion that the behaviour of a child is mainly influenced by the family unity who they imitate and the impact of socialization. Though for quite some time there has been a fight of drug abuse among the under-age in Kenya propagated by NACADA where in 2007 they remarkably included educational campaigns among the youth, still, as the study found out, the above vice is almost getting out of control and as a consequence more and more single mothers of the aforementioned category increasing at a high rate.⁹⁷ Among the drugs rampant that are frequently used by the under-age in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County included are alcohol, bhang and intoxicating over the counter tablets. Among the stimulating drugs whose use has shown a great link between them and under-age pregnancy include alcohol, bhang (cannabis) and other substitute amphetamines.⁹⁸ Though there is less use of heroine, morphine and other substances of a kind which are said to be reducing the libido.⁹⁹

2.5 Inadequate Knowledge About Contraceptives

Some countries in the world have in one way or the other experienced the rise of population and economy hardships. To curb the ever increasing number of people, family planning has been aggressively propagated even here in Kenya. Contraceptives are being dished out freely even in public toilets irrespective of who picks them so as to have sex on demand without fear of conceiving. Our research showed that teenagers are more enterprising in utilizing these contraceptives some being ignorant of how to safely implement them thus ending up conceiving. The research further

⁹⁶ M. W. Pudo, *Let's Talk About Drugs and Drug Use.* (Nairobi: Global Bookman Publishers, 1998).

⁹⁷ NACADA, Report Situation Assessment of Drug and Substance Abuse in Nairobi, 2007).

⁹⁸ UNICEF. (2001). "A League Table of Teenage Births in Rich Nations" (PDF), 2001).

⁹⁹ U.S. Teen Sexual Activity (PDF). Archived from the original on 2008-02-16. (147 KB) Kaiser Family Foundation, January 2005).

showed that those with no access to abortion or are afraid of abortion fatality keep their pregnancies thus becoming under-age single mothers.

In Kenya, contraceptives are not new among the youth yet the commensurate knowledge about their use remains a challenge.¹⁰⁰ In United Kingdom by 1998, it had set a strategy of halving the under-age referred as the under 18years pregnancy rate by end of 2010 under the TPS program which was mandated to carry out the task. Both the under-age girls and boys in Thogoto village often think that contraceptive exist as a pill, injection or condom which is extremely used amongst themselves, hence having no know- how about other existing and prevention methods. The major influence that negatively hampers them are the stories conveyed by their peers members and friends together with the media thereby limiting their discerning capacity and informed volition. Their ignorance on how, when and in what way to utilize the above often times make the method fail resulting in negative consequences.¹⁰¹ Biggs in 2012 came up with an interesting publication on *unprotected intercourse among women wanting to avoid pregnancy*.¹⁰² The author researched among women in relation to birth control methods such as use of contraceptives, enabling him to establish that almost half of respondents engaged in unprotected sex. They outlined three hindrances as being; lack/trouble in getting/accessing birth control, lack of intention to have sex, fallacy of not getting pregnant.¹⁰³ In UK among the under-age found that those seeking abortion in one of the studies found that contraceptive use among the under-age and adult seemed to be equal.¹⁰⁴

The use of these contraceptives sometimes fails in its intended purpose: *“Contraceptives are there to help one not to get pregnant easily. I have been using*

¹⁰⁰The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. (1997). What the Polling Data Tell Us: A Summary of Past Surveys on Teen Pregnancy. teenpregnancy.org (April 1997).

¹⁰¹A Adams, D'Souza, "Teenage Contraception," *General Practice Update*, Vol. 2, No. 6, (2009). pp. 36–39.

¹⁰²M. A. Biggs, D. Karasek,; Foster, D. G. (2012). "Unprotected Intercourse Among Women Wanting to Avoid Pregnancy: Attitudes, Behaviors, and Beliefs". *Women's Health Issues*. Vol. 22, No. 3, 2012.

¹⁰³Ibid, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴"Teenage Pregnancy Myth Dismissed". BBC News. January 22, 2007. Retrieved February 6, 2018.

them for quite some time and the day I got pregnant I had done as usual but I don't know how it happened and I became a mother at a very tender age. Since I feared flashing out the fetus by way of abortion, I brought it to full terms. That is how I ended up as an under-age single mother." Several other respondents had a similar story indicating the peril of inadequate knowledge of using contraceptives. The backfiring of birth control methods more so that of using contraceptives seems to be a major contributor to having unwanted pregnancies particularly among the youth expected. ¹⁰⁵ The Encyclopedia of women's Health,¹⁰⁶ explains the effort of distribution of contraceptives among the under-age through the family planning package distributed indiscriminately even among students thereby undermining their intended goal. The research verified that out of this, several primary and secondary schools students acquired motherhood status at a very young age.

2.6 Molestation

Molestation is explained as Sexual abuse inflicted upon any person irrespective age, gender and nationality. Some of the respondents informed that they became parents against their own volition. Such molestation resulting in being mothers without ones volition is a widespread occurrence by those who exploit others especially the minor.¹⁰⁷ The researcher found out that in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County habitual exposure of one's bodily parts and suggestive behaviour that entices enhances the evil though sometimes not intended- leading to numerous cases of child abuse. This was experienced, for instance, from two of the respondents who said to have been abused by their closest relatives and ordered not to speak, only to realise that they were pregnant. One of them explained how his brother in-law forcefully sex abused her making her pregnant against her will:

I went to visit my sister one morning, as I usually did, only to find that she had gone to work. As I waited her in a room I used to stay whenever I visited, her husband uncharacteristically returned. He requested me to make lunch for him which I did. After serving him, I went to my room to relax. In a strange manner, he entered where I was pretending to look for something. I did not know that the something was sex

¹⁰⁵D. J. Besharov, K. N. Gardiner, (1997). "Trends in Teen Sexual Behavior," Children and Youth Services Review. Vol. 19, No's. 5-6, 1997). pp. 341-367.

¹⁰⁶"Teen Pregnancy" (2004) in *Encyclopedia of Women's Health*.

¹⁰⁷"Sexual Abuse," American Psychological Association, 2018.

with me since that kind of conduct is a terrible taboo in our ethnic community. It would even incur a curse. He suddenly locked the door and had sex with me forcefully. He ordered me never to tell anybody under death threat. It was so embarrassing. I left for home immediately. As weeks went by, I realized that I was pregnant. I thought of procuring an abortion but I feared. Painfully, I decided to bring the pregnancy to full terms. That is how I became a mother at such a tender age and with nobody to call a husband and I am not alone. I know friends who are in the same state too.

They opted to give birth rather than carrying out an abortion, for one still the case in ongoing in court, but for the other still the culprit is at large since they avoided family shame and solved it within their home. Some were lured by displaying pornographic films, engaging in sex by being pressured or by request and others confirmed of indecent exposure that triggered their sexual desire.¹⁰⁸ Though previous studies carried out in different countries, for example in South Africa, under-age motherhood is enhanced by acts such as rape in small percentage, more than half of the under-age girls become mothers by engaging in unsolicited sexual practices become pregnant. Among girls at an average of 15 years engage in sex not by choice but un-voluntarily. Guttmacher Institute in its findings shows that a good number of under-age girls who engage in sex at early ages are molested by their senior boys and adult men who later abandon them.¹⁰⁹ Some under-age single mothers confirmed bearing children from their close relatives whom they were even ashamed of disclosing their identity and it too lowered their self-esteem and social wise. Kerry explains too of a ratio among under-age girls who become mothers unwillingly as being one to five.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Martin, J.; Anderson, J.; Romans, S.; Mullen, P; O'Shea, M. *"Asking about Child Sexual Abuse: Methodological Implications of a Two-Stage Survey,"* Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993, Vol.17, No. 3. Pp. 383–392.

¹⁰⁹I. S. Speizer, A. Pettiford, Cummings, S. McPhail, C. Kleinschmidt, I. Rees, *"Sexual violence and Reproductive Health Outcomes Among South African Female Youths: A contextual Analysis,"* American Journal of Public Health, 2009, Vol. 99 Suppl 2: S425–31.

