

DECLARATION

**SINGLE MOTHERHOOD AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR GIRL
CHILD EDUCATION: THE CASE OF KISUMU CITY, KENYA**

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Date: 27/07/2003
Name: M. M. Mwangi

BY

SAMSON MARTIN RADENY

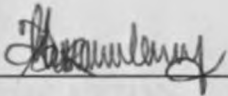
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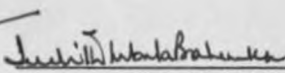
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.


 Date 27/10/2003

Samson M. Radeny

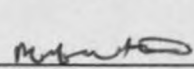
This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University of Nairobi supervisors

 Date 23/07/03

Prof. Judith M. Bahemuka

 Date 27/10/03

Prof. E. H. N. Njeru

 Date 27/10/03

Dr. Paul N. Mbatia

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This thesis is dedicated to the girl child in Kenya. May this work be a source of inspiration to strive for the best in education and not be content with the limiting societal expectations that seem to prevail around you.

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Samson Martin Radeny

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a result of a study conducted in selected sites within the City of Kisumu, in Kisumu District of Nyanza Province between 1999 and 2001. The study entitled, "Single motherhood: Implications for the education of the girl child," focuses on single mothers and education of their daughters. The general objective of the study is to determine the impact of single motherhood on the education of the girl child. Since the focus of the study is the relationship between marital status and the educational performance of the girl child, the units of analysis is the single mother and her daughter, however the analyses focus on the relationship between marital status and girls' educational participation and performance. The key research question is: Does single motherhood affect the educational participation and performance of girls? And related to this question, what other non-mother related factors affect the performance of daughters of single mothers? A theoretical framework consisting of four complementary social change and social psychology theoretical considerations (social change, anomie, rational choice and psychoanalysis) is used to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of single motherhood and its possible implications for education of the girl child.

The study was conducted in five randomly selected clusters (urban villages) within Kisumu City. The study used the social survey methods to collect data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The qualitative methods were particularly used to supplement the quantitative and to give the researcher an opportunity to learn from the voices of the people affected by the challenges of single motherhood. Both interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with single mothers, married mothers and their daughters and sons. A total of 546 respondents consisting of

single mothers, married mothers, boys and girls from two-parent families and girls from single mother families were interviewed using standard questionnaires. In addition, 12 FGDs, 13 In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with key informants and three case studies were conducted. The data from the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). The strength of association between variables was measured using contingency coefficient, while the Pearson test was used to measure level of significance.

This study found that the interplay of societal, environmental and personality factors rather than single motherhood alone work together to determine the educational participation and performance of the girl child. The findings show that single mothers are roughly six times more likely than married mothers to have daughters of school going age who are not attending school. Their daughters are more than four times likely to drop out of primary and secondary school prematurely compared to their counterparts from the two-parent families. Daughters of married mothers are more than two times likely to perform better academically than daughters of single mothers. Age at first sex is a key determinant of performance. The study shows that girls who initiated sex between ages 10-14 are more than two times likely to perform poorer than girls who initiate sex at 15 and above years. In addition, the study found discriminatory practices that affect the performance of the girls in schools. For instance, over 20 percent of the single mothers want to educate a boy as opposed to a girl. The study makes a significant contribution by adding to the body of knowledge on the sociology of the family. It is a critical attempt to re-define the African family and to look at the girl child from an academic rather than an activist perspective.

CONTENTS

The study concludes that single motherhood does affect the educational performance of girls in many ways. It poses serious obstacles to girls' ability to perform well in school because of inadequacies in the provision of school requirements and providing suitable environments for children's education. At the same time, single-mother families are viewed negatively by society. There are indeed significant familial, personal (mother) and community factors that affect the educational participation and performance of girls from single-mother families. These negative attitudes and reactions affect the motivation of children, especially girls from these families. Single mothers have a significant role to play in facilitating the education of their daughters. The single mother can play a key role in the provision of a supportive environment for the girls' education.

For the girl child from single-mother families to compete effectively on a level ground with children from the two-parent families, the study recommends that obstacles to her education that exist in her environment must be addressed through sensitization and dialogue with mothers and the schools' system. Single mothers should champion the creation of a supportive environment for their daughters' education, and this must include communication and career guidance. The study also recommends rigorous education and awareness-raising campaigns among single mothers to enable them to confront the unique challenges that their families face.

Samson M. Radeny

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBS	-	Central Bureau of Statistics
DF	-	Degrees of Freedom
FAWE	-	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	-	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA	-	Federation of Women Lawyers
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	-	In-depth Interview
KAACR	-	Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Child Rights
KDHS	-	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
MOE	-	Ministry of Education
NASCOP	-	National AIDS/STD Control Program
NGOs	-	Non-governmental Organizations
P	-	Pearson Value
PATH	-	Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
SHA	-	Sexual Harassment and Abuse
SPSS	-	Statistical Program for Social Sciences
SRH	-	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STI	-	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
WERK	-	Women Educational Researchers of Kenya

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Single motherhood and the 'girl child' are new concepts that have recently begun to occupy the minds of researchers and development workers throughout the world. Though not previously considered as sociological concepts, single motherhood and the 'girl child' have recently featured in various national and international sociological fora. Available literature has not captured the phenomenon of single motherhood and the concept of the girl child to the extent that sociologists can begin to research on them from a sociological perspective. They have always been presented in literature and in various fora as issues of equity and addressed through human and women rights activities. The current study is therefore an attempt to redefine the two concepts and to draw the attention of sociologists to their relevance in sociological inquiry.

Goode 1973 defines the family as a social unit consisting of male and female parents and their children. This study takes a broader understanding of the Family and defines it as a social unit consisting of at least a parent, children and blood or adopted relatives. The definition includes the three popular family types that are discussed in this study: nuclear, extended and single mother family. In the study, the nuclear family means a social unit consisting of a man, his wife and their offspring. The extended family includes man, wife and their children, the man and woman's consanguine such as brothers, grand children

and other relatives. The family also refers to female-headed households where there is a mother and children but no father. Head of household refers to the resident breadwinner in the family who is also the key decision-maker in all matters of the household. A woman can head a household either by *dejure* or *defacto* means. A woman may be a *defacto* head of household if and when the husband is traveling or works away from home. She is a *dejure* head, when she is the *bonafide* leader of the home. In African societies, men are presumed to be the heads of homesteads as well as households even though in most cases they seem to play a bigger role than men do as heads of households. This is illustrated by the Luo alternative word for a wife – *min ot-* which directly translated means mother of the house. It seems therefore, that even though women are culturally not supposed to be the head of the household, socially they are by the very nature of work and role they play in the family.

This study makes an attempt to correct the way some scholars have conceived the family in their sociological and anthropological discourse. Many researchers (Nye, 1973; Marsden, 1970; Goode 1973, 1989; Kayongo Male, 1991) have failed to pay attention to emerging forms of families and have instead concentrated on the African traditional family and the western nuclear family. The failure to take cognizance of the emerging forms of families has lead many a researcher to take a rather lop-sided approach towards addressing the family as an institution.

It is this misleading style of dealing with the family, single motherhood and the concept of the girl child that convinced the researcher that a new approach to addressing these

issues must be evolved. In this new approach, the research takes a historical look at the emergence of the single mother family and how social change has contributed to this phenomenon. At the same time the researcher takes a critical look at the girl child as popularly referred to by gender activists and analyses the specific circumstances that make her special or sets her apart from the boy child. Many activists have advocated for equity in formal education for girls and boys but failed to address the root of the problem. The root cause of the problem in the view of the researcher is that the social structures and systems in our society, including the family, are breaking down with advanced rapidity. Many of these social structures have, by and large, become dysfunctional giving way to high incidence of single motherhood and its engendered social problems. This study takes a historical look at typical traditional African society, and in particular, the marriage institution, to establish the transformations that have occurred and the resultant ramified implications in modern society. Thus, for instance, there is an inherent comparison between a typical traditional Luo community and the modern Kisumu city life. This comparison is used to isolate the individual changes that have occurred in traditional societies that explain the social phenomenon that is the subject of this study.

1.1.1 Conceptualizing single motherhood

This study defines single mothers as women who have children but do not have legal or resident spouses. They therefore are bringing up children in their own homes without the support of the children's father/s. This definition clearly departs from the more popular concept of female heads of household. Single mothers take charge of household leadership and decision-making, but may or may not have children of their own. They

may have sexual partners but not legal spouses¹. A woman can become a single mother through death of spouse, divorce or separation or by remaining unmarried and choosing to have children outside a marital relationship. There are some challenges regarding who is a single mother especially because some women argue that they are not single mothers even though they are not in a marital relationship. Such women include those who have sex partners and those who have maintained links with the father/s of their children.

It is important to look at single motherhood within the context of family structure. This study has made an attempt to redefine the “family” in such a way as to enable the concept and phenomenon of single-mother families to be addressed as a sociological concept. For purposes of this study the family is defined as social unit consisting of at least a parent, children and blood or adopted relatives. The definition includes the three popular family types that are discussed in this study: nuclear, extended and single mother family. The study recognizes that women can become mothers by adoption, but it is important to state the emphasis is placed on biological motherhood since the former did not emanate from the interviews.

Scholars (Garfinkel, 1986; Marsden, 1970) and societies have viewed single motherhood worldwide as a diversion from the norm in general, and as an exemplification of a pathological family. This is because in most African traditional societies, every member is expected to marry and have children of his or her own, in conformity with the norms of

¹ A spouse is a legal sexual partner. The legality of a sexual partner is confirmed through a legal marriage. Legal marriages can be contracted through religious, civil and traditional ceremonies and witnessed by persons known to the two partners.

the society concerned (Marsden, 1970; Goliber, 1989). This was an obligation and no one was excused from taking the responsibility. Men and women, who delayed marriage, were pressurized by both peers and relatives to marry. The society also used other social sanctions to ensure that no one acted contrary to the marriage norms. However, the social and cultural transformations that have taken place in these societies have changed the value of the once highly esteemed social institution of marriage. Today, there are many women who live without a spouse and still derive enough satisfaction and provide an adequate and suitable environment for their children's development. Thus, there should be a limit to which the generalization of single-mother families as 'pathological'² should apply. In addition, as expressed by McClelland (1961), achievement is determined by a myriad of factors including socialization. From this statement one may argue that perhaps single motherhood in itself may not be the problem in the education of the girl child, but there may be other actors related to socialization that may be important determinants, especially in the African setting. Such determinants may include the cultural, social and economic underpinnings.

There has been an increase in the number of single mothers as reflected in the rise in female household headship in many parts of the world. An increasing number of households in both developed and developing countries depend solely on women's

² Many scholars view single-mothers families negatively, just as society does. They argue that most single mothers are poor and often involved in immoral sexual behaviors. They also believe that their children are likely to follow their example and therefore become poor single mothers, themselves, thus perpetuating a cycle of problem families. But this study take a more open-minded position given that most single mothers are forced by circumstances to take on single motherhood. Many work hard against all odds to have successful and prosperous homes, where children have the right amount of discipline to

economic contribution. The causes of this situation include divorce, death, and the increased tendency of women not to get married. The incidence of teenage pregnancies worldwide has also contributed to the increase in single motherhood. According to a UNICEF (1999) report, it appears that bonds between unmarried, pregnant, adolescent women and their sexual partners anywhere in the world are always typically weak. Such relationships tend to break up as soon as there is a stressful situation to be addressed by the couple. Stressful situations such as the occurrence of a pregnancy often lead to termination of such relationships. The behavior of boys and young men to dissociate from the relationship on learning the girlfriend is pregnant has been observed in all societies. In addition, marriages due to unplanned pregnancy can often be unstable and thus more likely to result in marital dissolution (UNICEF, 1999).

The increase in the number of single-mother households is becoming a matter of great concern to researchers and development agencies both in developing and the developed countries (UNICEF, 1999). Studies have shown that single motherhood is more prevalent in the urban areas than in the rural ones (Kayongo Male & Onyango, 1991), and in some countries in Africa, the rates are as high as 30 percent. A recent study UNICEF (1997) found that 30 – 50 percent of first marriages in developed countries and 25 percent of first marriages in developing countries are dissolved by the time women are 40 – 49 years old, many as a result of divorce or separation.

study and relate normally with others in the society.

In Kenya, there exists only scanty data regarding the prevalence of single motherhood. This study is therefore a significant step towards generating relevant information on single mothers, the girl child and formal education. It is postulated that single motherhood is in fact on the increase. Household based observation show that many mothers live in their own homes without spouses. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 1998) shows that women head 31.7 percent of households in Kenya. Though these statistics include all women heads of household, it is believed that a significant proportion is composed of single mothers. This further confirms that single motherhood is on the increase.

The social change theories – part of the theoretical framework used in this study – confirm that single motherhood is likely to increase with urbanization. In Kenya it has been observed that a good number of women who divorce tend to remain single for the rest of their lives while most men seek remarriage. This behavior has the propensity to fuel the rate of increase of single mothers. Other theories and models applied in the study such as the theory of reasoned action, social cognitive theory, social experience model and the psychoanalytic perspective attribute the incidence of single motherhood to behavioral and social changes occurring in society. If the picture painted by these models and theories is realistic, then clearly the incidence of single motherhood will continue at an alarming rate.

Single motherhood is a deviation from the marriage norm and is believed to perpetuate developmental problems for the child. It has been associated with certain social and

emotional problems that have significant negative impacts on education of their children. Children of single mothers are said to suffer psychological, social and economic disadvantages as they grow up. It is assumed that their counterparts in the two-parent³ families do not to experience these challenges (Rapoport, 1977). This is not accurate assumption given that many children with both parents in Kenya and other African countries are known to suffer social and economic deprivation to the degree that is much worse than some children of single mothers.

Those who support the view those children from single-mother families perform poorly at school argue that the father's presence is important because of its strong influence over the child's intellectual ability (Lamb, 1976; Kahl, 1953). However, education statistics show that under certain circumstances such as having an educated mother, many children from female-headed households can perform better than those from families with resident fathers. This inherent contradiction has not been researched, yet it touches on a crucial aspect of child education.