¹¹⁰Cullinan, Kerry Teen mothers often forced into sex. www.csa.za.org. 23 November 2003

2.7 Courting Anger

Violence experience is not only practised by or among the married and adults but also appears to be common among under-age who engage in unwarranted relationship and sexual acts. It's generally agreeable that a number of children imitate and learn from their parents.¹¹¹ For those raised in violent homes, they have a higher probability of being negatively aggressive which they project to their lovers who leave them since they are not able to tolerate the violence even if they have already sired children with them. In many families, according to the respondents, they ran from their homes to seek refuge in their friends house due to their parents' disagreement ended up vulnerable in the hands of their hosts who readily impregnate them and then, in anger, such girls quite to live by themselves out of anger. Two respondents revealed that their irritable fathers murdered their mother and then rapped them. Out of anger, they disappeared from their homes with the embarrassment of carrying their biological fathers' babies. Another respondent disclosed that her mother poisoned their dad and was she was convicted ending up in prison serving a life sentence forcing them to undertake parenting roles prematurely. To make ends meet for the welfare of the siblings, she was compelled to sell her body sexually which eventually resulted in motherhood. Among the studies carried out, one confirms that under-age girls are put into motherhood status out of the above occurrences.¹¹² In another study¹¹³ that was found out that violence and extreme anger contribute greatly to the above phenomenon.

2.8 Collective Financial Issues

Poverty was found to be one of the main triggers of under-age single motherhood in the locality of research. This was openly expressed by a majority of the respondents. There was a clear indication that they were unable to meet their daily basic needs due to lack of support they are subjected to most of the times as singles. It was clear that majority of those interviewed were unable to take care of their upkeep together with

¹¹¹Smith, Carolyn, "*The Link Between Childhood Maltreatment and Teenage Pregnancy*," *Social Work Research*, 1996, Vol.20, No.3. pp. 131–141.

¹¹²D. Rosen, "*I Just Let Him Have His Way*" *Partner Violence in the Lives of Low-Income, Teenage Mothers*," *Violence against Women*.2004, Vol. 10, No, 1, pp 6–28.

¹¹³*Violence, Abuse and Adolescent Childbearing* Archived 2013-09-27 at the Way back Machine. (Florida State University Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy 2005).

their children welfare without some amount of benevolent support. indicator of poverty amongst the families made things worse. Among the social agencies under-age single motherhood has been classified as a social difficulty also at the field of research. The increase of poverty rates is linked to increase of under-age parenthood.¹¹⁴ Studies indicate that economically struggling states for example Bangladesh, the rate of under-age single parents is higher than those well of states such as Japan.¹¹⁵ In the USA under-age parents cost them about \$9.1 billion this was as per 2004,¹¹⁶ though some claimed that under-age mother's graduate to parenthood for selfish benefits or gains like being taken care of, entitlement to remuneration and provision of free accommodation. Nevertheless, what does not add up is that it was a small number who knew about the relief before getting pregnant of which on others who thought had know-how about the support not knowing they had got it all wrong.¹¹⁷ In Thogoto Village, narratives of the above are so numerous that it would be idle to document them. In the locality, the researcher found out that prostitution, sometimes referred to as commercial sex work, featured greatly as a fundamental cause of the aforementioned mode of motherhood.

2.9 Child Environment

Children exposed to internal house violence, and household troubles while at tender age the probability is that they are likely to start experiencing parenthood irrespective of their age bracket classified as under-age. Smith verified that the more the violence in families and surroundings the more the risk of exposure to early motherhood.¹¹⁸ Such are the concrete surroundings Thogoto Village children are socialized in. A study in 2004 showed that a third of under-age single motherhood could be prevented through eradicating violence, household struggles, and much exposure to abuse. The

¹¹⁴D. J. Besharov, K. N. Gardiner, (1997), "Trends in Teen Sexual Behavior," Children and Youth Services Review, 1997, Vol. 19 No's. 5-6, pp. 341-367.

¹¹⁵Indicator: Births per 1000 Women (aged 15-19) - 2002 UNFPA, State of World Population 2003.

¹¹⁶Teen Births Cost U.S. Government \$9.1B In 2004 Despite Drop In Teen Birth, Pregnancy Rates, Report Says Archived 2011-05-12, Way back Machine. Medical News Today 2012.

¹¹⁷Teenage Mothers: Decisions and Outcomes - Provides a Unique Review Of How Teenage Mothers Think (Policy Studies Institute, University of Westminster, 30 Oct 1998).

¹¹⁸Smith, Carolyn (1996). "The Link Between Childhood Maltreatment and Teenage Pregnancy," Social Work Research. 1996, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 131-141.

investigator came up with a view that any domestic family that has to constantly endure unfavourable situations in life and persistent hostile environment is exposed to detrimental circumstances towards parenthood. Tomkins in *Teenage Pregnancy Risk Rises with Childhood Exposure to Family Strife*¹¹⁹ supports the assertion. Thogoto Village has people from all kinds of life with diverse and divergent character traits which impacts positively and negatively on the children. One does not need to live there for long to notice the mutual enrichment among these ethnic groups' cultural values just as, negatively, it becomes clear that the young ones easily get lost while embracing the divergent mannerism uncritically which more often leads to permissiveness and diminishing sense of shame resulting in promiscuity hence premature initiation into parenthood. In such surroundings, one finds a proliferation of under-age single mothers as our research found out.

In several cases the researcher found that some fathers deserted their families while their children were still young leaving their desperate wives to bring them up single handed and in the above surroundings. We found out that some these mothers prostitute in their own dwellings to get money for their respective families. This also contribute to the rise of promiscuity among the under-age in the involved families since some of the mothers' clients turn to the youth out of sexual greed making them pregnant before their appropriate age. Inadequate schooling and education owing to abject poverty factors makes things worse. Allen identified the elements as risk characteristics that enhance the aforementioned evil.¹²⁰ Rebecca explains that under-age girls whose mothers or elder sisters gave birth at early ages indirectly influence their daughters to take after them.¹²¹ We confirmed that such wedge reaction is real in Thogoto Village, Kiambu County deteriorating when the children are orphaned owing to the demise of their parents.

¹¹⁹T. Tomkins, *Teenage Pregnancy Risk Rises with Childhood Exposure to Family Strife. Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, March–April 2004.* (Way back Machine, 2004).

¹²⁰E. Allen, C. Bonell, V. Strange, A Copas, J. Stephenson, A.M Johnson, A. Oakley, "Does the UK Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Deal with the Correct Risk Factors? Findings from a Secondary Analysis of Data from a Randomized Trial of Sex Education and their Implications for Policy," *J Epidemiol Community Health.* 2007, Vol.61, No.1.

¹²¹A. Rebecca, Maynard, "Kids Having Kids," Ed. *Archived 2005-11-26, 1996.*

2.10 Death

The researcher came across cases of under-age single motherhood as a result of the death of parents whereby the young ones are left behind as helpless dependants. They find themselves under the mercy of the sex predators' benevolence which, more often than not, turn out to be malevolence in the form of sex abuse that reduce them to being mothers while still under-age. There is a prevalence of this kind of cases in the study locality. Bereavement usually arises owing to old age, predation, malnourishment, illness, suicide, murder, famine, desiccation, and natural calamities.¹²² There was a consensus among the respondents that bereavement ranks among the top causes of under-age single motherhood. The same is verified elsewhere.¹²³ To human death is considered to be unkind, this is due to affection brought about by the death person since the societal and hereditary connection has been broken. With this gap the under-age also becomes affected since they have to take parenting roles. A good number of the under-age single parent's confided it was after the demise of their parents leaving them orphans when still young that contributed in their being in the state they were in. They cited different causes of their parents deaths ranging from accidents, drug and substance abuse, murder, suicide, illness together with the dreaded HIV and AIDS. Though the Church leaders recognize them as orphans they are ignorant of the specificity in pastoral approach they need as not just orphans but under-age mothers too. This means that the assistance offered them is impoverished and, therefore, inadequate. It is for such insufficiency that several of these mothers, as they informed, no longer go to their respective Churches.

¹²²L. Zimmerman, "Must All Organisms Age and Die?", Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Engineering, 2010.

¹²³"Single-Parent Families – Demographic Trends". *Marriage and Family Encyclopedia. Net Industries and its Licensors*. Retrieved 11 February 2018.

2.11 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

Based on the insights provided in the previous Chapter, the Chapter was well grounded to explore out the causes of under-age single motherhood in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. To do that, it focused on the factors that bring about under-age single motherhood that the study came up with namely: baby-sitting for kinfolk members who are young single mothers, enhanced desire for sex, drug and substance abuse and inadequate knowledge of contraceptives. It also identified and explained molestation, courting anger together with collective financial issue as further triggers. In addition, the chapter elaborated child environment and bereavement as additional causes of the phenomenon. These factors have equipped us reasonably well to delve into the problems under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County are confronted with while parenting in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

DIFFICULTIES UNDER-AGE SINGLE MOTHERS ENCOUNTER IN PARENTING ENDEAVOUR

3.1 Introduction

In the light of the previous chapter which enabled us to explore the main causes of under-age single motherhood in Thogoto Village, Kiambu County, we now examine the problems they are confronted with in the same locality. The field research identified some fundamental problems which the current Chapter will explore. They are: discrimination and contempt, child-care difficulties, mistreatment by relatives, property inheritance, acute loneliness and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) together with HIV and AIDs. Mediation theory propagated by L. Boff and C. Boff¹²⁴ will be utilized in the investigation.