³ This is synonymous with the nuclear type of family. The operational definition of the nuclear family is provided under the family, above. In the study the two-parent family refers to a social unit consisting of male and female spouses and their children living under one roof. However, in the analyses the two-parent and not the nuclear family is used to simplify the comparison with single – mother family.

The nuclear family is the smallest social unit consisting of a man or husband, his wife, and children. It is more characteristic of the modern society, where there is increased individualization of the family. In contrast, the extended family is the social unit consisting of a man his wife or wives, and grand children. It may also include brothers of the man, and other kin.

1.1.2 Conceptualizing the Girl Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the 'girl child' as a female child aged 18 years and below. This study adopts this definition and refers to the girl-child as a female child aged below 18 years. The study recognizes the disadvantaged position of female children in Kenya with regard to access to opportunities such as in education and later on in life, employment. Even though children in general in developing countries live in especially difficult circumstances, the study takes cognizance of the fact that female children are even more disadvantaged than the male children.

The 'girl child' concept became popular in the 1990s after the declaration and subsequent adoption of the famous convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) of 1979, and the universal declaration of human rights of 1980. Though the last two did not have specific clauses referring to the wellbeing of the 'girl child' they did bring to the fore the interests of women in general regardless of age. But the CRC makes specific references to both female and male children. It is therefore important at this point to put the girl child in a sociological context and place her within a social structure. The feminists regard the girl child as a particularly vulnerable individual who lives under harsh social environments and experiences numerous challenges *vis a vis* the boy child. But this study takes the position that the girl child is not different than the boy child. The study makes the assumption that the two are born and socialized within the family structure. The difference comes when we look at the varied socialization experiences influenced by type of family and prevailing environments that the children go through. It is the study's focus

on socialization process rather than the product of socialization alone that justifies the use of the term the girl child.

At the World Conference on Children (New York, 1990), the world's leaders endorsed the right of all children to basic human rights. They also recognized the special needs and rights of a girl noting her dual disadvantage due to her gender and age. Thus, the concept of the girl-child gained currency. About the same time, the African Charter on the Rights of the Child was ratified at the continental level. This Charter highlighted traditional practices that were harmful to the child and called for their elimination (Article XXI).

For many years, many women rights activists have used the concept of girl child as though it was anything different than the female child. The girl child has suddenly become the subject of discussion in many national and international meetings dealing with gender issues. Many of the activists campaigning for the elimination of discrimination against the girl child have tended to take a radicalist rather than an intellectual approach. This approach has blocked and repudiated all opportunities for scholars to begin looking at the subject with the soberness required. In 1952, Simeon Ominde, the late educationist and population analyst, published his book, "the Luo girl." The book, tracing the life cycle of the Luo girl from infancy to marriage, was the earliest focus on the girl child by a serious Kenyan scholar. Not until the 1990s would the interest in girls as distinct subjects of intellectual discourse gain impetus, and the practice of submerging the identity of the girl under the generic terms "woman," "youth" and "child" challenged.

Activities seeking to enhance the status of the girl child were initially concentrated in South Asia, but Africa soon joined the bandwagon, when it was noted that similar cases of discrimination faced the girl child across the continent. By the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Africa had taken up the cause of the girl-child as its own, and successfully lobbied for the inclusion of issues relating to her as a separate area of concern (UN, 1995). Kenyan NGOs were in the forefront in lobbying for the girl-child in the global Platform for Action (PFA).

However, it was UNICEF that spearheaded the campaign for the girl-child in Kenya in the early 1990s. In 1992, Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (ESARO) of UNICEF initiated multi-country studies on the educational situation of the girl-child. Kenya was one of the countries that participated in the initiative. While UNICEF-ESARO sponsored case studies of Kenyan girl-children from different ethnic communities, the country office funded a review of literature and statistical data (Wamahiu *et al.*, 1992a/b). At the same time, a holistic study on the situation of female children in Kenya was commissioned. This study, based on a mix of literature review and field research, was completed in November 1992 (Wamahiu 1992a). All three studies adopted a gender perspective, documenting the depth and types of discrimination faced by the Kenyan girl-child in relation to her brother(s).

Article 10 of the CEDAW seeks to eliminate the discrimination suffered by girls in the field of education, from pre-school to university, by urging States parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the same conditions for vocational and career guidance,

equal teaching staff, school premises and equipment. An important appeal to States parties is the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels of education and the reduction of school dropout rates.

However, the transition from traditionalism to modernity, and the inherent natural dynamism of societies has triggered off a chain of changes in the social structure and systems of most traditional societies leading to the emergence of various deviant behaviors. For instance, with modernization and urbanization, many of the traditional norms have relaxed with inhabitants tending to adopt alternative codes of conduct and exhibit rather liberal behaviors. In the modern urbanized society that upholds freedom of choice, the phenomenon of single motherhood begins to occur because the traditional rules have ceased to take effect. Many women begin to justify their status and to demean the institution of marriage. The incidence of single motherhood begins to rise with urbanization and slowly the implications come to the fore. One of the areas in which single motherhood is assumed to affect society is in formal education of daughters of single mothers. But there is insufficient literature to confirm this assumption. This study is an attempt to understand the complex relationship between single motherhood and formal education for single mothers' daughters in a Kenya setting.

The 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the 'girl child' as a female child below 18 years of age. In November 1979 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The convention became the springboard which has since

catapulted women's rights into the rarefied atmosphere of human rights guaranteed to all human beings under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms everyone's entitlement to all rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind including distinction based on sex. Since the 1979 women's Convention was adopted follow up articles seeking to enhance the position of women have been drafted and presented in various conferences. These have resulted in the realization that the "girl child' rights were equally being violated and therefore the need to focus on the enhancement of their intrinsic rights as specified in the CRC became paramount. However, despite these international treaties which are ratified and acceded to with alacrity by member states of the United Nations, discrimination against children of the female sex persists. In some societies the discrimination begins even before birth, and if one is fortunate enough to be born, the discrimination continues into adulthood.

The culture of some African communities such as the Maasai, Samburu, Kalenjin and Somali, among others dictates that girls should be relegated to secondary role *vis a vis* the boys. They are not regarded as an asset to the family. Right from birth her perceived role in life is to reproduce and attend to the needs of her male partner and family. In some communities in Kenya such as the Maasai, Samburu and the Kalenjin, she is prepared for womanhood by female genital mutilation, commonly referred to as female circumcision. Formal education for a girl is regarded as unnecessary and she may, if fortunate, be given only an elementary education. Inevitably she may drop out of school to care for younger siblings or to assist her parents with household chores. At an early adolescent age, a marriage is arranged for her, and she continues to minister to the needs of her family.

There are instances where girls are forced into prostitution by economically powerless parents or employed ostensibly as domestic workers in affluent households, with paltry wages for endless hours of work, in addition to the risks of being abused by male employers. There are many more forms of discrimination against the girl child. The fight against discrimination of female children has been based more on emotion, driven by human rights activists than intellectualism.

Despite much effort towards the welfare of the girl-child over the last six years, things have not changed for the better; many of the problems highlighted in the earlier studies or indicated in the international fora still persist. In some cases, the situation may become worse within the context of declining economies, increasing poverty, and violence. Educational statistics reveal regression in school enrollment for both girls and boys, with relatively fewer girls than boys completing the first cycle of schooling. At the secondary and tertiary levels the situation gets progressively worse for the girl-child. Increasing household poverty has forced many young girls to commercial work, including commercial sex, as a strategy for survival, often with life-threatening consequences. Combined with poor access to health facilities and reproductive health knowledge, more and more girls are getting infected with HIV/AIDS and other STIs. Others are experiencing physical, economic and/or social-psychological complications due to unplanned (and often unwanted) pregnancy- and abortion. Easy access to a variety of dangerous synthetic drugs is posing real danger to their well-being. But of greatest concern to this study is the status of the girl-child with regard to formal education. A UNICEF (2000) publication reports:

"Fifty years after education was affirmed as a right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a decade after the Right was reaffirmed ... in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and nearly 10 years after girls' education was identified as 'the most urgent priority' at the World Conference on Education for All ... girls around the globe cannot exercise their rights to education as readily as can boys. Of the more than 130 million 6 to 11 year-old out of school youth in the developing world, nearly two thirds are girls.

In Kenya there are gender disparities with regard to school enrolment and completion rates. Fewer girls are enrolled, retained and complete education at all levels (KDHS, 1998). It is hypothesized that poor economic conditions play a key role in diminishing the participation and performance of girls in school. It is also believed that most single mothers are economically disadvantaged (Marsden, 1970). Thus, the girls from single mothers' families may be even more disadvantaged.

This study attempts to establish the role of marital status plays in the girls' enrolment and performance within the formal education system. The study is an attempt to grapple with the issues around education of single mothers' daughters, especially the societal factors, which tend to reinforce the girl's educational performance and those which tend to militate against it. These are important in the promotion of the female child's education efforts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Many people ask themselves why there seems to be an increase in the number of single mothers in the society and what happens to their children. How do they turn out? The researcher is one of the many people who for years asked themselves these questions.

The effect of single-mother families on educational achievements of their daughters is one of the major concerns of researchers and educationists in Kenya today. The researcher has taken a step to provide some answers to some of these questions commonly asked by researchers regarding relationship between single motherhood and child educational achievement.

In traditional African societies, the concept of 'single motherhood' did not exist (Goode, 1989; Kayongo Male and Onyango, 1991)). The society expected everyone to marry and every widow to be inherited. Divorced and/or separation was prevented under all circumstances, but even if it occurred, the divorcee was expected to re-marry. A marriage arrangement was made to facilitate this process. These conditions made it extremely difficult for single motherhood to exist. Everyone was socialized to uphold marriage, and the marriage institution was one of the most respected. Therefore, it was a case of social deviance for a man or woman to remain single. Such a person would be considered a public ridicule to his family and the entire clan and would be treated with askance by the society. The rules governing marriage and/or re-marriage were very well laid out in the society's code of conduct. There was no argument and no justification for wanting to be different.

The emergence of single-mother families is presenting new challenges to research on the sociology of the family. If these families are not considered "normal" as found in some literature (Garfinkel 1986; Marsden '1970), then researchers have a duty to establish how these families affect the general welfare of children. This study focuses on an aspect of

these families – education of girls and attempts to establish the relationship between their academic achievement and the fact that the mother is single.

Most single mothers in Kenya are discriminated with regard to matters of culture, health, education, training and employment. This study is particularly interested in education, which is believed in Kenya to be the key to success and prosperity. The study seeks to understand the interplay between the experiences of the single mothers and the education of their daughters. Enrolment of female children in schools is still generally lower than that of boys at all levels in the educational spectrum (UNICEF, 1989, 1992, 1998 and 2000). In a recent document produced by PANOS (2000), it is estimated that just over a third of the girls and over half the boys who enroll in Primary school Class One complete eight years in school. In another publication by the National Women's Bureau (2000), completion rates have generally increased at both primary and secondary school levels, but the gender disparities are still in favor of the boys. It is conjectured that the situation could be worse among girls from single-mother families, who experience a myriad of financial problems. Most African societies generally have a negative attitude towards single mothers and children born out-of-wedlock. Such attitudes are likely to affect the educational advancement and performance of children, especially girls from such families. Children are likely to suffer loss of self-esteem and reduced sense of commitment and motivation to academic work. However, due to other constraints that face the girl in society, she is more likely to be affected than the boy.

In Maasai, Samburu and Kuria communities of Kenya, where formal education of the

women is not valued, the girl child is likely to have low achievement motivation. There are no role models to motivate her to pursue higher education (Ministry of Education – MOE, 1994). In single mothers' homes, where the mother herself is perhaps less educated the stimulus for her daughter's education may be less appealing. Thus, the girl may be forced into a cycle of semi-literacy. But this may not necessarily be true of all single-mother homes. There have been many reports in the Kenyan media suggesting that some of the girls who performed well in national examinations came from such homes. Therefore, there must be other critical factors rather than the family set up, which the current study attempts to investigate.

It is believed that with social change taking place in most societies, some of the negative attitudes towards single mothers and their children are changing. There is increased freedom of choice and self-determination for all sexes, including the choice to or not to get married and have children in or outside marriage (Smelser, 1967). These changes may also have improved the status of the girl child, but it is unclear how the change in attitudes has affected the formal education of the girl child.

Studies from other parts of the world show that many of the problems related to formal education for the female child arise from lack of adequate supervision and guidance of the child, and that female children who lack parental supervision are likely to engage in early sexual activity (Garfinkel, 1986). Such studies show that these girls are also likely to get pregnant out-of wedlock and hence drop out of school. The extent to which these positions are true in the Kenyan situation is a matter of conjecture. While parental

supervision of female children has been found to be an important aspect of child development (Njau, 1993; Radeny, 1993) its relevance to formal education for girls in single-mother families is not obvious. Single mothers are assumed to be too busy to provide adequate supervision, given that they are the only parents and have to work hard to sustain the family (Garfinkel, 1986). Parental supervision of the formal education of the girl child in single-mother families is therefore a crucial interest in this study.

It is a common practice in many African families that whenever there is too much household work for the single mother, she tends to delegate some of the work to her daughter(s). Even in families that are relatively liberal and boys participate in household chores, girls carry a heavier burden. Girls often have to take the position of the mother when she is not at home and do all the work that the mother is supposed to do. That means that occasionally, they have to be absent from school to carry out household chores. It is conjectured that this situation may contribute to reduced educational commitment and girls' poor performance at school. The effect of household participation on education of the girl child is therefore an integral part of this study.

Given this background and the fact the relationship between the mother's marital status and the educational achievement of the girl child is not quite clear, the study is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the effect of different single motherhood on educational participation of the girl child? How exactly does the absence of the father impact on the formal education of a girl?

2. How does single motherhood affect the educational performance of the girl child? For instance, why do some children in spite of having a father continues to perform poorly; why do some children from single mother's families perform better than their counterparts from two-parent families despite the popular belief that they would often perform poorer?
3. What parental factors are essential in the education of the girl child? Is it possible for a single mother to provide the necessary support and environment to facilitate the educational performance and achievement of her daughters?
4. What role does the mother's education play in the educational performance of the girl child?

Thus, the study is an attempt to investigate the extent to which marital status (and absence of father figure) and societal attitudes affect the educational achievement of the girl child.

1.3 The Study Objectives

The general objective of the study is to determine the impact of single motherhood on the formal education of the girl child. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To establish the factors that determine the level of school enrolment and participation of girls from single-mother families.
2. To establish the causal factors relating to school drop out among girls from single-mother families.

3. To assess the effect of single motherhood on the educational performance of the girl child.
4. To establish the factors that affect the educational participation and performance of girls from single-mother families.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on the education of girls brought up in families headed by single mothers in Kisumu City. Quite a few studies have been conducted on the education of girls in general and there is a gap in knowledge on the situation of daughters of single mothers. Education is a very broad concept that cannot be dealt with effectively in one study. Thus, this study focuses specifically on the formal education of daughters of single mothers.

To gain an in-depth understanding of the subject of inquiry, single mothers and their daughters is the subject of inquiry. The study focuses on the relationship between marital status (married or unmarried mother) and the educational participation and performance of girls. The unit of analysis⁴ therefore is the single mother and her daughter. However,

⁴ The unit of analysis according to Trochim (2000) is the major entity that a study is designed to analyze. A similar definition is made by Schutt (1996:88) who describes units of analysis as "the level of social life on which the research question is focused." The nature of analysis one conducts determines the unit of analysis. For instance, if one is comparing children in two classes on achievement test scores, the unit of analysis is the individual child because there is a score for each child. On the other hand, if one were to compare the two classrooms on climate, the unit of analysis would be the group because there is only classroom climate score for the class as a whole and not the individual. In

to control for intervening factors, parents from two-parent families and their children are incorporated into the study. This is therefore a comparative study.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Formal education, particularly for women, is an important index in the national development of any country. Conditions that impede the education of women therefore are seen as impediments to a country's development. In Kenya, it is popularly believed that formal education is the key to prosperity (MOE, 1994). That is why this study focuses on formal education of the girl child. Studies have shown that female educational participation is still a problem in many parts of Kenya, especially, the rural areas (UNICEF, 1999, 1998). Most studies on formal education have looked at enrolment rates, discrimination, subjects, teacher-student relationship, and cost of schooling from a general perspective. A review of literature on this subject shows that previous studies have not focused on the effects of the father's absence on education of the girl child. This study therefore presents an opportunity to find out whether or not paternal authority and absence influence the formal education of the girl child. Thus, it adds to the scanty body of knowledge that currently exists on the subject of single motherhood and girl child education.

Female household headship, especially by single mothers, and the concept of the girl child are new sociological concepts. The concept of girl child has for a long time been

our case, the unit of analysis is the single mother and her girl child. However, the analyses and conclusions of the study focus on the relationship between marital status of

famous among gender and human rights activists. The convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 saw the emergence of the first generation of women and human rights activists creating much pressure for the Kenya government to enforce and revise laws related to women rights. Since then the rights of the girl child have been discussed in various national and international fora including the Women's Conference in Beijing (1995) and the International Conference on Population and Development (1994). Despite all the activism and lobbying that has taken place, no studies have been conducted to establish the actual situation of the girl child. Thus, many of the arguments put forward by the activists are likely to be an expression of their own pre-conceived ideas and feelings or based on mere reports from communities. It is against this background that the current study seeks to establish the relationship between single motherhood and girl child education. The study provides an opportunity for women and human rights activists and professionals to infuse research findings in the design of advocacy strategies.

In many African societies, single motherhood is not acceptable because it is believed to create constraints, especially in the development of children. However, the phenomenon has increased tremendously, and this study is a significant step towards finding solutions to the common obstacles to educational participation and performance of girls, particularly those from single-mother families.

the mother and educational participation and performance of the girl child.

In addition to breaking new ground in sociological research, the study makes significant contribution to sociology of development by analyzing the relevance of the modernization paradigm, psychoanalytic perspective, the theory of reasoned action, social cognitive theory and social experience model in explaining the relationship between single motherhood and education of the girl child. It adds to the existing body of knowledge on the subject of single motherhood and challenges researchers to re-think their approach to studying the family.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter the author undertakes a careful review and analysis of existing literature on the family and the effect of change, marriage patterns and marital dissolution, single motherhood and child rearing, and education of the girl child. The aim of this chapter is to establish what is known and what is unknown about single motherhood and education of the girl child, therefore helping to identify gaps in knowledge for which the current study could make a significant contribution. This is an important chapter because it provides a background for our analysis and further justifies this study. It enables the author to put all issues related to this study in perspective and to build a basis for a theoretical framework, which analyses and explains the effects of single motherhood on girl child's education.

2.1 Conceptualization of the African family

It is important to clearly understand the concept of family, especially in the African setting. A family at its simplest level includes a husband, a wife and their offspring (Nye, 1973; Goode, 1989). This is what is commonly referred to in western literature as the nuclear family. It fails to describe the arrangements found in most African societies, where families go beyond the nucleus to include others such as brothers and some times

in laws and polygynous arrangements where one man is married to several wives, each of who sets up her own family. Recent developments in lifestyles have, however, made it misleading to define the family as husband, wife and children instead of man and woman. There are, for instance, many marital unions that are not legally defined, but which loosely qualify to be called families as expressed in the following quotation:

...The nuclear family does exist in most cultures during particular stages in the family's life cycle, but other types of structures such as the extended family are also common during other stages. Over the life cycle, a family may change from nuclear to extended family form and back to nuclear again. The structure of the family in terms of the number of individuals can be expanded in many ways. For instance, children may grow up and start their own families but decide to live with their parents. Whenever the parents, their children and their children's children live together in one housing unit, this is referred to as an extended family. The term 'extended' can also refer to families that include cousins in the nuclear family or other relatives who may not necessarily be members of the nuclear family (Nye, 1971: 21).

This quotation captures quite clearly the African extended type of family. In the African family set up, the household typically has relatives besides those of the nuclear family such as brothers of the father or mother. A family can also be called extended if the ties with relatives outside the nuclear family are maintained through visiting or economic support (Nye, 1971).

It can also be noted that African families can be looked at in terms of both the classical or more traditional forms as well as the more modern forms. It would help to give an illustration and examples of what is traditional and what are modern forms of African families. From existing literature, traditional African families have been seen to exhibit

certain features. They have often had bride wealth, polygyny and patrilocal residence as significant features (Mbiti, 1969). The transfer of bride wealth, in form of cattle, at various stages, formalized the marriage and gave the man and his clan ownership of children. Each wife had her own hut, farmlands and cattle. Although the pattern of residence was patrilocal, no familiarity was allowed between the sons' wives and the father in law. The most significant feature of the African family life is the importance of the larger kin group beyond the nuclear family. Inheritance was commonly the communal variety and the entire clan or kin group owned the land. The importance attached to children was another feature. Children were so important that husbands were allowed to marry a number of wives to guard against being childless, even if they were practically not able to support all of them.

In most African societies, kinship patterns form the major part of the whole social structure. By contrast, the family is only a small part of social structure of modern industrial societies. It is nevertheless a key element in them, especially linking the individual with other social institutions such as church, the state or the economy. Most importantly, it is within the family that the child is first socialized to serve the needs of the society, and not only its own needs. A society will not survive unless its needs such as production, distribution, care and support of the sick are met. Only if individuals are motivated to serve society needs will the society continue to operate, and the foundation of the motivation laid by the family (Goode, 1989). The family, therefore, is part of a larger social network. Families are not isolated, self-enclosed social systems. Even in the industrial societies, where it is supposed that people live isolated and anonymous lives,

most people are in continual interaction with other family members.

There is certainly no doubt that much has changed in the African traditional family life. Goode (1989) identifies the following features that characterize typical modern African family: individualized/nucleated family arrangements, monogamy, modern marriage ceremonies and alternative modes of bride wealth payment such as use of money. At marriage the couple tends to make their own decision regarding where to live. Though the couple maintains close ties with their parents and consult as much as possible, they reserve the right to make important family decisions. Therefore, nowhere in the world is traditional African family system intact. It has undergone tremendous transformation with shifts towards the western nuclear type of family and other liberal urban-oriented forms of families such as single parent and same sex families. It would therefore be wrong today, to refer to any family set-ups in Africa as purely traditional but rather as societies in transition because significant changes have occurred and many modern lifestyles and codes of behavior have been adopted. There are today fewer traits of traditional family attributes epitomized by short-lived allegiance to family relations and participation in family ceremonies.

2.2 Marriage in traditional African societies

In this section an attempt is made to put single motherhood within the context of the African social structure, especially within the family institution. To do that an attempt is made to trace the various stages of African family life ranging from contracting a marriage to its dissolution either through death or separation.

2.2.1 Understanding Marriage in the African context

Marriage is perhaps the most central institution for the establishment and reinforcement of social relations among kin and non-kin members. Saskia (2000) notes that marriage as an institution is old, caught up in real and imagined traditions, and these features conspire to create a deceptive image of constancy. However, the socio-economic developments of the past decades have left their marks on this institution.

African societies had some form of ceremony to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. A person who did not undergo the initiation rites was regarded as a 'child,' even though he was physically mature. Generally, the rites were associated with the onset of sexual potency. The young people were made aware at this time of the responsibilities as adult members of the community. They learned to endure hardship. They received explicit instructions on sexual behavior through family life education by grand parents. For some communities public circumcision of males and female genital mutilation (clitoridectomy) for females often accompanied the initiation rites. These were regarded as surgical preparation for marriage life (Holway, 1976)

All African communities agree that marriage is the norm of adult life and celibacy is shunned and considered unnatural. Marriage is the focus of existence and the duty of producing children is a social obligation in the African context (Holway, 1976). A person who has no physical descendants becomes forever dead. According to the Meru people

of Kenya, people who had no children of their own were derogatorily referred to as '*mbura - iti -luga*,' which means people who do not matter. Among the Luo, a woman who could not have children was called '*Lur*,' another negative word for barren. Such people were shunned and ignored by society. After death they were often thought to become evil spirits (Harris, 1954). It was believed in most communities including the Luo community where this study was done that a person who had children somehow continued to live through them and achieved physical survival after death, though perhaps not eternal life. The importance of children was further illustrated in the society's adoption of alternative arrangements for impotent men and barren women to sire children through proxy. For impotent men among the Luo and Akamba people, another man, in most cases a relative would be asked to sire children for him, while for women, the practice of woman to woman marriage was encouraged. But the children born out of these arrangements would belong to the man (husband of the barren woman).

2.2.2 Contracting Marriage

Within African traditional and modern societies marriage is a great investment not only for the couple but also for the kin and entire community. There were different forms of contracting the marriage but one of the most common is marriage by arrangement. There were many different ways of arranging partners for marriage. Less than a generation ago - and in many rural traditional communities this is still the case - parents would choose a marriage partner for their children. The head of the family decided when his sons were to marry, and he would both be materially and morally responsible for the procedure. It was the task of certain elders within the family to judge whether the girl proposed by any elder

family member would make a good wife (Saskia, 2000). In a typical African marriage a number of things had to be established. For instance among communities living in Bamako, Mali the mother of the girl had to be married. The elders inquired how the girl's mother had behaved throughout her life. The behavior of the other family members was also investigated. Finally they delved into the family roots. After all these were approved of, the girl's hand was asked whether or not the husband to be knew her. In this kind of arrangement, men did not marry girls because they were pretty or elegant.

In some communities, parents made the choice, and this was done even before the children were born. In many Kenyan communities such as the Kuria and Maasai, infant betrothal was common (Middleton, 1953). But this is not to suggest that young people could not make their choice of spouses. In some cases they did (Holway, 1976). In other communities such as the Mijikenda, Luo and Akamba, the man selected a bride but then the parents had to arrange the marriage with the girls' parents. Parents invested heavily on their children's marriage to ensure they lasted and remained stable.

The marriage institution has changed much and arranged marriages are today the exception rather than the norm in contracting marriage. The couple rather than the parents or kin members make the choice of a marriage mate. The ceremonies involved have also changed. Most marriages today are conducted through religious ceremonies in churches or through the legal system (civil marriages). These new forms of marriage have increasingly transferred the burden and responsibilities of the marriage to the couple, many of whom have the freedom and the flexibility to make their own choices

and decisions regarding the marriage.

However, there are still some restrictions though. In most communities, it is still a prerequisite that relatives from both sides agree to the marriage. And parents are still officially in charge of the marriage procedure, even though they may not physically pay for it. Parents may encourage certain unions and forbid others. In Kenya, marital unions between certain ethnic groups such as Luo and Kikuyu have been the most problematic. Parents from both communities hold very strong feelings against their sons or daughters marrying from the other community. Though the reasons for such strong parental opposition to marriage outside one's community are not obvious, one would imagine that community identity and affinity are key factors. In traditional African societies, people were socialized into the culture of their ethnic group. The culture determined and regulated people's behaviors regarding marriage, kinship, and initiation rites, among other things. The culture defined the appropriate requirements and procedures for marriage such as age, the ideal partner, courting, and wedding ceremonies. In almost all communities, marrying outside one's community was one of the proscribed practices. Since cultural beliefs and practices take time change, such beliefs are still common in contemporary society.

There were varied range of prohibitions regarding inter and intra-clan marriages. In some communities, a system of clans existed and men could not marry from outside the clan. In others, a man could not marry a woman with whom he had any detectable blood relations, no matter how remote. Among the Luo, parents of both girl and boy had to

trace the family lineage several generations back to rule out any kinship ties and affinity. The inquiry would go like this: *In wuod or nyar nga? Ma ka ng'a? Ma ka ng'a? Ma ka ng'a?* This translates to; you are son or daughter of? Son of? Son of? Son of? Son of? And so on and so on, until the girl or boy was unable to tell the next person in the lineage. Even then, the parents went ahead to establish the remaining bit of the lineage from people who knew the family.