3.2 Discrimination and Contempt

The under-age single mothers are generally treated with contempt more so among the Africans.¹²⁵ The study found out that adults (women) married view the UaSM as those eyeing their potential husbands to redeem them from their suffering by extorting money by all possible and applicable means as it was explained by the respondents. This makes it hard for them to even secure a local manual work to support themselves in married families of such a kind. Some of the UaSM admitted seeking asylum in both the married and unmarried houses where they can meet their daily basic requirement. This has seen marriage breakage among married counterparts. For the UASF they distance themselves from peers and married men since they don't identify themselves with either of them. Their public life fluctuates downwards since they don't want to be dubbed as adulterers.

The *madharau* (contempt) has been, still is and believes it will remain a major problem as viewed by UaSP in community. The contempt and discrimination is not only externally experienced but internal cannot be outlawed. Internally it's received from parents and elder sibling for those who have given birth while the elderly

¹²⁴ L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), pp.24-39.

¹²⁵ P.N. Wachege, *African Single Mothers: Socio-Ethical and Religious Investigations* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 1994), pp. 71ff.

haven't. For example a case encountered is the one of fifteen years who has two children of hers and the parents call her a wife to *unknown* (spirits), though they cook and eat together and live in the same house. On the other hand a high school boy who impregnated a lady in the same school being dubbed as *jogoo* (cock) of the village.

This has seen them segregated and not allowed to socialise freely with peers in community, since they are branded as being immoral. Some respondents accepted of not being visitors to some houses since they always feared what could follow, the dreadful and hurting gossips. This implies that they belong to specific class of anti-socialising and contact with others of opposite gender. UASM whenever they give smart outlook they identify it as the works of a '*sponsor*' (male rich friend who gives hand-outs for selfish gains).

The study found out that a larger group of people including Christians outrage UaSP. If by chance UaSM gets to get support from anybody or anywhere they are accused them of using luring means through bodily pleasures for material gain and self-development. They are believed to be coming from 'poor' background and should remain that way of life. The UaSF on the other hand is not appointed to head any peer department in Church because of his past mistake tagged upon him, reason being that the Church can't withstand any further pregnancies among their children of the lord.

The mixed feeling perception received from the community has developed suspicious treatment and disapproval of the UaSP. This has led to increase in stigmatization and acumen socially denying them their right as Christians and human beings according to Gods wish. Zani¹²⁶ supports the study with the view of how single parent families are perceived.

3.3 Childcare Difficulties

This problem was seen as of great concern among the respondents from Church leaders, select families, administrators and the under-age parents themselves. For the UaSM they have to take the role of a father, while UaSF have to play a role of mother. In the case of loss of parents then the UaSP plays the role of parents both father and mother at the same time. To adjust to take the roles becomes strenuous considering

¹²⁶ A.P. Zani, "*The Family in its African Socio-Cultural Context*," in P. Ryan (Ed.) *The Model of "Church as Family": Meeting the African Challenge* (Nairobi, Kenya: CUEA Publication, 1999), p.50.

the age and position in the family, and mostly the employability of one to enable him/her fend for the family. Things worsen in the sense that the parent is not employed yet there are children who are dependent on him/her for survival. The scenario forces them to embark on engaging themselves in odd jobs like being house helps, gardeners among other.

With the rise of the cost of living and high life demands, UaSP who are malnourished financially due to divergent causes they find it hard to neither educate neither themselves nor their children. As a result of these struggles the UaSP end-up dropping out of school so that they create time to engage in manual works which do not go well with them sine they said of being abused and paid skimpy remunerations. Wagua,¹²⁷ in his work *'Pastoral Care for Incomplete Families: A Forgotten Ministry in Africa'* views, some families are said to be suffering from abject poverty, during the struggle for a brighter life and future. This enhances basic dissatisfaction hence search endures falling them in erroneous influences. This being the mistreatment they undergo in the hands of their hope 'the rich'. The UaSP work for long ours even others relocate to those homes but with little pay. They also tend to pursue courtesies, this makes some to be concise the UaSM be used as sex toys (molested). Nicholas in his work attributes that; those who grow (children) under care of single parent, are likely to have low learning realization, with high chances of dropping out of school and become parents. There is also a high possibility of them becoming malingerers; participate in sexual activities habitual drug abusers; participate in sexual activities among others.¹²⁸The research confirmed the above in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County.

3.4 Maltreatment by Relatives

A larger number of UaSP that the researcher came across articulated how their family relatives/ members mistreat them. They receive abuses and all sorts of insults right in the eye. This further denies them their just place as associates of a family. Sometime they are sent to go hide in their relative's homes and places as a way of hiding the bad

¹²⁷ P. M. Wagua, *"Pastoral Care for Incomplete Families: A Forgotten Ministry in Africa,"* (In AFER, 1996). Vol.38 No.2,pp.117-118.

¹²⁸ S. Nicholaus, *"A Pastoral Reflection on Single motherhood in Vocations Animation,"*(F. Wanjala (Ed.) African Christian Studies, 2013).Vol.29, No.4, p.41.

reputation brought about by one. The born child in some families is denied sense of belonging from both the fathers and mothers home. In the case of the death of a parent the UaSP is accused of coming from parents who never wished to assist anyone and who never helped even their personal families, how does he/she expect to be helped yet?

Interesting enough one of the UaSM, spoke of how she dropped out of school since she couldn't fund her educational quest, initially she was under the care of a relative who felt she is not working enough to entice her to fund academic needs. Others said of them becoming burdens, others were frankly told that time had arrived for them to depend upon themselves since once children had grown enough. The emphasis here is the pain, which is caused by relative and family members. According to Christian dogma we are all entitled to live as one family irrespective of our diverse and divergent ways of life. We should learn to accept one and all since we belong to the family of God, and we should live according to his will and wish. This is why they run to seek refuge and belonging in Churches, expecting to be valued and acknowledged as members of a "Family of God."

3.5 Property inheritance

Some studies done have confirmed the existence of restructured property heirloom but they found out this being applicable to widows thus being a challenge to the under-age Wachege.¹²⁹ This remains upon the UaSP to continue struggling to inherit what belongs to their parents rightfully from their relatives, since the person to inherit/own the property is either death, mentally deranged, under drug and substance difficulty among many grounds. The UaSP is considered not eligible considering his age and position in family. They report cases to chiefs who in turn advices them to settle the grievances within the family. Though it isn't a guarantee for the UaSP to own property, it was exhibited to some that value a life, some of these category of UaSP had been given one to enable them improve their lives and that of their families. It's here that not only the boys were considered even the girls had what to smile about. Property inheritance is and continues to be a problem among the UaSP. Without a well spelled out will and declaration from the parent about his property sharing, it

¹²⁹ P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, p.219.

remains a riddle in the allocation if it to under-age children to inherit. The conflict and antipathy experienced among nuclear and extended families are relatively property related issues, where some oppress others with pride of their enlightenment over.

3.6 Acute Loneliness

A good number of under-age single parents who participated in the study expressed the segregation they receive from their peers, relatives and the community at large about their state, this was for those who bore children by themselves they live together in one village. On the other hand the larger discrimination in one way or the other also is experienced by all under-age single parents in the region of Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County, of diverse forms considering once cause of single motherhood. They also accept the fact that this parenthood role is challenging and they themselves can't fill the gap fully despite their struggles to see ends meet. For those with their children responded on the issue of memory torture when they compare their present life with the past one when in love which they never imagined will be curtailed someday by giving birth this also applied to those who lost their parents making them to under-take parenting roles. Such thoughts ponder them trying to imagine the future world how it will be. The loneliness is expressed when they find nobody to converse to and tell specific concerns.

The situation deteriorates when there are more than one or two children to look after. This hinders the 'parent' from undertaking personal roles but rather prefer concerning once self with the siblings lonely. This makes it difficult for him/her to be present during the eating time of the young ones, if not well fed health wise they deteriorate reducing once immune system, weakening the person and exposing one to risk factors like disease.

3.7 Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's) Together Together With HIV and AIDS Infections

HIV/AIDS remains to be one of the lethal infections around the world, which has and is consuming people's lives. Wachege in his book titled: *Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights*¹³⁰ approves this that indeed it has undecorated effect on each key organization in our humanity. Where he acknowledges HIV/AIDS not only being a tormentor but also a tragedy. It not only affects the human life but also explored other areas like; religious, social and economic sectors just to name a few, thus raising the reliance percentages. This has caused death to parents of the under-age, others are infected ignorantly without knowing as confessed by one respondent, who confessed being told the information after delivery in by the doctor's in. as the investigation discovered in Thogoto Village, Kiambu County.

As of this case of an infected mother whose child was medically salvaged from death in near future, compliments are to the Government of Kenya in conjunction with Faith-Based Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations that has recouped the situation by making easily and free access of the Anti-Retroviral drugs (ARVs) to those with the disease. Also there those UaSP whose parents are infected and weak to appoint of not doing anything, one is forced to take care of the siblings at the same time maintain the good health requirements for the sick parents thus become affected also heal wise and socially.

This killer disease has denied homes the best of the joyous life, which is expected by one to be celebrated. It consumes each and every coin meant for other things such as buying food, school fees among many other basic need necessities. The family's economic solidity is left in a limbo due to high curative purchases necessary. Wachege endorses this by clarifying the gravity sway of the disease as not only affecting the mortal life but also being disastrous a

On socially and economically too.¹³¹

¹³⁰ P.N. Wachege, *Living To Die, Dying To Live: African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2002), pp.186ff.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.188.

3.8 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

In the light of the previous chapter which empowered the study with diverse causes of under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County, the Chapter examined the problems they are confronted with in the same locality. The field research identified some fundamental problems which the ending Chapter explored namely: discrimination and contempt, child-care difficulties, mistreatment by relatives, property inheritance, acute loneliness and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) together with HIV and AIDs. Mediation theory propagated by L. Boff and C. Boff¹³² was utilized in the investigation. The insights gained from the current and previous chapters provide a springboard into the theological section that will commence with reflections on family and parenting in the next chapter.

¹³² L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), pp.24-39.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON FAMILY AND PARENTING

4.1 Introduction

The insights gained from the previous chapters provide the socio-cultural anthropological ground into the current theological section that will be concerned with theological reflections on family and parenting in view of under-age single motherhood. Under the theme, the following will be discussed: Biblical teaching on family and parenting, CCC instructions on family and nurturing children and Vatican Council 11 teaching on family and child-care. It will also deal with Synod of African Bishops and Christian family ideal in culture. The other aspects that will be examined are those of Pope John Paul II's pedagogy on Christian family and parenting together with compendium of social doctrine of the Church on family and parenting. In solidarity with the previous Chapters, the study will be enabled to draw the summary, study implications, emerging recommendations and the conclusion of our study.

4.2 Biblical Teaching on Family and Parenting

The Old Testament forms the foundation of the Christian parenting aspects by simplifying them for easy understanding by the way it's organized or outlined. Here both genders are regarded as being equal persons. Fertility too is considered to be good. Both are bound by sexual interrelatedness with the aim of procreating.

In the Old Testament families are perceived as those from a common specific cosmos and even of same blood. They include; husband, wife and children both in wedlock and not married. This traces itself from the patriarchal accounts of Genesis. Any Christian family here is regarded as a primary unity, which is vital in its formation. For instance, "the last supper was celebrated within a family" (Ex 12:13ff.). The family of Elkanah too pays an annual pilgrimage to Shiloh among other many examples that the Bible outlines the family as being the core of any religion (1Sam1:3ff). Hence Christian perception on family plays centre part other than just worshipping.

The introduction and development of values and virtues for the children, which helps in the moral development in them, run across the Old Testament and the New Testament. Unity being valued, this made each individual to lean towards his own family. As such members took the effort to offer assistance to fellow members; it's similar to under-age single parents who are to work in solidarity with their siblings to uphold to highest degree and with courage.

Parenting, in the first creation account is considered to be an important feature (Gen 1:26-28). Here Gods procreation and mandate is demonstrated explicitly. With this in mind, we see the Jewish regard marriage as God' s covenant given companionship through which procreation was achieved, hence became lineage continuation for future human races. The second account of Yahwist explains man's companion and equal dignity with creators' intention in mind (Gen.2: 18-25). It explained that man and woman companionship are meant for companionship, procreation and implementations of mutual life covenant. This shows that fertility is also highly valued and taken as a blessing from God upon humankind(Gen. 15:2-6; Ex.23: 26;Deut.7: 14).

It's at family levels that members carry out different responsibilities. For example, mothers here are concerned with their daughters much in educating them on morality related issues while they are young (Prov.1: 8, 6:20). On the other hand fathers impart general education to the boys/sons (Ex. 10:2, 13:8; Deut. 4:9, 6:7). They are also to transmit religious and other living values. Parental duties therefore are to be supplemented by the people surrounding too like; priests, teachers among others, who contribute towards their human development and growth as an all-round person. Parental responsibilities in the Old Testament and those required of Christians are seemingly the same.

4.3 Catechism of Catholic Church Instructions on Family and Nurturing Children

In the RCC, both the family and parenting are among the central ecclesial doctrines. The CCC¹³³ emphasizes the interdependence of people within a family unit and parenting. The accentuation is that it is within matrimony that the consorts cooperate with the Creator for the continuity of human kind by begetting children within family

¹³³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Vatican, 1994.*

set up triggered by both mothers and fathers. The catechism is emphatic on relationality and communality in a family.¹³⁴ Moreover, marriage is regarded as one of the seven sacraments among them being Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Holy Orders among the others in ecclesia. God instituted¹³⁵ and analogically linked it with the covenant of the ecclesiastical and Jesus.¹³⁶

The spouses are instructed to ensure community welfare by nurturing their children while socializing them with the desired community.¹³⁷ Irrespective of age or gender no one is imperilled to any form of exploitation of any nature. Therefore the family is mandated to ensure its members take the responsibility of taking care of the less privileged in society. By implication a family should be of significance to under-age single parents without neglecting adult single parents in process. Despite that a good number of families may be incapable of providing the required assistance, and then it will turn to other families in to provide them with their needs.¹³⁸

The adult parents are to realize that, a child doesn't belong to one person, but rather be considered a gift. Also is not being regarded as a thing or piece of property or a right to be a child, which is merely an asserted notion. Indeed it's here that a child is said to possess unpretentious justices. This implies that the child hence is a product of parent's matrimonial entitlements; too they deserve respect like any other person.¹³⁹ With this in precise the under-age who acquire parenting roles at their tender ages form a serious problem in reference with their age, hence seriously taken, since it's a rapidly mushrooming category of single motherhood in society.

The presence of both parents contributes immensely to congruent existence in a family. The parents should bear in mind that children come from God; therefore they deserve respect like any human being. To demonstrate the obedience of God's will, they offer social development for example by educating the in order to fulfil the Gods

¹³⁴ CCC, no.2202.

¹³⁵ CCC, no.1603.

¹³⁶ CCC, nos.1617, 1661.

¹³⁷ CCC, no.2206.

¹³⁸ CCC, no.2208.

¹³⁹ CCC, no.2378.

law.¹⁴⁰ With the training that one perhaps offers is a duty to those under his or her care irrespective of gender and age.

According to Christian doctrine on married family can't be said to be the monopoly of child bearing but to complement the society selflessly by contributing towards the welfare of other members within and outside their specific family setting.

4.4 Vatican Council II Teaching on Family and Child-Care

Vatican Council II (1962-1965) is one of the greatest Ecumenical Councils in Church history. Among the discussions, which took the floor, were the ones giving perceptions on family and parenting matters relevant to this study. This is the pastoral doctrine of the Church in the current millennium (*Gaudium et spes*).

At social levels within a society any member who belongs to the Church belongs to a family. The Church by it is considered a family as a whole formed by primary units through which a person belongs to identified as family expresses himself or herself. The council explains that children have a duty to sanctify their parents as like any other active number in a family. They should show readiness in showing respect and appreciation to the ones concerned with their welfare.¹⁴¹ This forces the under-age single parent families to seek assistance from Christians in order to accept and appreciate them as a gift from God rather than ignoring them. In the midst of joy, hope, torment and misery among the present generation the Council teaches that they need to work with Christ under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to be the light and hope of and for all – including, in our case, under-age single mothers. They should be united with Christ the Saviour and redeemer who establishes the Kingdom of God which is the kingdom of grace, light and fulfilled life. Christianity is thus a community composed of people united with Christ its Founder who are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Gods kingdom, with which they carry the salvation message to all. As such, Christians are expected to develop a deeper feeling of communalism within human race without segregating anyone.¹⁴² Further the council explains the institutionalism and nature of spouses who are endowed to procreation and training to their young ones and that, which is within the offspring's

¹⁴⁰ CCC, no.222.