Holway (1976) notes that traditionally, there were many forms of wedding procedures as there are African peoples. In general, there were fewer ceremonies surrounding the actual wedding day because getting married was considered a process rather than an event and extended from the initiation rites to death. The idea of marriage by capture was perpetuated in the mock fight and carrying off of the bride among the Kikuyu, Luo and Taita. The girl was carried off either by the man's female relatives or by his age-mates. But among the Akamba, the bride was fetched by the groom and taken quietly to his hut in the evening. Virginity on the wedding night was highly prized in communities such as the Luo. But in others it was expected that the couple would have had sex previously but not necessarily between themselves (Holway, 1976).

Bride wealth was an important part of the marriage process. Bride wealth is the payment made by the groom's family to the bride's family (Middleton, 1953). It was considered a form of indemnity. The man's family compensated the girl's family for the 'loss' of a family member, who from then on would render domestic services in the new home. Bride wealth also served to ensure good behavior of both husband and wife. If the man

maltreated his wife she could run away and he would not receive his bride wealth back, if he was found guilty. But the kin group would exert social pressure to bear upon the spouses to keep the union going.

From the above discussion one could observe that marriage was and still is taken seriously in most African societies. In traditional African societies in particular, much effort was put in the process of contracting the marriage to ensure that it lasted forever. Today, the situation has changed as there are cases where marriages are contracted without the involvement of the wider clan or even the parents of the couple concerned. It is for this reason that marriage dissolution is on the increase in Kenya and other African countries. There are fewer mechanisms to resolve marital conflicts and fewer concerned persons to reprimand a spouse who breaches the marriage contract.

2.2.3 Marriage and Polygyny in traditional African society

Polygyny was very much part of the African marriage pattern. Polygyny is sociologically defined as the practice in which a man marries more than one wife. It is often mistakenly referred to as polygamy, which refers to both the marriage of more than one wife and husband. The former is not common in African societies. Most Africans still consider plural marriages as a right. In Kenya today, it is estimated that 16 percent of currently married women are living in polygynous relationships. There are regional variations with Nyanza province leading with 24 percent and central having only 4 percent. Older women are more likely to be in such relationships (KDHS 1998).

Traditionally, it was believed that the more wives a man had the more children he was likely to have and therefore the greater his power of 'immortality' (Southall, 1961). It was also believed that polygyny reduced sexual immorality on the part of the polygynous husbands. Thus, polygyny w Fecundity was an important feature of an African marriage. Fecundity is demographically defined as the biological ability to reproduce. It had important implications for the status of women. The proof of fecundity, for example the birth of a child, would be used to seal a marriage bond. The infecund union was soluble on that account. A woman's reproductive services were crucial for her social standing not only among her husband's kinsmen but also among the larger community (Ssenyonga, 1972). But despite the many ways of justifying plural marriages, polygyny is fast losing value in the modern African society

Polygyny is still supported by some schools of thought on grounds that demographically, women outnumber men and since celibacy was and is treated as 'social anomalies' in Africa, the best solution was to marry many wives and balance the population equation. The 1998, KDHS established an inverse relationship between female education and polygyny. The proportion of currently married women in a polygynous union decreased from 29 percent among women with no education to 11 percent among those with secondary education. Based on the KDHS findings and analysis of trends in the last two decades, it is evident that polygyny is declining in Kenya. The proportion of women in polygynous relationships fell from 30 percent in the 1977/78 Kenya Fertility Survey (KFS) to 16 percent in the 1998 KDHS. Though there is no research evidence to explain the declining trend in polygyny, it can be conjectured social and economic factors have

played a key role. The rising cost of living has forced many men to marry fewer wives and have fewer children that they are economically able to take care of. At the same time, increased formal education for more Kenyan men has exposed people to cultures where it is prestigious to have one wife. Finally, Christian religion has played a key role in reducing polygyny. Christianity teaches against polygyny and in some churches men who marry more than one wife are punished or shunned and isolated or even excommunicated.

2.2.4 Divorce in traditional African society

In traditional African societies, divorce was uncommon. In fact anthropologists and linguists have failed to find any terms in local languages that described divorce or a divorcee. Almost nothing was so serious as to justify divorce. The infertile women needed not be divorced because her husband could still take on another wife. But the situation was tricky when it was the man, himself, who was infertile (Southall, 1961). In many cases it was only women who were suspected to be infecund. However, when it was proven beyond any reasonable doubt that it was the man, a secret arrangement would be made for another man (usually a relative, among the Luo) to have sex with his wife and give him children (Holway, 1976). Everyone worked really hard to make sure that marriage stayed. But when marriage broke, for instance on grounds of infidelity, again usually on the part of the woman, a proportion of the bride wealth was returned to the man's family. In some communities, nothing was returned. In many respects traditional marriages were discriminative against women and men had more leeway for extra-marital affairs and authority to make most family decisions.

The provisions described above in traditional African society ensured that single motherhood did not arise because a woman had divorced. The society played a key role in sealing all possible avenues that would necessitate the separation of a couple. As already pointed out, the situation is different. Studies (Garfinkel, 1986; Kayongo Male, 1991; Panos 2000) have pointed to the increasing incidence of marital dissolution through divorce and separation even though actual statistics are hard to come by.

2.2.5 Treatment of widows in traditional African society

Another African value that kept the institution of marriage going is 'widow inheritance.' For many years, this has been referred to as 'wife inheritance' and it is only recently in the late 90s that the language begun to change. Many scholars argue that the woman was not inherited. In the Luo community, it was a way of providing support to the widow. In any case the person to provide this support was appointed by the elders and had to be a respectable person who could actually support his and the new family. He would not take the woman into his home (Holway, 1976). Therefore, it was not an issue of inheritance per se. Many scholars have begun to use the term 'widow guardianship' to depict what is believed to be the original intention of the practice (Panos, 2000). However, much has changed in the family lifestyles and the tradition of widow guardianship has change too, thereby raising questions as to whether or not this practice should be continued. There has risen a new class of 'professional widow inheritors' who do nothing else but to look for women whose husbands have died. Obviously most of such men are not out to fulfill a cultural obligation but either to benefit from what is left behind by the deceased or have

sexual relations with the widow. It is no longer the brother or cousin of the diseased but a willing man (Tuju, 1996). This has raised controversies, especially with the rising incidence of HIV and AIDS. Widow inheritance is becoming less popular with increased literacy and with women becoming less economically dependent. However, traditionally, the practices served to prevent widowed women from living a single life, re-marrying from outside the kin network or leaving the marital home to return to her people. Widow inheritance was therefore yet another mechanism for preventing the occurrence of single motherhood.

2.3 Illegitimacy in African Families

Goode (1989) defines legitimacy as what is acceptable within the culture or social system of a group, family or society. All social units develop their own understanding of what is legitimate and what is not with regard to cultural practices and choices. However, in many cases families abide by the rules of legitimacy that are set by the wider society. The family is a crucial part of the society and must play its part in upholding the values and ideals of society. Goode (1989) observes that many scholars view legitimacy from a narrow perspective, only as it related to children. However, legitimacy relates to many things such as marriage, child rearing, sexual behaviors and customs. For our discussion, legitimacy relates to issues of pre-marital sex and motherhood.

African societies were traditionally mainly preoccupied with birth-related legitimacy. Today, with the influence of western culture and moral codes of conduct society is much more liberal and illegitimacy is not considered a serious breach of norms as it was

traditionally. Sexual permissiveness is a common feature of the industrial society and this has fast diffused into African lifestyles. The human community and its culture come to depend on the effectiveness of socialization, which equips the child with values, attitudes and behavior of community and family. This way, the community takes active control of behaviors of its members such as selection of mates and subsequent family behavior of the couple. When this fails, illegitimacy takes the center stage and single motherhood becomes an acceptable phenomenon.

Traditionally, one form of community control was the disapproval of casual sexual unions that resulted in premarital births. Bearing in mind the definition of family in the African set up, such a child would be considered illegitimate. The society expected those who entered into sexual unions to be mature enough to support themselves and their children. If they were very young, they would have to form part of the extended family network so that they could receive support from the wider kin network. In almost all African societies, parents viewed their children as part of their continuing identity after death. In many regions, children, especially sons, played an important role in the ceremonies after the death of a parent. Children were expected to become part of the social insurance on which parents relied in old age. It was emphasized that these and other benefits were typically obtained only if the child formed an official part of a publicly recognized family line (Goode, 1989).

Most African societies maintained that no child should be brought into the world without a man assuming the biological role of a father (Malinowski, 1966). Realistically, all

children have biological fathers, even if the child or mother is not aware of it. It was universality believed that children must be born within a marriage. Even in the sexually permissive industrial societies, having children outside marriage is not approved. Marriage, therefore, bestows legitimacy on the parents. This implies that motherhood and fatherhood outside a marital association were equally disapproved.

However, single parenthood has become a common trend in Africa. In fact single motherhood presents a new challenge in the sociology of the family, especially because it has been viewed as a deviation from the normal conjugal marital relationships that were the norm in African societies. It is a challenge that is forcing scholars even to redefine and to search for theoretical considerations related to the family.

2.4 The phenomenon of single - mother families

Single – mother families are families or household headed by a single mother. The conventional definitions by most family scholars do not recognize these as complete families. But single mother families are common and many are functional. There is therefore need for re-definition of types of families to include them. Household or homes headed by women are referred to as female-headed households. In such households, women take absolute responsibility for decision-making in their families. The term is also used to refer to households headed by single mothers. There are basically two types of household headship described in Latin as *dejure* and *defacto*. The latter referring to somewhat temporary headship in the absence of a husband who may be away for work, studies or other business. The former refers to complete headship by a woman who does

not currently have a spouse.

Households headed by single mothers have increased in the recent past. The 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) gives an indication of the proportion of single mothers in Kenya today. The KDHS indicates that 9 percent of Kenyan women of reproductive age (15 – 49 years) are widowed, divorced or no longer living with a man. Of course the figure is expected to be higher if women aged more than 49 years are included in the analysis. This is an indication that the marriage institution is undergoing serious tension and transformation. The DHS also shows that a woman heads one in three Kenyan households. Female household headship is higher in the rural (34 percent) than in the urban areas (23 percent). Possibly most rural female heads of households are not single mothers but rather *de facto* heads. In Kenya, it is common practice that many people live their wives in the rural homes as they seek employment or work in the urban areas. But our ability to determine how much of the 34 percent are actually *de jure* heads or single mothers is quite limited. On the other hand, the 23 percent female household heads in the urban areas could be a closer indication of the prevalence of single motherhood in Kenyan towns. There should be a word of caution though because there are many women living separately from their spouses, probably in two different towns. However, the common practice in Kenya is that most women heads of households living in towns are likely to be single mothers.

The African society expects everyone to marry and have children, but many men and women today are not following the norm. Perhaps the structural and social changes

taking place in various sectors of society have created relief to many people, who can now choose what they please and not feel intimidated by the demands and requirements of the society. The normality and idealness of the nuclear family (two parents and children) has become debatable today by those who demonstrate that many forms of functional conjugal unions that can be described as families exist. Today, there are same sex marriages, single parents and extended family arrangements. As divorce rates rise in all societies of the world, single parenthood, especially motherhood is likely to become even more common (Mann, 1983). Today, many mothers who separate or divorce can choose to remain unmarried and so are the widowed. Similarly, unmarried women who desire to have children can choose to have children outside marriage. All these contribute to the rise in the proportion of single mother families.

Kayongo Male and Onyango (1991) observe that in Africa, single parents are normally women just as is common elsewhere. These families are popularly known as single mother families. Surprisingly, national leaders have not voiced concern over the issue, creating ambivalence among the youth, who may not adhere to traditional codes of conduct. Kayongo-Male, 1991 argue that traditional African societies negatively sanctioned members of the society who failed to play their roles and obligations. Marriage and child bearing were such obligations. All members of the community were expected to marry and have children to preserve the name of the clan. According to data collected from various sources, Buvinic (1978) notes that estimates of female-headed households are up to 30 percents in some parts of Africa, especially in major towns.

Studies on incidence of single motherhood are very scanty, especially in Africa. But a number of studies have been conducted in the west, where cases of divorce and separation have always been common. Bruce *et al* (1995) notes that studies of female headed households in selected less developed countries, conducted after the world conference of the international women's year in 1975, reported that 10 – 46 percent of women over the age of 20 could be labeled "head of households" on the basis of data on divorce, separation, widowhood, and single parenthood in their countries (Buvinic *et al*, 1978). Buvinic notes that more recent data reveal a rapidly rising proportion of female-headed households in both developed and developing countries.

Kayongo Male and Onyango (1991) observed that unmarried mothers are becoming more common in Africa today than in the past. In traditional African societies, strong sanctions guarded against anomic actions. The authors add that women who gave birth to illegitimate children either were forced to get married to polygynous men, as an exemplary punishment, or were physically beaten. In some cases, a death penalty was preferred, like in parts of West African states. Thus, unmarried mothers were almost unheard of. But unmarried motherhood is not new in the world's history, nor is interest in the problem of illegitimacy unique to the 20th century scholars. Rapid social change has created new developments in family life. Industrialization, for instance, has contributed to the weakening of traditional bonds and breakdown of traditional morality, giving way for liberalism in traditionally uncommon practices. Though statistics on the actual incidence of single motherhood in African societies are scarce, most western writers assume that the proportion of single-mother households is increasing just like in the developed world

(Bruce, *et al*, 1995). It is therefore important that future studies attempt to establish the trends in this phenomenon.

Goode (1993) notes that marital dissolution through abandonment, separation, divorce, or death of a spouse is common throughout the world including the less developed countries. He points out that about 40 – 60 percent of women in their 40s in the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, and Senegal reported in recent Demographic and Health Surveys that their first marriage had dissolved. Goode (1993) notes that a growing proportion of divorcees involve couples with young children, thereby increasing the likelihood that marital dissolution will lead to single parenthood, and consequently to single motherhood. Existing data indicate a trend toward increasing divorce rates in less developed countries. Though rates vary widely from eight divorcees per 100 marriages in Italy to 55 per 100 in the United States in 1990, rates have increased in every country, more than doubling in Canada, France, Greece, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and former West Germany between 1970 and 1990.