¹⁴¹ GS, no.48.

¹⁴² Ibid. , pp.904, 930.

that the highest glory is achieved.¹⁴³This enhances the understanding without considerations on gender; they all have a right to get good parenting and are well natured with stimulations and intuitions from family prayer. Within such an understanding, all are summoned and given the means to godliness as members of the Church.¹⁴⁴On the other and sons and daughters have a duty to respond the love of their parents? Such pedagogy explains the presence of Christ in the world and the real description of the Church by love of spouse being able to propagate, by the fact of unity and dependability among family members cohesion.¹⁴⁵Vatican Council II, furthermore, inculcates family values on mutual outward and love complement. It explains that a family is a unity of loving companionship that is uniquely treasured by the benevolent Creator where none should be excluded or discriminated against.¹⁴⁶

4.5 Synod of African Bishops

The Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesial in Africa* (The Church in Africa) by John Paul II augments the analysis of Church as ‘Family of God’ relevant to the study of under-age single parents. Christians from a Christian community are identified as Church that is a representation of Gods family on earth and challenges all to work for its well being.¹⁴⁷ The Bishops from Africa realized that the Church ought to play a fundamental responsibility in person’s improvement as a whole discriminating nobody since all are family members irrespective of their shortcomings or deviations.¹⁴⁸The implications for our subject matter is an earnest call to give meaningful ministry to under-age single mothers who are in dire need of being liberated from parenting difficulties confronting them and to be confirmed as real mothers in their own rights.

The stress of the religious as a community of communion as institutionalized by Vatican Council II lobby corresponds with the image created by the African Bishops synod of the Church as ‘a family of God’. The ecclesia being a community of

¹⁴³ Ibid. , p.950.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. , p. 951.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. , pp. 951-952.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. , P. 952.

¹⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Ecclesial in Africa* (The Church in Africa), Vatican, 1995, no. 63.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. ,no.45.

communion basically checks the commonality, wellbeing of others, discourse and assurances¹⁴⁹ that should be upheld by the people of Thogoto Village Christian community.

The assortment of the Church as ‘a Family of God’ among the African synods is established by the togetherness among the African cultures. The African understanding is; inside a family is a cradle where tenets are natured and safeguarded, by these ones contentment is actualized. The model of the ecclesiastical as a community of communities isn’t chiefly genetic but rather through the Trinity which is a covert of communalizing three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The synod fathers acknowledged an African family as a way through which unanimity between the Church and the ecosphere is internally transformed.¹⁵⁰ They assist in the understanding of under-age single parents families to Church and also globally. Christians within African families should nurture harmony to every individual faithful, if they are to be homeland ecclesia, most importantly contribute to societies’ success and further communal life among devotees.¹⁵¹ The under-age single parents are not exclusive taking responsibilities too.

The Christian family is to be domesticated holy unit of the Church, since values and virtues are first natured in homes such as being alert, adoration, Gods word and prayer among others.¹⁵² At family level as a whole component involving single parent families such as under-age single parents. The Church mainly has a huge task in evangelizing mission with aim of the innate human growth.¹⁵³ In the document the work of shepherding is to promote the affiliate towards development of an individual both significantly and mystically merging personnel slander of distinct solemnity.¹⁵⁴ The under-age single parents therefore deserve empowerment from Christian community to handle their difficulties that dehumanizes them in one-way or another.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. ,no.63.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. , no.85.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. , no.85.

¹⁵² Ibid. , no.92.

¹⁵³ Ibid. , no.47.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. , no.70.

The ecclesia's main task is to shepherd with the objective of individual human development. The personal development as a whole person, to be specific the neglected ones in community, are significant in evangelizing.¹⁵⁵ Among the in need members of the Church are the under-age single parents who are seeking refuge in a more fruitful Christian community in overcoming the parenting problems. In the study the content adds value since the under-age single parents form the flock to be shepherded with the aim of alleviating them from the difficulties they are facing.

The Church faith is to be maintained with the dignity it deserves by the people not being inhuman or promoting dehumanizing conditions.¹⁵⁶ The existence and life of ecclesia therefore is to fight and assist mankind to overcome diverse difficulties among them are under-age single parents with a goal of liberating them. The African synods face their foundation as by accepting to be instruments of redemption among Africans with regard to their strength of faith and hope of saving Jesus' power.¹⁵⁷ Salvation is entitled to evangelize everyone including the under-age single parents who seem to have given up in life.

The image of the Church as 'a family of God' has not only been a perception of just co existing but a form of community of communion. Each Christian member should take the brotherhood and sisterhood keepers, where one is concerned by the neighbours' concerns and needs. With these one will be able to find sense of belonging for they form the larger community. Thus the Christian community should propose and put measures through which the under-age single parents as members of a Christian community.

4.6 Christian Family As n Ideal in Culture

The examination here is of Jesus' family as a role model not excluding the under-age single parent families. Jesus having been born of a carpenter Joseph and Mary but yet was concerned with others around. Based on this family Christians can learn a lot with regard to under-age single parents. The synod fathers, who intensively encourage

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. , no.68.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. , No.69.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. , No.70.

Christians to learn from the family threefold, this by acknowledging Pope John Paul II work. Each member is required to work towards living in harmony as Holy family.¹⁵⁸

The major characteristic that is presumed in the Bible is that of Joseph being a carpenter.¹⁵⁹ Carpentry being his profession, yet still he was able to provide and be fully concerned with the family welfare. As Abraham's family was used. God too used Joseph's family appropriately. Too Jesus before commencing his mission work he was a craftsman, this implies that he knew hard labour. This dares the under-age single parents on effective ways concerning them, based on the welfare of siblings despite the challenging situations. Under-age single parents can learn too from Jesus Christ's hard labour.

Jesus' family; Joseph, Mary and Jesus himself they lay the foundation of theological understanding of ecclesia. Through the family of Jesus as a model; faith and affection in God and so become prophetic studies. The family became the source of community in heaven. Pope John Paul II with reference to Nazareth being the place of where the family kingdom started, it's felt that Christians can learn about love, obligation and supporting one another among others. This feature creates the source for attaining God's kingdom.¹⁶⁰ This challenges Christian families in society and the under-age single parent's families, in particular towards attaining God's kingdom.

4.7 Pope John Paul II's Pedagogy on Christian Family and Parenting

In John Paul's appeal he echoes the characteristics of an expected Christian family in *Familiaris Consortio* (The Family and Modern World), his advice families to have a deep understanding of the kind of families God expects. This is only achievable by looking at the core values and put them into practice in life across Christian families.¹⁶¹ By it the curiosity of studying different family formations is triggered including those in special situations as the under-age single parents. How they can be assisted to maintain their family status quo like any other in society. The family is recalled to actualize its knowledge and self-realize as a community of love and

¹⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa* (the Church in Africa.), Vatican, 1995, no. 81.

¹⁵⁹ Mk. 6:3.

¹⁶⁰ C.C.A Majawa, *Mary and Kingdom of God: A Synthesis of Mariology*, (Nairobi: CUEA, Unpublished Licentiate Notes, 2005), p.28.

¹⁶¹ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (The Family of Modern World), Vatican, 1982, no.17.

promoter of fullness of life. It outlines the role of Christian's family as that, which guards, reveals and communicate affection, though its Gods love for man with that of Jesus for the ecclesia which is pride promoter, with this statement the study is positively enriched.

Socially Pope challenges the families to prove beyond their social expectation of just education and procreating, but also venture in supporting the less privileged in society.¹⁶² This encompasses the under-age single parents. Christian families are challenged to accept all: right from welcoming them in their households and assisting those without dwellings to own one accordingly in the natural environments progress. Such statement adds value to the study since the Faithfull's community is endowed to accommodate all irrespective of their differences either cost-effectively, informally, or ethnically. Among the affected who deserve the hospitality are the under- age single parents who are overshadowed by parenting problems individually among other difficulties.

In Romans the view of the family as being measured in favoured way to attain. Paul on his part views where families are to share with other Holy peoples who are in need and find chances of being acceptable.¹⁶³ To imitate Christ's example by bringing together all those in need. On the same apostolic counsel, John Paul II acknowledges the importance of pastoral alertness to those families in difficulty situation. Among those families include the under-age single parents. He further calls for better shepherding, logically, openhandedly and judicious pastoral engagement to this kind of example families. The families do not only mean those in need of aid but also of keen achievement upon shared attitude in that to support in diminishing the triggers and hitches as much as possible.¹⁶⁴ The Christian family in particular should assist under-age single parents.

In *Ecclesia in Africa* (the Church in Africa), Pope John Paul II emphasizes on the other hand on adopting the positive values for globalization, the Africa firmly has to keep personal core values. The exhortation upholds the dignity of mankind in 'A family of God' mood and being the model of the Church. The human kind is created

¹⁶² Ibid., no.44.

¹⁶³ Rom. 12:13.

¹⁶⁴ FC. no.77.

with high image and freedom with acumen.¹⁶⁵ The Holy family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus is imaged as a model of the ecclesia. It's with due to respect that the 'exemplar' and example for all Christian families and the representations of spiritual source for every Christian.¹⁶⁶

4.8 The Compendium of the Church Social Doctrine on Family and Parenting

The (CSDC) clearly outlines the Church involving itself in ordinary materialistic of life all round the world. Since they realize the direct impact in life of universal family from the contemporary world to life of the Church, it recognizes human life as plan of God that is a small source unity involved in the internal development and humanization for a person, society and protector of life and love.¹⁶⁷ It's in a family where basic welfare, affection and support of one another is learnt. It explains the significant role of a family not excluding the under-age single parents. Consequently a family is an important unity to each person's life. From the household level the society freshmen are customary accepted in a community with the aim of living in common with each other. Here at family levels values and virtues are imparted a property that in the custody of each member interest, responsibility concerning the welfare and its development to community as an asset and life. At this level too one is able to learn truth about affection and to be loved; with the family love one indeed feels a person.¹⁶⁸ This enables the theological understanding of family aid parenting which is necessary for the study.

The Church is a divine institution propagated by Christ Jesus where family is founded and family comes before state, therefore with this regard the family doesn't exist for a culture but rather culture for family.¹⁶⁹ Therefore when a member of society assists a family member or neighbour, they do it for themselves or family cum state. This helps in addressing the difficulties in confronting the problems facing the under-age single parents for a common good of the Christian community.

¹⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa* (The Church in Africa), Vatican, nos. 62 and 82.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, No.81.

¹⁶⁷ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Nairobi: Pauline's Publication Africa, 2004).

¹⁶⁸ CSDC, no. 212-213.

¹⁶⁹ CSDC, no.214.

By engaging in creativity works, families have the opportunity to directly contribute to the society.¹⁷⁰ This is possible by putting the children's interest first by educating them. Members of a family have a mandate of working towards societal development but on the other hand the same community seem to exploit them in return. Christian families therefore are to realize their co-operation with the love of their creator. This involves the full participation role with an aim of taking the Christian responsibility,¹⁷¹ whereby the under-age single parent is included. Through this each member of the Christian community or Church is entitled to love, care and support the members within the surrounding and the Church herself for whole growth and transformation. However, it's two way because the Church and the family are to benefit.

Further the Church has a responsibility to provide education for their children. It should emphasize on cohesion, discourse, legitimacy and sociality.¹⁷² The role-played by both parents; father and mother equally is significant in educating the young one.¹⁷³ Both parents therefore must work hand in hand towards achieving a common goal for their children. This is necessary and relevant in the Christian community where under-age single parents are facing diverse difficulties in the upbringing and general concern on welfare of their young ones.

4.9 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The insights gained from the previous chapters provided the socio-cultural anthropological ground into the current theological section that was concerned with theological reflections on family and parenting in view of under-age single motherhood. Under the theme, the following issues were discussed: Biblical teaching on family and parenting, CCC instructions on family and nurturing children and Vatican Council 11 teaching on family and child-care. It also dealt with Synod of African Bishops and Christian family ideal in culture. The other aspects that were explicated were those of Pope John Paul II's pedagogy on Christian family and parenting together with compendium of social doctrine of the Church on family and

¹⁷⁰ Gen. 1:28.

¹⁷¹ Gs. , no.50.

¹⁷² CSDS, no. 242.

¹⁷³ Gs. , no. 52.

parenting. In solidarity with the previous Chapters, the study was enabled to draw the summary, study implications, emerging recommendations and the general conclusion thereby.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, EMERGING OF THE STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Drawing from the insights gained from the previous chapters which not only provided the socio-cultural anthropological ground into the current theological section but also theological reflections on family and parenting, the study arrives at the final Chapter. Here we will spell out the summary of the work, draw out its implications, provide emanating recommendations, indicate some related areas for future research and the make concluding remarks.

5.2 Summary

The study investigated under-age single parents in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County, checking on the causes and problems they face and the impact of theological interpretations with a view of vesting them with the power to undertake parenting roles more effectively within the image of Church as ‘a family of God’ referencing from the theological reflections. This was guided by the objectives; to establish the genesis of under-age single parents, to investigate the problems facing under-age single parents. And to examine the Christian theological reflections on Church as a ‘family of God’ image with the view of helping under-age single parents in addressing their difficulties.

The main hypothesis for this study is that; Christian perception on family is useful to under-age single parents in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. There is a possibility for this category of parenthood to be empowered to effectively handle the problems befalling them as single parents. Through this they will be able to undertake parenting roles efficiently, with the understanding of Church as ‘a family of God’ specific hypothesis were; different factors have indeed led to rise of under-age single parents, under-age single parents are hampered in the bringing up of the children due to their inexperience and conflict of needs. Therefore theological reflections on family are useful to under-age single parents in addressing parenting difficulties.

The study was guided by two theories namely; mediation theory which is explained by Clodovis Boff and Leonardo Boff and Psychosocial theory propagated by Erick

Erickson's. It's through the guidance of the theories that the study goals and objectives were able to be achieved.

The investigation is meant to create conscious that not only in the adulthood cycle where single motherhood is possible and acceptable and practiced but also at tender ages, which in turn are referred as under-age single parents who undergoes parent's experiences like any other. Under this category both gender provide diverging and diverse categories of single motherhood, each faced with parenting difficulties. A such study is to create alert as well inspire correlated and further studies on other geographical area spread to establish extra parenting difficulties that single parents under this category face with the goal of complementing this study.

The study came up with causes of this category of under-age single motherhood as; kinfolk affiliates, desire for sex, drug and substance abuse, inadequate knowledge about contraceptives, molestation, courting fierceness, collective financial issue, child environment among others. In relation to the causes above an explication of difficulties that the study identified include; discrimination and contempt, diseases such as STD's, in-law abuse, solitude, social economic constraints, property inheritance, childcare challenges. With this in mind the study requests the community and Church to take keen considerations and put interest to the concerns of this category of under-age single parents which is raising rapidly our contemporary societies today. This can be done by empowering them and enhancing their capability and potentiality in tackling the problems hence making them better parents.

The central situation of this study is that a child is a gift irrespective of the situation, therefore should be respected with the uttermost perception by all. Under-age single parents should be given the respect they deserve also be valued as members of the society who also are vital and have roles to play. They should accept their call for parenting with consideration and awareness of their status.

In Christian perception it's explicated from Pope John Paul VI guidelines in *familiaris consortio*, on matters concerning families and parenting. He attributes the Church and household as places that should express welcoming to all, right from the physical entrance area, to one's heart, generosity not being excluded should be put into practice and to all those in need such as under-age single parents.

Therefore an ecclesia is mandated to embrace the image of ‘family of God’ in order not to have biased mind when delivering services, coexistence, being generous, togetherness and frankness. This are the values that are wide spread in any society, any religion. A Christian family thus should serve as asylum of every person in need such as under-age parents, since it’s at family levels that values such as love, care, among others are natured.¹⁷⁴ Christians are representatives of the Church globally. A lively sphere is categorised using different jurisdictions of the parenthood, under-age parents included. Life inevitabilities are not to miss, neither should they suffer physically, emotionally, economically or go through any other form of pain, yet they belong to a Church which is a representative of Gods Family on earth.

In addition the study through *instrumental Labroids* it establishes that in modern day society families face diverse problems ranging from different causes, all of which are in pastoral need considering the family situation at hand. Significant pastoral care and catechism methodologies are vital to those yelling in dire need of fruitful advocacy. With these In mind the implication drawn from this study is that of enhancing and developing the potentiality among the under-age to effectively confront the parenting difficulties to be better parents with the image of belonging to a ‘ family of God ‘.

5.3 Inferences of the Study

The following interconnected suggestions can be made concerning the above explanations in the study. The survey is done in the order of; religious instruction inference, pastoral inference.