Many single mothers, especially teenage girls have children outside marriage, and thus contribute to the incidence of single motherhood. In Kenya, it is estimated that by age 19 years about 21 percent of teenage girls have become mothers. The situation is more serious in places like coast and North-eastern provinces, which report about 28 percent (KDHS, 1998). Many of the teenagers who get pregnancy outside marriage eventually become single mothers. Data on reproductive age of women (15 – 49 years) collected by Demographic and Health Surveys between 1986 and 1992 indicate that a substantial

portion of never married women were sexually active (Westoff *et al.* 1994). Westoff adds that notable proportions of these never married women have given birth in some regions: more than 20 percent in seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Madagascar, Namibia, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Liberia, and Tanzania) and 10 percent or more in three Latin American countries (Bolivia, Colombia, and Paraguay). In some countries, the proportion of women who have had a premarital birth by the age of 20 is high: more than 20 percent in Kenya and Liberia, and 43 percent in Botswana (Bledsoe and Barney 1993).

A variety of demographic, social, and economic factors contribute to the high and growing proportions of female-headed and single parent households. These include increasing levels of migration and high, and in some places increasing levels of marital dissolution and non-marital childbearing.

2.4.1 Causes of single motherhood

One of the most inevitable and inescapable causes of single motherhood which does not involve the will or decisions of individuals is death. Women whose husbands have died become single mothers, at least for sometime before they remarry as some do or are 'inherited.' But one can observe that with increased shift towards modern lifestyles many women today do not remarry when their husbands die. Given that women usually have a higher life expectancy than men, and women are usually younger - sometimes considerable younger than men they marry, it is a demographic certainty that a far greater proportion of women than men are left without a spouse. The population of widows in many countries is not insignificant. A study conducted in India in 1991 showed that there

were about 30 million widows (Chen and Dreze, 1992). Chen and Dreze add that in developing countries such as Bangladesh, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, and Sudan, among others, where spousal age differences are traditionally large, ranging between 7 to 10 years, and marital fertility continues late in life, widows are often left with children to support. The loss of income and emotional support from one parent can be devastating to the children.

In the African society, widows are treated differently than other single mothers (Panos 2000). Widows have more access to support systems even in the industrial world. They are viewed rather sympathetically by society and their children are not likely to suffer as much as children of divorced or unmarried single mothers. It can be observed, in addition, that in the Luo community widows were 'inherited,' but today this practice is becoming less common. Instead families, especially relatives of the diseased husband offer moral and financial support to the widow in all areas of family life. Thus, in this study widowed mothers will be treated as a special category of single mothers.

The inhabitants of African urban industrialized locations have come from communities in which elders were once powerful. Marriages were arranged and illegitimacy was rare. The authority and level of control that elders previously had is less intensively felt. Today, elders are not greatly respected, especially in the urban areas, and therefore their ability to exert social control and pressure in matters related to marriage has dwindled. Social control is therefore likely to be reduced to the formal controls of the outside society (Goode 1973; Smelser 1967). The increasing prevalence in mother-only-families

in the Kenyan society can be attributed to changing social norms about pre-marital sexuality, out-of-wedlock births and the acceptability of single motherhood for never-married women. Indeed the social controls that depressed such behavior have been weakened by the impact of industrialization. The social stigma previously associated with pre-marital sexuality and out-of-wedlock births has weakened resulting to increased cases of premarital births. Single motherhood has thus become an acceptable alternative family type. It is believed that the waning stigma attached to single motherhood and the absence of social sanctions in most communities has contributed to the incidence of single motherhood.

Buvinic (1978) notes that there is consensus among scholars in Africa that the changes in social norms are attributable to the overall decline in the functional importance of the family and the engendered increasing emphasis on individual rights and fulfillment. For instance, norms regarding acceptability of divorce and single motherhood have drastically and radically changed, giving way to rampant marital dissolution and increasing incidence of female headed households. In Africa and everywhere in the world, children are valued as an economic asset. The desire to give birth to and raise a child is a social obligation that every individual has whether or not he or she is in a marital relationship. The strong desire to love someone is often reflected in women's decision to raise children outside marriage.

Blake and Pinal (1981) attribute the increase in single mother households to the value human beings place on children. They emphasize the fact that people are likely to see

reproduction as being socially instrumental when their alternative means for achieving social goals are the most limited (Mamdani, 1973). In African cultures children are valued and many people will have them even when they are least capable of bringing them up. Children are considered social investments and a hedge against loneliness. For some communities having children is an indicator of social status. The status of a mother is respectable one and many single women may try to achieve or acquire such statuses by having children. According to Mamdani's study in India's Khana village, the importance of children can evidently be supported by the following responses of villagers:

... It is strange they offered to give free medicine to stop women from bearing children but had nothing to help those who could not bear children. That is where medicine could be useful to us. (Mamdani 1973:147) Mamdani also reported a farmer saying, as he softly caressed his son's hair:

... These Americans are enemies of the smile on the child's face. All they are interested in is war or family planning. (Mamdani, 1973:147)

Many social scientists argue that single motherhood is a functional response to adverse conditions like poverty and unemployment. For many young women this living arrangement provides a level of flexibility and adaptability in the face of economic change (Panos, 2000).

As noted earlier, divorce rates are increasing in both developed and developing countries and a good number of divorces involve couples with younger children. In North America and Northern Europe, 30 to 55 percent of marriages end in divorce. In less developed countries an average of 25 percent of first marriages have dissolved, many as a result of divorce or separation, by the time women are 40 – 49 years old (Bruce *et al* 1995). The rupture or attenuation of parenting partnerships generally worsens the economic condition

of the mother and her children. Separation or divorce may stigmatize a mother, reduce her social status and shrink her support network in cases where community members or her partner's kin reject her.

The experiences and knowledge of marriages that did not work may be a factor influencing the incidence single motherhood. All women want and need satisfying sexual relationships. Most women probably also want to have a close partnership with a man and want to have children. But many women worry about the kind of relationship she will have with her husband and the kind of life she will live in that relationship. Some with negative memories and experiences from other families or couples, may consider remaining single. Women's weaker bargaining power in the arena of sexual relationships, childbearing, and rearing is the difficulty. Women's lack of control over their own sexuality and fertility remains one of the most threatening aspects of their lives (Bruce *et al* 1995). Men and women, including husbands and wives, often hold very divergent views about sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy (Papanek, 1979). These circumstances pose a great difficulty to young women who desire to marry and have children. However, strong negative feelings and attitudes towards marriage can easily overtake that desire.

Although the prevalence of single motherhood in Kenya's rural areas may not be as high as in the towns, the phenomenon is becoming more common in the rural areas (Mbabu, 1982). Some evidence of single motherhood by the never married and the divorced have been recorded, for example, in researches done in Nyeri and Makueni (Mbabu, 1982;

Liku, 1987 respectively). Changes associated with the modernization process have not spared the rural areas. Urban life styles have penetrated the rural folk, leading to adoption of urban behavior.

The other possible cause of single motherhood relates to the demographic realities. As mentioned earlier demographers report that there are more women than are men. At birth the ratio is the same, but then there tends to be a higher mortality for male than for female children. The life expectancy for women is also higher than for men in most countries. Thus, the population of women is always higher than that of men. Hence, it is possible that many women who desire to get married and have children within a marital relationship may not be able to because the men are fewer. This argument was used in traditional societies to justify polygyny (Holway, 1966), but it can equally explain single motherhood, especially in the modern society where polygyny is becoming less popular.

Finally, the increasing gap between childhood and womanhood caused by rising age at first marriage and declining age at first sex have immensely contributed to premarital motherhood. According to the KDHS (1998) the mean age at sexual debut for boys and girls is 16.2 and 16.8 years, respectively and by age 19 years, about 50 percent of girls have had a child. Yet the mean age at first marriage for girls is about 21 years. This means that many premarital pregnancies occur. Though the exact number of teen mothers who end up in marital relationships is not available, it is possible that a good number of these girls remain unmarried and become single mothers.

Buvinic (1978) notes that fathers of children born outside wedlock tend to keep out of sight to a remarkable extent. Very few take financial responsibility. The others abandon the young mothers either during the pregnancy or at the birth of the baby. These behaviors have also been observed in the Kenyan scene where young men promise to marry the girls but never keep their promise. Several reasons can be suggested to explain why the young men do not take responsibility for pregnancy. The changing social structure in most African cities has become such that a great deal of youth socialization takes place out of the range of parental guidance (Buvinic *et al* 1978). In addition one can observe that young people are also allowed a great deal of freedom of movement, and parents are very often not aware of their children's, especially their son's whereabouts. Consequently, parents would not be able to tell whether or not the boy is responsible for the pregnancy. Secondly, faced with the rising cost of contracting a marriage and the economic crisis, which hits young people particularly, many of these young men may not be financially ready to bear the responsibility of a household of their own. Another complicating factor is that the spread of choice marriage can make them more selective, and the criteria for a love relationship may differ from the criteria for a suitable wife. The young mothers, themselves, may not necessarily be happy with the thought of marrying their lovers (Saskia, 2000). One can also observe that the failure of young men to take responsibility for pregnancies they have caused is one of the major factors influencing the increasing incidence of infanticide and child abandonment in many cities of Africa. Hardly a week passes without a news report indicating that babies have been found abandoned or dumped in places including toilets and even the roadside.

2.4.2 Poverty in Single-Mother Families

It is generally taken that families headed by single mothers are by any standards the poorest and often in dependent situations (Mbabu, 1982; Marsden, 1970). There are exceptions to this position as evidenced by the large number of single mothers who occupy higher socio-economic groups or classes, for instance professional women. The generality of poverty situation in single mother families probably comes as a result of the fact that, being single, they may not be able to fully provide for the requirements of the family, especially if a woman does not hold a well paying job. In the two-parent families, the two parents (the couple) often combine their incomes making it possible to provide many more things in the family, which an ordinary single mother without external support would not. The implication thus is that such families will inadequately cater for the needs of the children and the family in general.

Potash (1986) points out that single motherhood, especially widowhood, can have serious financial consequences for women, who may lose property as well as spousal income when their husbands die. This situation is common in much of sub-Saharan Africa, widows often do not inherit from their husbands, regardless of the age and number of children, or the closeness of the marriage (Saskia, 2000). After the husband's death it is not uncommon for his kin to take away key possessions. One may observe that this practice is not unique to Kenya including the area where this study was conducted. Many women suffer at the hands of the husband's kinsmen after he dies. These cases have been reported in the media and were a great concern during the Beijing conference in 1995. In many cases the woman is left barely with anything to fall back on. Many women have been denied access to property when their husbands died. Some have been thrown out of

homes that they, themselves, have contributed to when they were being built. In such situations, widows are left in very poor state than any other category of single mothers. Even worse, they are treated as strangers as captured in the following quotation:

...In some parts of parts of Africa and India, a woman is seen as the cause of her husband's death and is treated as a "stranger" by her deceased husband's family. Further more, restrictions on residence, ownership, and employment place widows in a situation of acute dependence on economic support from others, yet such support may not be forthcoming or regular. This situation may adversely affect the development of their children (Potash 1986:14).

But one may observe that this is not always the case in all situations. There are many widows who have inherited their husbands' property while others have been the custodians of family property even before the death of their husbands (Panos, 2000; Women's Bureau, 2000). As we have already observed, widows in many societies, particularly in Africa, are treated with sympathy and her relatives are more likely to offer their support. This may not happen to all, but the general trend is that society will tend to be supportive, thereby giving them a little financial cushioning. This support is manifested in the practice of widow inheritance, which was previously a common practice among many African communities including the Luyia and Luo of Kenya.

Poverty among single mother families may cause certain negative behaviors. Kayongo Male and Onyango (1991) argue that poverty in single-mother families is responsible for social problems in society such as abandoning of babies along the roads, in bushes, in toilets or rubbish bins, and in hospitals. This may be amore common among teenage mothers rather than all single mothers. Due to economic deprivation, many unmarried mothers have also left their children under the care of their own parents. Such children

always tend to suffer developmental problems because of both early separations from the mother and absence of a father (Lelland, 1974; Lamb, 1978). The early part of the child's development, which requires the presence of the mother, goes unattended as the child is deprived of parental warmth (Rapoport 1977). This might affect the way the child turns out and even his or her performance in various aspects of life. The third hypothesis for the study is based on this assumption. The hypothesis reads: there is a positive correlation between single mother's income level and the girl child's educational performance.

In a nutshell, it can be noted that single motherhood has become a reality in society. The incidence of single-mother families will continue to grow as long as the various social, economic and developmental factors discussed in this section impact on African societies. Studies on African families need to include single-mother families and treat them as any other type of family. Researchers need to move from the position of condemnation to treat these families as social entities that have been created by changes in the social structures of societies including the African society.

2.5 Single motherhood and child education

According to the Freudian scholars (Freud 1974; Luella 1959; Lamb 1976; William 1969), child's identification with a nurturing father hastens the adaptability of the father's characteristics such as the instrumental competence that should foster intellectual functioning. Thus, the father's authority over the family is in many cases a kind of inspiration for the child, especially the son, to be like his father. This often involves the

imitation of the father's work, occupation and achievements. The child wants to achieve as much as the father. This motivates his intellectual ability. The second hypothesis is based on this argument. (The hypothesis reads: there is a positive correlation between marital status and educational performance of the girl child.) However, scholars who hold the view that fathers have critical influence in the intellectual development of the child do not take cognizance of the fact that the mother takes much more time with the child in the early developmental stages than the father, and therefore, she is likely to equally influence the motivation of the child. Furthermore, research has shown that achievement motive exists in everyone but in varying degrees. All it requires is someone to provide a stimulus and the individual will acquire a higher motive for achievement. If the mother is an achiever the child will have no difficulty being an achiever, especially if she uses her potential to motivate the child. It does not take a great deal of imagination to assume that if a number of people with high achievement motivation happened to be present in a given culture at a given time, things would start to hum. They might as well start doing things better, or even more importantly, they might start doing them differently by trying to get achievement satisfaction (McClelland, 1961).