5.3.1 Religious Instruction Inference

The inference here has similarities to religious perceptions inference as clarified below. The study establishes some of the religious perceptions that will be of help to the clergy, laity and Christian family at large including the under-age single parents to fully participate and engage themselves in the ministry of family-life and stewardship among the ‘family of God’ to be specific the single motherhood as one of the parenting cases among the people of Thogoto village, Kĩambu county.

¹⁷⁴John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa* (The Church in Africa), Vatican, 1995, no. 92.

Accordingly this study does not only motivate but encourage under-age single parents not to be discouraged by the hard parenting roles which are of their concern but also mould their young-ones in the best way possible in accordance to God's wish. This will enhance a deep comprehension of the CCC which persuades parents to honour their children as of God and give them due respect as human beings. By showing obedient to the spirit of God the father in heaven, and educate their children according to the will of the law.¹⁷⁵ Besides, they will reap the fruits of holistically training their children.

However the study dares the ordained and the larger Christian community to evaluate their dogma procedures. They are required to provide good role models as they are the larger extended family of God on earth. The study too tasks the bigger Christian religious formations in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County, and all those other places to evaluate and re-examine their religious teaching bearing in mind the problem surrounding the local area. The Christian family from the study too are expected to be role models by taking others people's needs at heart in the society. With such then the Church will be build based on the main goal as a 'Family of God' where the society shares the spiritual and quantifiable properties. Majorly 'catechism main agenda is to enhance, through God's assistance, a well-versed hitherto original belief, and make a better modern day Christian life in both young and old'.¹⁷⁶

5.3.2 Pastoral Inference

There is a close affinity between the pastoral inference and religious instruction inference. They both seem interdependent in their correlation among themselves. This examination mandates the Christian community in Thogoto village, Kĩambu County to recheck the core ministry involved in the family welfare within its ministries in Churches. Nevertheless the study brings out the image of the Church encompassing this steadily growing category of under-age single motherhood sourced from divergent causes and that is facing difficulties when playing their role as parents with the aim of alleviating them positively.

Therefore in Christian family setting that the study has brought to light, not only adults who practice single motherhood but also the under-age. Religious agents are now to identify the different single parent categories without side-lining the under-age

¹⁷⁵ CCC, no. 2222.

¹⁷⁶ John Paul II, *Catechesis Tradendae* (Catechesis Today), Vatican, 1979, no.20.

single parents for better outreach mission in society. By these better approaches will be developed for single families with particular in every category rather than combining all those who practice single parents together irrespective of each category. In *Familiaris Consortio* instruction by John Paul VI's, by all means the ecclesia and family are to be hospitable; right from the house, to one's heart, also to one another's concerns extended to the environment conservation.¹⁷⁷ This message goes in line with the apostle's request of "exercise kindness" (Rom 12:13) without forgetting to copy Jesus 'way off sharing his love where he welcomed all those in need, "If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then in truth I tell you, he will most certainly not go without his reward."¹⁷⁸ This guides the Christian community to pay attention to its associates like the under-age single parents who seek asylum with many expectations.

Through *Instrumentum Laboris* the Christians gets to learn that "... it isn't the physical ailments, including HIV/AIDs, there are: cerebral diseases, hopelessness and death, which call for urgent pastoral care. These instances are in need of comforting and support according to the faiths' nature".¹⁷⁹ It's upon the Churches to decree the gospel of compassion to the families who befell with such difficulty. According to Pope Francis the Church is not to judge and condemn but rather be kind as a mother who concerns herself with child's welfare.¹⁸⁰

Through the theories; psychosocial theory that the Christian agents will be able to identify and classify the different types of parenthood practices among themselves. Mediation theory too will assist Christians to insert themselves in the situations of each and every affiliate family life member. Also relate it to the teachings for better liberation practicality. This will help in understand this category of parenthood much in relation to the problems they face as under-age single parents.

5.4 Recommendations

The following are some emerging recommendations drawn from the Study findings:

1. Christian Groups ought to be reinforced more diversified with regard to parenting issues. Through the groups communality and healthy relationality need to be

¹⁷⁷ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (The Family in the Modern World), Vatican, 1982, no.44.

¹⁷⁸ Mt 10:42; FC no.44.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, no.79.

¹⁸⁰ Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), nos. 139-141.

enhanced and more revitalized. The occasions whereby the faithful assemble as a family should be prepared in such a way that the event promotes interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging even upon parents without discriminating single mothers and especially the neglected under-age single mothers since they too belong to the family of God.

2. The small Christian communities should not only emphasize on prayers, pecuniary collections and well being of those who are in good books with the Church. Awareness should be created that they should break down segregating barriers and welcome under-age single mothers as well in their capacity of sinful followers and disciples of Christ who came for sinners. This will assist them to positively face the mothering difficulties previously identified and explicated boldly and realistically.
3. The methodology and approaches applied family catechesis be transformed to make it more significant and appropriate to different types of believers with their peculiar existential situations in life like the aforementioned category of motherhood in order to achieve the intended goal and meaning of Christian evangelization. The bureaucratic farfetched paternalism and exaggerated pontificating tendency towards the seeming stray community members should be minimized to make the Church the refuge of “hopeless” sinners too thus encouraging them to convert.
4. Christians should also be taught on the need to be hospitable to everyone around. As such it will encourage the Church as a ‘Family of God’ since there is sharing among its members of material and spiritual properties. This includes the responsibilities and commitments among the faithful in assisting its members, people and society at large.
5. Organising of different seminars is also vital for different categories of single motherhood including under-age single parents. Since their single motherhood arises at diverse ages of life and gender also brought about by different causes ranging from drug and substance abuse, environment, molestation among others. Their needs differ considering ones family social organisation. Wachege¹⁸¹ describes age variance being a variable it has to be considered above all. This will be of help in liberating varied

¹⁸¹ P.N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, pp.255-256.

- categories of single parents endowed with diverse parenting/parental problems. The seminars should be on regular basis for it to be at pace with the daily emerging trends.
6. For many instances seminars and training of this kind have been as social gathering, rather than an empowering gathering. They should be oriented objectively on ways through which under-age single parents can handle parenting issues more effectively and later emerge as better parents. Topics may include; divine leadership for children/under-age/teenage.
 7. Equal treatment among the Christian family members should be encouraged irrespective of one's social economic or spiritual status. This by giving those sidelined first priority and offering warm welcome for them to the 'family of God' which of often not displayed by the larger individualistic people in communities.
 8. The method of being blessed as Christians, so that to be a blessing to the larger society should be of importance. Having spiritual economic and material blessings it has to be a way through which the chain of blessing continues down to those who don't afford/ are in need. For this case Christians irrespective of the social, economic or spiritual status, whether single or married young or old should be role models to the Under-age single parents who are in need. This will be a way of encouraging unity and sharing rather not reliance for the betterment and support the life continuation.
 9. The larger Christian society through their Churches should co-ordinate and work with the government to assist the under-age single parents in providing them with social amenities, educating them and their siblings and providing food for them once a month among other help necessary. By providing Under-age parents and their siblings with means to access education will improve the academic altitudes in community with goal of reducing over-reliance among society members especially the under-age parents on others.
 10. Formal education should be improved and encouraged among the under-age single mothers. Life educational centres for example youth education centres, in the county have to be well and responsibly used to ensure its objectives are achieved to the letter. By so doing talent and other training prospects in other fields will be promoted like; music, drama, sport among many more. This training will assist in developing an all-round person who not only will grow good morals but alone be independent. The under-age parents should be of focus since its rapid growing mode of parenting among the under-age, and through it the government can empower them by introducing and engaging them in small activities for self-reliance.

11. Nevertheless on the side of feeding the Christian society should partner with the available local NGO's to supplement them by feeding them. Through a well-structured feeding programme. The Under-age single parents can be able to meet the needs of themselves and that of their siblings. Most cases such kind of children under their care become malnourished and deteriorate health wise due to lack of balanced diet. Some gave an opinion of increasing educational centres concord with this category of parents and their siblings to supplement the available. This can be realised not only by the Churches and NGO's but also by government.

Above all, the study recommends other area of further research to complement this work which was a case study in a particular locality as a model. Also the change of area of study may uncover different causes and difficulties facing the rapidly rising category of Under-age single parents. As per the limitations of the study focused itself on the under-age single parents in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. A further study can be done on the same topic; investigation of under-age single parents in reference to Christian perception of family in another study area/ region.

A further study on the same topic; investigation of under-age single parents in reference to other religions for example Buddhism, Islamic among others, teaching on family.