There is a good deal of evidence suggesting that the father may exercise a strong influence over his children's intellectual capacity in facilitating cognitive development of the child from infancy. This kind of paternal motivation is lacking in fatherless children whose achievement is therefore taken to be weaker. Paternal encouragement, even for females (young girls) is correlated with higher achievement motive for children (Biller 1974; Lamb 1976; Williams 1969; Leland 1974). In this respect, the mother's role in

motivating the child to perform well is often assumed. These scholars assume that the mother is often too busy with the family work to supervise educational activities of the child. This is not exactly true. There are fathers who, for instance, pay no attention to the educational activities of their children. Such fathers do nothing to motivate their children. At the same time, there are mothers who spend so much time supervising their children's educational activities. Thus, both mother and father are important in this respect.

Kahl (1953) points out that a close father-child relationship and the characterization of the father as both dominant and democratic are associated with high achievement motivation, in both boys and girls. This may not always be the case because these father characteristics may fail to impact on the child's performance and motivation to achieve. There is more to this, that would stimulate the child to achieve. One of the more consistently reported effects of fatherlessness on boys is a deterioration of school performance and intellectual capacity. The effect, it has been found is not as great for girls as it is for boys (Lamb 1976; Kahl 1953). Perhaps, this is with reference to the observation that boys may have no one to act as a model and to play the role of the absent father. However there is evidence that paternal encouragement of intellectual performance is positively related to achievement. Thus, paternal rejection and absence can be detrimental to children's achievement (Biller 1974; Leland, 1974).

Some scholars have argued that the importance of fathers in fostering academic success, particularly in their sons is clearly relevant to the attempt to improve intellectual performance in deprived children, that is fatherless children (Biller, 1974; Lamb, 1976).

These studies suggest that children (boys and girls) from single mother families are thus disadvantaged intellectually unlike their counterparts from two-parent families whose cognitive development often proceeds normally, under normal family conditions. This argument assumes that it is the father who plays a major part in guiding and supervising the child's academic work. While this may be true in some situations, it may not be in others. It is important to note that different family environments will affect the cognitive development of the child differently. However, existing evidence suggest that this may not necessarily be the case as many mothers spend more time and are key determinants of their children's achievement (Bruce *et al*, 1995). This of course will depend on a number of factors such as social class, income and education of the mother. They also assume that in a single- mother family, especially among the working class, the mother has less time and presumably less energy for monitoring and supervising the children. This may be true given that the mother is the only parent and has a variety of roles to perform in the household.

In adolescence, single motherhood is more damaging to offspring. This is a time of increased sexual stimulation and adventures, a time when adolescents are faced with problems, which need important decisions and coping (Luella, 1959). They need the guidance of both parents more at this time. This is the time when teenagers have fantasies, which maybe misleading if proper guidance is not provided. They may be experiencing certain emotional and physical changes in their bodies, which might create demands and desires such as the desire to be in a relationship with the opposite sex. The presence of enabling parents can make a significant difference in the life of a teenager at

this point. However, it should not be misconstrued that parental supervision and guidance are only possible in the presence of a father. It is true that some single mothers, aware of the limitations, will try their best to provide a conducive environment for their children to grow up. However, this may only be possible with some but not all aspects of the environment required for the healthy development of the child. For instance, the single mother may not easily provide the personality aspects of child development, which require the presence and involvement of a nurturing father. Even the alternatives (the so-called uncles) may not provide this necessity for the child.

Supervision of adolescent boys and girls is an important part of raising children. It has implications for academic performance of children at this stage. Garfinkel (1986) argues that adolescent girls from single mother families are more likely to engage in uncontrollable dating frequency and become pregnant before marriage. It is against this argument that our first hypothesis is based. The hypothesis says: the mother's marital status is likely to determine whether or not the girl child drops out of school. But this argument is based on the thinking that perhaps these girls are exposed to less guidance and limited supervision and therefore have more freedom for sexual engagements. The situation may be worse if the mother is employed and has to be away most of the time. In such situations girls may turn to their peers for information and guidance. Research has shown that though peers are good at communicating certain messages, in the absence of reliable and accurate information, they can mislead each other with very disastrous results (Erulkar, 1998). However, Garfinkel's position should be taken with caution. The destiny of children, especially girls from single – mother families is not pre-determined

just because they do not have resident fathers. Mothers can play a key role in guiding their daughters in matters related to sex. In fact it has been observed that most fathers shy away from discussing sexual matters with their daughters and would rather have their mother do so (Njau, 1993).

Garfinkel (1986) suggests that employment of the mother outside the family reduces her participation in the child's educational activities as well as her monitoring and supervision of the child's extra-curricular activities). The latter has important implications for the child's educational performance. This is normally a problem for most single mothers who in turn blame the child for poor performance. One can observe that in Africa it is an ambivalence too difficult to resolve. The single mother is not entitled to any welfare benefits like her counterparts in America and other developed or welfare states (Garfinkel, 1986; Bruce, 1995). African single mothers, therefore, have to work and if possible seek extra sources of income to avoid abject poverty. However, it is important to note that many women choose to be single mothers and they have the economic capability to provide for the basic needs of their households.

Garfinkel (1986) note girls who grow up in single mother families are more likely to marry early and have children early both in marriage and out-of-wedlock. They are also more likely to divorce than girls in two-parent families, and are comparatively less successful on the average when they become adults (Garfinkel, 1986). Most girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy do not return after they deliver their babies. Only very few of such girls go back to school, and majority tend to discontinue their studies

(Njau, 1993; Khasiani, 1985). Existing evidence point to the fact that girls from single mother families may have early sexual exposures leading to unplanned pregnancies, as the mothers may have the tendency to keep lovers or boyfriends (Okumu and Chege, 1994; Young 1954; Ochola-Ayayo, 1992). This may be true especially of the girls who drop out of school and do not pursue any opportunities for training and future career development. Such girls will tend to have fewer opportunities for employment, and if the mothers are poor, they may not have access to business capital to initiate income-generating activities for themselves.

Children's educational achievement may be affected by the economic situation at home (Garfinkel, 1986). As observed before, poverty seems to be a general condition affecting most single mother households. Most of these families have either no or little money to invest in the education of their children. Further, the children may not get a chance to participate in extra-curricular activities, which are known to have positive correlation with the child's performance (MOE, 1994). Thus, such children may drop out of school and assume adult roles prematurely or seek employment to support the family. In Africa, there are many cases of child labor where small children, often school dropouts are employed. Besides, children from single mothers families in school may often experience numerous forms of instability and chronic stress resulting from negative attitudes of other children and the environment at home, which may lead to poor academic performance and thereby undermine their achievement motivation (MOE, 1994). Such are the characteristics of the harsh educational environment experienced by female children, particularly daughters of single mothers.

From this discussion one can observe that indeed there are certain challenges to the education of children from single-mother families. However, these challenges do not affect all single-mother families. Therefore one should be careful not to over-generalization the effect on child education to all single-mother families. It has been observed that some single mothers can provide an optimum environment to support the intellectual growth and academic performance in their daughters and sons. However, these mothers may not be able to provide for all the requirements such as male parental involvement, and therefore the children may still experience challenges in coping with this gap as they grow.

2.6 Education of the Girl Child in Kenya

Education, especially that of women, is an important index of type and quality of development of a state. Low level of education and literacy tends to depress the standard of living and mobilization capacity of the population (Collaborative Center on gender and development, 1998). This study observed that in Kenya, the regions where literacy levels are low also happen to be the areas where poverty and morbidity are rampant. Correspondingly, the areas with low literacy levels also have low school participation of girls in the entire educational spectrum. In general, more boys than girls are enrolled in Kenyan schools with the trend becoming worse in secondary and institutions of higher learning (UNICEF, 1999,1992; Njau and Wamahiu 1994). However, there are regions such as Kuria, Suba, Garisa, Moyale, and Samburu districts where fewer girls are enrolled in school due to discriminatory practices against the girl child (MOE, 1994)

Analysis of sex composition indicates that the proportion of females decline at each succeeding class. There are higher rates of female wastage within each particular stage of schooling and there also tends to be sharper school drop out rates between the levels. Female wastage is estimated to be at least three times the male wastage at the primary school level and is somewhat higher at the secondary level (Central Bureau of Statistics - CBS, 1972; UNICEF, 1999).

The dominance of research on school participation is perhaps provoked by the very high wastage of children from the Kenyan education system. Such wastage is higher for girls than boys: National statistics from Ministry of Education (MOE, 1994) show fewer girls enter the education system and fewer still complete primary school than boys, with the gender gap increasing as one ascends the educational ladder. In specific regions like the districts of North Eastern, Isiolo and Marsabit in Eastern, Kwale and Tana River in the Coast, Suba in Nyanza, to name a few, the situation is much worse. There is little research to show the percentage of the girls who actually participate in an alternative form of education system. Some girls are further disadvantaged by the circumstances in which they were born or grew up. Such girls include those who drop out of school due to pregnancy or other causes, the street girls, child workers, child brides, abandoned and neglected girls, drug users and traffickers, children of imprisoned mothers, children displaced by and caught in ethnic strife, child prostitutes and AIDS orphans, and many of the disabled. With the exception of a couple of studies on street girls (Wattimah, 1997; Misiati, 1997) the other categories of disadvantaged girls have remained invisible to

educational researchers.

In the districts where participation of girls is low such as Kwale, Kilifi, Kuria and Mount Elgon, education of girls tend to be affected by such cultural factors as early and arranged marriage (UNICEF, 1989). Early marriage has been found to affect the education of girls from the single-mother families. Studies from other parts of the world show that girls from single-mother families lack parental supervision and are more likely to involve in uncontrolled dating, pre-marital sex leading to school drop out due to unintended pregnancy and early marriage (Garfinkel, 1986; Schlesinger, 1970). It has also been suggested that when confronted with the constraint of limited opportunities or resources for primary schooling, parents have generally favored the education of male children giving earlier or higher priority to the education of sons (CBS, 1978). Though this attitude may be changing in Kenya today, in some regions such as Kuria, Samburu and Narok girls are still denied access to education and forced to marry so that their brothers can have education. Obonyo (1994) and Olielo and Ouma, (1993) observe that in such districts, especially in the rural areas, girls' education is still viewed negatively, as a waste of resources. Those who hold this view argue that girls' education will only benefit the family where she is married and not her parents. Thus, it becomes an unworthy investment for parents of girls. Many parents are still looking at children as social insurance to be depended upon in old age or as investment to be relied on in times of need. They do not look at children's education as a contribution towards the country's economic development. Based on this argument one may observe that daughters of women with low or no formal education may equally end up with little education. They

may be unable to perform well in school because they have no role model or someone at home to inspire them to perform well. It is against this argument that our fourth and last hypothesis is based. The hypothesis reads: there is a positive correlation between single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance.

In an inter-ministerial consultation held in Mauritius in 1994, FAWE argued that the cost of not sending the girl-child to school was higher for the individual, household, community and the nation in the long-term. Parental perceptions of the higher costs of girls' education, both in terms of hard cash and opportunity cost, is both short-term and short-sighted (Njau and Wamahiu, 1994) as investment in the education of girls has been found to be the single-most profitable investment that one can make in terms of development. Some parents also look upon their daughters as commodities to be exchanged for cash and/or kind through early marriage and as domestic and plantation workers (MOE, 1994). This trend denies the girl the opportunity to be educated and to develop a career for her future.

There are other factors, which affect girls' education. Some of them can be referred to as the push factors. A study in two girls' schools in Nyamira District (Nyanza Province) confirmed that girls were not necessarily safe from intellectual and emotional abuse and disempowerment in single-sex schools (Obonyo, 1994). Both male and female teachers were perpetuating gender stereotyping and discrimination. Obonyo's findings are supported by a rapid assessment undertaken by the Collaborative Center on Gender and Development (1998). The report of an intergenerational dialogue initiated by Kenya

Alliance for the Advancement of Children (KAACR) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) as a preparatory activity for the Beijing Conference and NGO Forum in 1995 provides similar insights into pupils' perceptions of the gender attitudes of female teachers in Nairobi schools (Wamahiu, 1995).

Qualitative studies conducted by various researchers have also drawn attention to sexual harassment and abuse among girls in- and out- of-school and to the issue of schoolgirl pregnancies (Wamahiu and Bennaars, 1993; Wamahiu and Kirea, 1996; Population Council/MOE, 1997). A study of sexual harassment and abuse (SHA) of schoolgirls in urban public transportation, however, used participant-observation as a key data collection tool (Chege, Rimbui and Olembo, 1994). The Annual Report on the Legal Status of Kenyan Women (1997) also revealed more discriminatory practices including sexual harassment, early marriage and rape (FIDA-K, 1997). Discriminatory practices can be a source of frustration and disinterest for girls leading to either drop out or poor academic performance. The environment for girls education must be void of such practices and be made truly supportive in order to increase girls' participation and performance in school.

For many girls, especially from single-mother families, the family economy as we have pointed out before, may greatly affect their educational participation and performance . In a country where at least 47 percent of the people are estimated to live below the poverty line (GOK, 1997), many girls are likely not to enroll in school or drop out early because the parent/s cannot pay school fees or afford basic requirements. This trend is

presumably more prevalent in single-mother families where the mother, alone, may not always manage to meet all the family needs, especially if she is not well educated and does not have a well paying job. Because the mother may not afford to employ a house-help, the girl child may be required to perform various domestic chores such as nursing the baby in the mother's absence, working on the family garden, working in the family as mother substitute to clean the house, fetching firewood and water and cooking for the younger and elder (brothers) siblings. These duties do not fit well with the educational work of the girl, as they often entail lack of adequate sleep and physical exhaustion, both of which adversely affect the child's educational output. (Olielo and Ouma, 1993).

From the above discussion one can observe that irrespective of the community, a girl's roles in domestic chores deny her the time to study at home, and physically exhaust her. This is usually not the case for boys whose roles are often seasonal and sporadic and take much less time than the work that girls do. The heavy workload for girls transcends the home to the school where they are expected to perform a variety of non-school related tasks, including smearing houses with cow dung, cooking for teachers and fetching water. In some cases, girls are also expected to take on the roles traditionally performed by boys, e.g. cattle herding (MOE, 1994). This increases their burden and leaves them with much less time than the boys for academic work.