A study can be done focusing on the married under-age parents in any among the religious theological reflections of preference, exploring the present-day difficulties, with a way forward towards bettering parenting in society in dire need of best parenting ministry.

5.5 General Conclusion of the Study

The study which has investigated under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County in reference to the Christian perception of family consisted of five related chapters:

Chapter One provided the setting of the study. It accomplished the task by examining the background to the study, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives, justification for the study together with scope and limitations. It also elaborated the literature review, theoretical framework spelling out the two guiding theories namely mediation theory and Erikson' s psychosocial theory, research hypotheses and

methodology together with ethical declaration. All these factors were invaluable for the overview of the work. It enabled us to explore the genesis of under-age single parents in Chapter Two.

Based on the insights provided in Chapter Two, Chapter Three was well grounded to explore the causes of under-age single motherhood in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County. To do that, it focused on the factors that bring about under-age single motherhood that the study came up with namely: baby-sitting for kinfolk members who are young single mothers, enhanced desire for sex, drug and substance abuse and inadequate knowledge of contraceptives. It also identified and explained molestation, courting anger together with collective financial issue as further triggers. In addition, the chapter elaborated child environment and bereavement as additional causes of the phenomenon. These factors equipped us reasonably well to delve into the problems under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County are confronted with while parenting.

In the light of the previous chapter which empowered the study with diverse causes of under-age single mothers in Thogoto Village, Kĩambu County, Chapter Three examined the problems they are confronted with in the same locality. The field research identified some fundamental problems which the Chapter explored namely: discrimination and contempt, child-care difficulties, mistreatment by relatives, property inheritance, acute loneliness and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) together with HIV and AIDs. Mediation theory propagated by L. Boff and C. Boff¹⁸² was utilized in the investigation. The insights gained from the current and previous chapters provided a springboard into the theological section that commenced with reflections on family and parenting in Chapter Four.

The insights gained from the previous chapters provided the socio-cultural anthropological ground into the current theological section that was concerned with theological reflections on family and parenting in view of under-age single motherhood. Under the theme, the following issues were discussed: Biblical teaching on family and parenting, CCC instructions on family and nurturing children and

¹⁸² L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), pp.24-39.

Vatican Council 11 teaching on family and child- care. It also dealt with Synod of African Bishops and Christian family ideal in culture. The other aspects that were explicated were those of Pope John Paul 11' s pedagogy on Christian family and parenting together with compendium of social doctrine of the Church on family and parenting. In solidarity with the previous Chapters, the study was enabled to draw the summary, study implications, emerging recommendations and the general conclusion thereby in this Chapter Five which happens to be the last one in the study.

On the basis of the foregoing, we can validly affirm that the goal and assumptions of the study have been attained. The conviction then is that what has been done is adequate and satisfactory although we are quick to acknowledge that the aforementioned areas for further research will no doubt complement our humble contribution.

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APPENDIX 1

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I am a Masters student registered in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi. As part of requirements for award of the Master of Arts degree. I am conducting a research on the topic, “*Investigation of under-age single parents in reference to Christian perception of family: a case of Thogoto village, Kĩambu county.*” The questionnaire attached herewith is meant to gather information for this Study from you.

Kindly respond to the items in the questionnaire. Please do not indicate your name anywhere in the questionnaire. The information provided will be solely used for the Study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. The information given will be highly acknowledged and treated with confidentiality and respect of the respondent. You are requested to tick the spaces [] for appropriate alternative or just fill in the spaces provided and give your opinion where explanation is required.

APPENDIXES 2

QUESTIONARE FOR THE ADMINSTRATORS

1. Age.....
2. Marital status.....
3. Do you have children? Yes
4. Child's age? 0-2 yrs. 2 s 3 s yrs 8yrs 1
5. Educational level.....
6. Your Church name
7. Name of sub-location/ and village
8. Name of Position held.
 - a) In Church.....
 - b) Village.....
9. Are you Aware of single parents in your village?
Yes No
If 'yes' what categories of single parents?

10. Are you aware of under-age single parent's category?
Yes No
11. Are you involved in any way in helping single mothers in your area? Mostly under-age single parents?
Yes
If 'yes' how? Briefly explain.

12. What do you consider are the causes of this kind of under-age single parents?

13. What are the major challenges under-age single parents face in your region?

14. What is your stand about the following issue related to under-age single parents?

15. In your own opinion do Christians discriminate under-age single parents?

16. Highlight your suggestions on ways of uplifting the general welfare of under-age single parents.

Thank you for your participation, time and patience.

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONARE FOR UNDER-AGE SINGLE PARENTS

1. Age.....
2. Educational level.....
3. Name of your Church?
4. Educational level?
Primary school Secondary school Tertiary level
5. Do you have your own child or they are siblings? And how many?
Sibling's n/personal child/children
Total Number of children?
6. For how long have you been a single parent?
7. How did you find yourself being a single parent? Explain.
8. Do you have parents either one or both?
Yes No Single parent
- i. If 'NO' where are they?
- ii. If 'YES' why aren't they playing their parental role?
9. What do you think are the causes of under-age single motherhood in society today?
10. What are the major difficulties do you face in parenting as an under-agesingle parent?
11. What's your stand on the following issues?

a) Participation Church.

OK NOT BEST EVER COMMENT

b) Work and support to your family.

OK NOT BEST EVER COMMENT

c) National and community work.

OK NOT BEST EVER COMMENT

12. In your own opinion do the Churches or society around you contributed to help you in parenting roles?

Yes No

Explain your opinion.

13. In your own opinion, how can they be assisted to uplift and assist them in parenting roles?

14. Any comment concerning the study?

Thank you for your participation, time and patience.

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH LEADERS AND SELECTED FAMILIES

1. Age.....

2. Marital status.

Married ced

Any other specify.....

3. Educational level.

Primary school level Secondary school lev Collegvel

University level

Any other specify.....

4. Are you Aware of single parents amongst Christians?

Yes No

If 'yes' what categories single parents?

5. Are you aware of under-age single parents?

Yes No

6. What is your perception of under-age single parents?

7. How would you describe the Christian attitude with regard to the Christian perception on family towards under-age single parents?

8. In your opinion what are the causes of under-age single parents?

9. Are you aware of any difficulties/ challenges that under-age single parents?

Yes No

If 'yes' highlight them and explain how?

10. What in your opinion can be done to alleviate under-age single parents from the challenges they face?

11. Any comment about under-age single parents?

Thank you for your participation, time and patience.

APPENDIX 5

THE SCOTT-WATSON MEMORIAL CHURCH, KIKUYU MISSION STATION, BIRTHPLACE OF THE ALLIANCE OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS ATTHOGOTO VILLAGE, KĪAMBU COUNTY BUILT IN 1898.



Photo Taken by Omwoyo Momanyi Lameck on 03rd January 2018.

APPENDIX 6

**PHOTO OF CHURCH OF THE TORCH, UNDER THE
PREBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA (PCEA) IN
THOGOTO VILLAGE, KĪAMBU COUNTY BUILT IN 1928-1933**



Photo Taken by Omwoyo Momanyi Lameck on 03rd January 2018.

APPENDIX 7

RESEARCHER IN ACTION



A PHOTO OF THE RESEARCHER ENGAGING RESPONDENTS

APPENDIX 8



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: 020 400 7000,
0713 788787,0735404245
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/17/11873/20720**

Date: **21st December, 2017**

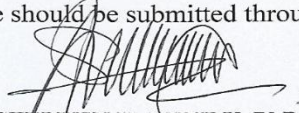
Omwoyo Momanyi Lameck
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Investigation of under-age single mothers in reference to christian perception of family: A case of Thogoto Village, Kiambu County,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for the period ending **21st December, 2018**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kiambu County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kiambu County.

The County Director of Education
Kiambu County.

APPENDIX 9

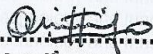
**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. OMWOYO MOMANYI LAMECK
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 617-40202
KEROKA, has been permitted to conduct
research in Kiambu County**


**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/11873/20720
Date Of Issue : 21st December,2017
Fee Received :Ksh 1000**

**on the topic: INVESTIGATION OF
UNDER-AGE SINGLE MOTHERS IN
REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION
OF FAMILY: A CASE OF THOGOTO
VILLAGE, KÍAMBU COUNTY**

**for the period ending:
21st December,2018**




.....
**Applicant's
Signature**


.....
**Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation**

APPENDIX 10

TURNITIN ORIGINALITY REPORT

INVESTIGATION OF UNDER-AGE SINGLE MOTHERS IN REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION OF FAMILY IN THOGOTO VILLAGE, KĪAMBU COUNTY

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