While we acknowledge the fact that the situation is rapidly changing, especially in the urban areas of Kenya, there is no doubt that in a number of Kenya's rural communities such as the Luo, Kuria, Luyia, among others, child labor is still a major hindrance to the

education of the girl child. In these rural communities, relatives employ fatherless female children as ayahs when there is no one to pay their school fees (MOE, 1994). This often happens to children born out of wedlock and whose mothers are living separately. As such, most studies on causes of non-participation (non-enrollment and dropout) link it to household poverty (MOE, 1994; Population Council, 1997). Few researchers have, however, gone beyond identifying poverty as a factor, to actually count the cost of sending the girl-child *vis a vis* the boy child to school at the micro-level and to attempt to establish other (especially the 'pull') factors such as the cultural and those related to the social structure, personality development and achievement motivation. These factors are equally important in determining girls' enrollment, participation and performance.

2.7 Conclusions on literature review

Evidently, there is paucity of literature on the whole subject of education of children from single mother families. This review shows that plenty of information exists on various aspects of single motherhood such as poverty, single mothers and work, divorce, separation, teenage pregnancy and motherhood. However, most of this information and data relate to the western world situations and therefore their applicability to local situations is debatable. The western literature places overburdening blame on single mothers. It would be unethical to imagine that all the literature will apply to our African or Kenya situation. Very little of the western literature describes the situation in Africa and Kenya in particular. Many western scholars and researchers (Trent; 1990; Garfinkel, 1986; Nye, 1973; Marsden 1970; and Young 1954) have paid much attention to the economy of these families and the impact of poverty on family life. In Kenya, a few

studies (Liku, 1987; Waiyaki, 1985; and Mbaabu, 1982) looked at single mother families and how they cope with economic difficulties. Thus, there are some obvious gaps, which the current study has undertaken to fill. Most of the previous studies have not ventured into the area of child education. Even though there is much literature on education in general, none of these looked at education of children from single mother families. Similarly, none of the studies have looked at the impact of father's absence in cognitive development and educational performance of children. The current study particularly attempts to add to the body of knowledge on the relationship between single motherhood and the education of the girl child. Some scholars have previously focused on the impact of father's absence on the male children. It is equally important to establish the effect on female children. Though this is a broad subject that may go beyond the scope of this study, an attempt is made to shed some light on this gray area.

Another area that is not addressed by existing literature is societal perception of single mothers and their families. The researcher believes that community attitudes can affect both single mothers and their children. Very little is known about how much community attitudes affect children from single mother families and how they cope with these attitudes. The whole area of socialization of single mother children is also silent. In the absence of the father, who is the substitute and how does this work out. Definitely this study does not answer all these questions. That is why there is need for more research on single motherhood and education so as to increase understanding of these very challenging issues.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The framework for understanding single motherhood and how it affects girl child education is based on a group of complementary and mutually inclusive sociological and social change theoretical perspectives. The theoretical framework explains the incidence of the phenomenon of single motherhood from the perspective of changes in the social systems caused by rapid modernization, urbanization, industrialization and other forms of technological advancement. Theories of social change, anomie, the rational choice and psychoanalysis are analyzed to demonstrate how single motherhood can result from a variety of interactive processes including, cultural and environmental changes, personal choice and personality development. The framework also explains the effect of single motherhood on the educational participation and achievement of girls.

Using a single theory would not provide adequate understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, the framework used in this section takes into account the combined effect of social change and the individual factors in the incidence of single motherhood.

2.8.1 The Social Change Theories

A couple of social change theories are used in this section to explain the phenomenon of single motherhood on girls' education. These include modernization, evolution, and structural functionalist theories.

Modernization is a central concept in the sociology of development. It refers to the interactive process of economic growth and social change: a process in which historical and contemporary under-developed societies become developed or progressive. Huntington (2000) describes modernization as total transformation of traditional or pre-modern societies to technologically advanced, economically prosperous, and relatively politically stable nations. He further summarizes the nine characteristics of the process of modernization as follows: evolutionary, complex, systemic, global, lengthy, phased, homogenizing, irreversible and progressive. Some of these characteristics such as homogenizing process are controversial. One can observe that the transition from traditionalism to modernity may not necessarily create a situation of convergence. The pace of change may be different and the coping mechanisms may vary from one society or community to another creating varied responses.

The proponents of the modernization theory such as David McClelland, Neil Smelser, Alex Inkeles, Reinhard Bendix and Rostow W. W., among others, argue that the society evolves into modernity through stages characterized by a certain level of social differentiation and integration. Smelser (1967) identifies four distinct but mutually interrelated areas encompassed by economic development or modernization. These include the realms of technology or industrial growth, urbanization, advancement in agriculture and ecology. A modernizing country therefore typically displays a multiplicity of changes in the political, religious, educational, familial, and social stratification spheres. The modernization theorists further argue that pre-modern societies will inevitably become modern like the industrialized societies of the world as

their institutions and value systems are re-defined to correspond with modernity. Thus, these theorists see modernization as a process of social change from an undesirable state (pre-modern) to desirable (modern state of society).

Evolutionists such as Charles Darwin described change as evolutionary, unidirectional, from a primitive to advanced stage, thereby implying that the fate of human evolution is pre-determined. The theory is based on the biological premise that social change occurs in the same way as biological objects grow and are transformed into more superior and well-adjusted beings (Rojas, 1996). The problem with this argument is that it is based on imposed value judgment. In other words it imposed judgment on the evolutionary process. The movement towards the later stages in the process is good because it represents progress, humanity and civilization. However, these three benefits are defined with western European cultural parameters. It is assumed that the rate of social change is slow, gradual and piecemeal. The theory, however has a critical relevance to the subject of this study in the sense that as changes occur in an evolutionary fashion, many forms of behavior emerge to cope with the emerging social order.

Other theorists of social change view change as a process that takes several phases or steps. The structural functionalist Talcott Parsons identifies four stages, while Rostow W.W recognizes five distinct stages that lead to modernity. Parsons theory shares the analogy of biological beings. The theory says that society is like a biological organism with different parts corresponding to the different institutions that make up the society. Each institution performs a specific function for the good of the whole. According

Parsons (2000) there are four crucial functions that each institution must perform to maintain the social fabric. The first is adaptation to the environment. This function is performed by the economy, but not any economic system, only capitalism can adapt to the environment. The second function is goal attainment, which is performed by government, pursuing liberal aims as defined mainly by western standards. The third is integration (linking the institutions together), which is performed by the legal and religious institutions. The last function is latency (pattern maintenance of values from generation to generation), which is performed by the family as ahistoric basic human organization and education.

From the above one can observe that the society can actually maintain social harmony and order if each institution performed its functions effectively. The society will tend to harmony, stability, equilibrium and the status quo. Any behavior jeopardizing these conditions will be considered anti-social and therefore unacceptable and punishable. However, more often than not some institutions will fail to perform their functions appropriately thereby creating social dysfunction and disequilibrium in the society. When that happens, the social harmony and order in society may no longer be maintained. If for instance the institution that should maintain latency fails, the transfer of social norms and morals will be interrupted and this will create avenues for manifestation of anti-social and morally unacceptable behaviors such as pre-marital sex, celibacy and single motherhood, among others.

For Rostow W. W, social change seemed to be a simple process involving five distinctive stages. Rostow (1964) suggests that all societies can be placed in one of five categories, or stages of economic growth. Rostow believed that it was possible to identify all societies in their economic dimensions as living within the traditional society, the pre-conditions of take off, the take off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption. Rostow describes the first stage (traditional society) as one whose structure is developed within limited production functions. The output is limited because of inaccessibility of science and technology. Values are generally fatalistic and political power is non-centralized. One would observe however, that the last two characteristics may not necessarily be true of a traditional society, except when the parameters are defined by someone without the inside perspective. For instance traditional African societies political systems were indeed centralized and there was no fatalism about their perspective of life.

The second stage (pre-conditions to take-off) involves clusters of new ideas favoring economic progress. New levels of education, entrepreneurship, and institutions capable of mobilizing capital arise. Investment increases, especially in transport, communication and raw materials, with a general direction towards commercial expansion. The third stage (take-off) involves commercialization of agriculture, growth in productivity, because that is necessary if the demand emanating from expanding urban centers is to be met. New political groups representing new economic groups push the industrial economy to new heights. During the fourth stage (drive to maturity) between 10 and 20 percent of gross domestic product is invested and the economy takes its place in the

international order. Technology becomes more complex and there is a move away from heavy industry. Production is no longer the outcome of social necessity but of the need of maximizing profits to survive in a competitive capitalist market. During the final stage (mass consumption), the leading economic sectors specialize in durable consumer goods and services. At this stage economic growth makes sure that basic needs are satisfied, and the social focus changes to social welfare and security.

Rostow's theory makes the assumption that modernization or social change is a phased process and the stages in this process are common to all societies, which is not true. The theory ignores historical developments that have shown that some societies did not develop in the Rostovian fashion. It also assumes that modernization is an irreversible process. In other words it assumes that once, third world societies come into contact with western European and American societies, they will not be able to resist the impetus towards modernization or social change. However, even if they were not to resist, the environments found in these societies may not be similar or conducive to the process of economic growth in all societies. However, Rostow's theory has great value to the understanding of Single motherhood. At each stage there are new changes occurring, most of these changes affect the traditional social structures and systems, and as a society nears the fourth and final stage, institutions such as the family become so individualized giving way to personal choices and creating an environment where previously unheard of behaviors take root.

The social change theorists make the general assumption that modernization typically proceeds in a linear fashion. This may not necessarily be the case. It is unrealistic to assume that the path to modernity is one. While many modern societies may have achieved modernization in this format, this may not necessarily be the case everywhere. In Africa, for example, there have been major calamities and armed conflicts in various regions, which reversed the progress to modernity. Most of the regions in question destroyed the gains made towards modernity had to begin a re-building process. Thus, modernization can also take a forward-backward swing, and can be marked by long spells of stagnation.

Most contemporary scholars who subscribe to the gradualist approach to modernity have opposed the social change theorists who uphold the dualist approach. The structural functionalists contend that even though pre-modernity has to give way to modernity, it has to happen in a gradualist adoptive process in which the structures of the society such as the family strive to adapt to the social changes taking place, in order to continue being functional.

The various social change theories discussed above explain how modernization affects the various sectors of society. At the family level, the structure and functions change, as its activities become more concentrated on emotional gratification and socialization. The authority patterns also change as elders who previously were powerful lose their authority and control to the nuclear family. The nuclear family becomes differentiated from the extended family and other kin network, and marriage norms change as emphasis is placed

on personal choice and love, and women become more independent economically and socially.

Industrialization (advancements in industrial technology similar those identified by Rostow (1964) as characteristic of the take off stage) and subsequent urbanization (the trend towards urban settlements as people seek employment opportunities and better living standards) open the job market to both men and women. As women move out of their homes to look for work, they become more independent and experience more freedom than before. They are free to choose whether or not to be sexually involved and who to be involved with. In the city, no one controls her sexual behavior. She can decide to get pregnant outside marriage.

Industrialization typically leads to migration of labor force from the rural to urban centers. Such migrants are often men. They are unskilled and relatively uneducated people whose incomes are likely to be low. For that reason, they cannot afford to keep their families in the city and will tend to leave them in the countryside. This practice tends to encourage marital problems as husbands and wives may be involved in extra-marital affairs, leading to separation or divorce.

In the realm of education, women's status becomes more established as more women go to school and colleges. The traditional conception of women and their role in society begins to shift as society takes on a more progressive attitude towards women. More and more educated women begin to join the male dominated labor force in senior positions,

thus improving the status of women in society. With gains in education and status, the women become independent and have the freedom to choose and adapt sexual behaviors convenient to them. Similarly, they can decide whether or not they want to have children without a resident partner. But more importantly, their improved status and empowerment enable them to decide whether or not to stay in marriage or seek divorce if they are not satisfied with the relationship.

Further more, it has been observed that formal education prolongs the period before marriage for women. Traditionally, in Africa for example, women would be married at or soon after puberty. But with formal education and the desire for academic excellence, most women are marrying at much later ages. This prolonged period increases their risk of pregnancy before marriage, and chances that more women will become single mothers.

Consequently, women take overall responsibility for the running of their own households, bring up their children without a spouse and providing for the needs of the family. They have to make decisions over household issues including children's welfare and education. Being alone, and having to execute the roles of father and mother, she may not have enough time to spend on guidance and motivation of her children in their education.

2.8.2 The theory of Anomie

The theory of Anomie has been widely used as a theoretical consideration for family studies. Anomie is essentially an adjunct of the social change theory. Mann (1983) has defined anomie as a state in society where substantial disagreements exist over

appropriate norms. Sociologically, anomie refers to a state of relative 'normlessness.' This does not suggest the absolute absence of norms in a particular society. Rather, it suggests that the previously highly esteemed norms and values take less eminence and for most members of the society these norms may not even be understood. It is however not possible to have a society that is completely void of norms. Certain aspects of normative systems are retained even in extreme situations of change.

The proponents of Anomie were Robert Merton and Emile Durkheim, the latter also a structural functionalist. Durkheim (1968) argues that Anomie results from the incompleteness of the shift from mechanic to organic solidarity. He gives the example of division of labor in society, and argues that Anomie occurs when the division labor in society has progressed faster than the moral basis on which it is based. Thus, certain segments of society become poorly adjusted and inadequately regulated, leading to various social vices. Division of labor refers essentially to the amount of differentiation of roles and tasks within smaller groups, occupations, and interest groups within smaller social groups such as family or modern bureaucracies. The social vices occur because the society has not defined a new code of conduct, giving individuals leeway to define and execute their own codes of behavior. Single motherhood may result from this situation because women have the freedom to determine the behaviors that would best serve their need and goal in life. While Durkheim essentially relates Anomie to the changes taking place in the environment, Merton and other have extended the concept to refer to the condition of individuals. Merton (1965) argued that the sociological concept of Anomie presupposes that the salient environment of individuals can be usefully thought of as

involving the cultural structure on the one hand, and the social structure on the other. Further, when the cultural and the social structure are inappropriately integrated, with cultural structure calling for behavior and attitudes which social structure precludes, there is a strain towards the breakdown in norms. Consequently, traditionally powerful or esteemed norms begin to breakdown, new ones emerge. But these tend to be liberal, fashionable and often associated with the younger generation. For example, social structure and norms in traditional society was very well defined and everyone was expected to operate within the boundaries of the structure to maintain social harmony. However, when new social structures associated with the shift to organic solidarities developed, new social norms and codes of conduct emerged to cope with the emerging structures in society.

The major works of Durkheim (1969, 1968) expound on the relation between division of labor and subsequent structural changes in society. He points out that division of labor in society is a result of certain segments of the society losing individuality and becoming more permeable or penetrable. The members of society begin to look upon themselves or their families and not the society for protection and restitution on matters pertaining to law, norms, rules, and aspirations. Durkheim explains that the speedy growth of the division of labor gives way to intimate relationships among and between segments of society and individuals that previously were not close.

In the book, "Division of Labor," Durkheim outlines ideal types of societies as characterized by either mechanical or organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is

characteristic of folk societies, while organic solidarity refers to large-scale urban societies. Simple or low division of labor characterizes mechanical solidarity while organic solidarity typically has highly complex, well-developed division of labor. Organic solidarity encourages autonomy and independence for social institutions and individuals which may encourage behaviors that are traditionally perceived to be against the norms of society, for example, celibacy and single parenthood. An individual's autonomy takes precedence over previously patriarchal powerful authority of the elders. This state of society broadens the individual's self-directing powers, will and conscience and subsequently the individual adopts an indirect relation to the dominant authority such as government or other regulatory powers through intermediary social institutions which fall outside the control and influence of the local authority in society.

In essence the theory of anomie suggests that societies tend to shift towards the state of organic solidarity. While this is a desired shift, it is potentially disorganizing and from a remote point of view may seem to bring confusion in society. However, it is important to note that anomie may not only result from the shift towards organic solidarity, other situations such as armed conflict and migration could equally play a part in creating a state of relative normlessness. The turmoil that has gripped most African countries in form of wars and famine has created situations of disorder, lawlessness, and social dysfunction. With widespread displacement of families and death of parents, guardians and care givers, many young people have been left to fend for themselves. In the field of survival of the fittest, many young people take to anti-social behaviors to cope with the stresses in their fluid environment. Social norms are not likely to be observed, because a

vacuum has been created in the enforcement of such norms.

Anomie is a relevant theory in our conceptualization of single-mother families. It describes the emergence of these families as a result of the weakening role of traditional norms and the shift towards what Merton (1967) calls a state of relative 'normlessness.' Under the liberal organic society characterized by autonomy and individualization, the autonomous man or woman emerges (Smelser, 1967). Based on this argument one may observe that the individual can do as it pleases him or her, without fearing any consequences from the traditionally restrictive social controls of society. The rules and norms which previously regulated the behavior of men and women in society become lax and the elders abandon their once privileged watch dog position to new and subsidiary institutions, which are not concerned with private lives of individuals. Further more, it can be observed that young men and women will have a greater freedom to marry or not; delay marriage; enter into temporary unions; separate from a relationship; have children or not; and control the spacing of the children. This situation would be conducive to mother-only family set-ups. Marriage becomes a personal choice rather than a family affair and the choice to have children with whoever one chooses becomes a reality.

In a nutshell, one may observe that the shift from mechanical to organic solidarities may create a state of relative 'normlessness' if the transition is not appropriately adjusted as happened in most developed and developing societies. The state of anomie may easily give way to individualized, liberal and highly self-seeking society, which may create a conducive environment for traditionally unacceptable phenomena such as single motherhood; same sex marriages and relationships and abandonment of children, among

many others.

2.8.3 Rational Choice Theory

George Homans formulated the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) in 1961. However, classical scholars such as Blau (1964) and Coleman (1973, 1990) extended and enlarged his framework in order to develop more formal, mathematical models of rational action. Rational choice theorists are more mathematical in their orientation than logical. The theory assumes that complex social phenomena can be explained in terms of the elementary individual actions of which they are composed. The theory according to Elster (1989) holds that the elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. He argues that to explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as a result of the action and the interaction of individual.

The rational choice theory assumes that individuals are seen to be motivated by the wants or goals that express their preferences. They act within specific parameters, given the constraints and on the basis of information that they have about the conditions under which they are acting. Since it is impossible for individuals to achieve all the various things that they want, they must also make choices on the basis of both their goals and the means for attaining these goals. Coleman (1973) says that the rational choice theory is based on the premise that individuals must always anticipate the outcomes of alternative courses of action and calculate that which will be best for them. In effect, the theory believes that rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction. Given this premise, one can observe therefore that the theory starts with the

actions of the individual and tries to judge other social phenomena as reducible to individual actions.

The rational choice theory believes that human behavior, like animal behavior, is not free but determined (Blau 1964). It is shaped by the rewards and punishments that are encountered. People practice things or behaviors that lead to rewards and avoid what is punishable. Therefore, reinforcements through rewards and punishments, is the determining factor in human behavior. The behavior can therefore be studied in purely external and objective terms – that people learn from past experiences and that is all one needs to know in order to explain behavior. This argument ignores the crucial role that the environment does in determining one's behavior.

In social interaction (Coleman, 1990) argues, individuals are involved in mutual reinforcement. Each participant's behavior rewards or punishes the other, and their joint behavior develops through this exchange of rewards and punishments. Coleman notes that while any behavior can, in principle, reinforce the behavior of another, approval is the most fundamental human goal. Approval can reinforce a variety of specialized activities. Therefore individuals are likely to adopt behavior, which they think will be approved by others. What this theory does not explain is how some individuals decide to behave in ways contrary to others, even when they know that their behaviors are not likely to be approved by others. It does not take into account the fact that individuals sometimes decide to behave in ways contrary to the popular norm even when they clearly understand the consequences of doing so.

The rational choice theory has very direct relevance to the subject of this study in the sense that it points to the individual and personality factors that encourage people to act on the basis of rationality. If human beings are rational then they can be expected to use their senses, facts and experiences to make deliberate and rational choices in life. In this regard, women can make rational choices to become single mothers.

The theory of rational choice has some inherent weaknesses in that it denies the existence of any kinds of action other than the purely rational reactions. All social action according to the theory can be seen as rationally motivated, as instrumental action, however much it may appear to be irrational. The theory does not take cognizance of the equally important determinants of individual actions or behavior such as the environment, gender and culture.

For our purposes it suffices to note that single motherhood can be a matter of personal choice just as much as it can be a conditional choice. Under certain circumstances before becoming single mothers, many young women take time to evaluate the implications of being this kind of a mother. But some are simply caught up in the situation and because they have no choice, decide to be single mothers. But those who take time to evaluate their situation forecast on the future and basically weigh the pros and the cons of becoming a single mother. While doing so they rely heavily on their perceptions and attitudes, and experiences they have gone through themselves or heard from their friends and consciously reach the decision to become single mothers. In such a situation, such

women may be seen to have taken rational choices. Some of them may be using their personal experiences with boyfriends or ex-husbands or even current husbands to make the decision to become single mothers. At this point they will not be taking the values and norms of society into consideration, but their own personal values and those maintained by their role models, significant others and close associates. Many women are therefore believed to have become single mothers because they have made a choice do so even though the choice may be a result of pressure from peers and/or significant others.

It should not be assumed rational choice is the only factor that explains single motherhood. As already explained before, women can become single mothers due to many other reasons. The PATH way to single motherhood can be as diverse as the reasons for taking the decision to become a single mother. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind all the factors, some of which may be voluntary, conditional or unconditional.

2.8.4 The Psychoanalytic Perspective

Sigmund Freud has been given much credit worldwide for being the first psychologist to formulate a comprehensive theory of human development. The psychoanalytic perspective is one of great significance to sociologists and social psychologists as far as its explanation of personality development is concerned.

Freud (1974) observes that identification is the basis of superego formation. He sees the superego as the basis of the process of assimilation of one ego to another, with one coming to resemble the other. The result of this process is that the first ego adopts the behavioral characteristics of the second. This often involves cognitive development and "motivation to achieve." Identification is a very important form of attachment to someone else, probably the very first to matter in the child's life. The developed superego in Freud's view is as a result of the successful identification with the parental agency. Freud also describes the role of the father in facilitating the development of appropriate sex orientation and roles. His theory emphasizes the crucial role of identification with the parent of the opposite sex and the resolution of the Oedipus complex at the appropriate time. He argues that failure of girls or boys to resolve the Oedipus complex might lead to failure in both boys and girls in later life to relate sexually with a person of the opposite sex. Instead such people may want to relate with someone of the same sex, thereby promoting homosexuality and/or bisexuality.

The initial attachment of child to mother has led many a scholar to argue that the father does not play a significant role in the child's life. Fathers have often mistakenly been viewed as being less important in the child's life, as they spend little time with children and may serve no appreciable function in the child's life as long as there is somebody to adequately take the place of the mother in her absence (William 1963). One may observe in addition that fathers play a key role in children's development in both direct and indirect ways. The presence of a father in a home alone is a good reason for a child to feel secure and there develop in a secure environment. His involvement in

communication with the child is absolutely crucial in spurring the transfer of positive personality attributes and stimulating cognitive development.

Recent researches have proved such assumption wrong as the role of father in child's cognitive development has been discovered to be significant (Lamb, 1976, 1978; Schlesinger, 1970; Williams, 1969). Identification or modeling theory suggests that girls become feminine by imitating the behavior and attitudes of their mothers, whereas boys become masculine by imitating their fathers. Imitation or identification with the parent of the same sex is one important mechanism through which gender appropriate behavior may be acquired. Therefore, it would be erroneous to suggest that the role of father is insignificant in the child's development. Even prior to this later attachment to parents of same sex, the father is significant as far as the resolution of the child's oedipal complex stage is concerned irrespective of the sex of the child. Thus, identification with both parents is very crucial both for cognitive development and acquisition of appropriate roles and behaviors in children.

The absence of a male model for girls may have considerable effect later in life in male-female relationships, especially when it comes to courting and choice of a marriage partner. According to the proponents of psychoanalysis, the girls that have been brought up in the absence of a father image may have the propensity to engage in early dating, early marriage, and unstable relationships, leading to increased incidence of marital breakdown (Williams, 1969; Luella, 1959). The girls may also get pregnant pre-maturely and thus drop out of school, and consequently become single mothers. However, one

needs to be cautions with this kind of argument given that it does not necessarily apply to all daughters of single mothers. On the contrary, some single mothers may be aware of the possible problems their daughters may experience and work hard to avert them. While, the trend seems to suggest that many girls from single – mother families become pregnant at early ages, there are a good number who receive adequate preparation and guidance from their mothers and other significant others to prevent premarital pregnancies.

The psychoanalytic theory has been criticized by contemporary writers on two premises: the lack of emphasis on environmental factors which are essential to social change and human development; and its analysis of familial antecedents in a narrow way that ignores the significance of the broader societal context (Williams, 1969). Williams (1969), observes that environmental factors, which the theory is silent about, are necessary determinants of personality and that not only clinical evidence should be adduced to support the theory. The environmental factors referred to here refer to the society as a whole. He feels that certain environmental conditions such as social class, culture and historical events should be investigated. Brown (1973), points out that when the micro-sociological understanding of familial life is divorced from the broader social context as it is true with most Freudian literature in the form of a historical conceptualization, then the psychoanalytic perspective loses its meaning and substance. In understanding the role of psychoanalytic perspective in explaining consequences of father-absent socialization, we should extend our analysis to include not only the family and the individual factors but also the larger society.

2.8.6 Summary and conceptual framework

There is significant evidence suggesting that single motherhood and the incidence of out-of-wedlock births are results of rapid social change that has taken place in most African societies in the last two to three decades. The shift from traditional society to modernity in African societies under industrial developments triggered off a chain of transformations in various structures in society. The transformations range from the smallest social unit, the family, to the entire society. Many of the changes are occurring so rapidly leaving many gaps in different sectors of society and basically threatening the functions of most social structures. The result is various anomalous behaviors that do not conform to the ideals of society. As we have argued before, decision to become a single mother can also be a matter of rational choice. Individuals can weigh their options and make the most sensible choice, which might be to become a single mother. There are therefore social, structural and personal determinants of single motherhood.

The psychoanalytic perspective is heavily criticized on grounds that its development was based on clinical trials and treatment for mental patients. However, it is important to note that aspects of the perspective are useful and can be used in sociological discourse. The perspective, though not a theory by itself, provides an understanding of certain human behaviors. In fact, it has been said that every human being has a certain level of insanity. The insane too have some amount of sanity. Therefore even though the perspective is based on clinical studies of mental patients, there is much about them that makes them respond as normal human beings. Secondly, in developing the perspective, the psychoanalysts relied on patterns that were observable from a reasonable sample over a

period of time. Therefore, though it has its own weaknesses, it is so far among the best theoretical considerations in studying cognitive and personality development. This study uses only the relevant sections of the perspective and not the whole. Certainly, there are various parts of the perspective that, used in the correct context, could provide deeper understanding of the controversial issues related to child development and single motherhood.

Most family theories including social change theories have been developed outside Africa and perhaps from observation of situations or social contexts that are not common to Africa. The same case applies to the other theories adapted for this study such as the social experience model, social cognitive theory and theory of reasoned action. Usually there are two typical responses among scholars wishing to apply these theories. Some people have rejected these theories as irrelevant, while others have taken them wholesale. Our approach in this study is different, we have tried to establish some middle ground by critically analyzing the theories, taking what is applicable to our situation and repudiating what is irrelevant.

Theories alone cannot adequately and effectively explain all social phenomena. Therefore, a conceptual framework is used to illustrate the relationships between society, single-mother families and education of the girl child. The framework on the next page is developed based on the theoretical framework, literature review and the key findings of this study. It illustrates the causes of single motherhood and how it can affect the education of the girl child. The framework shows that some popular believes about single

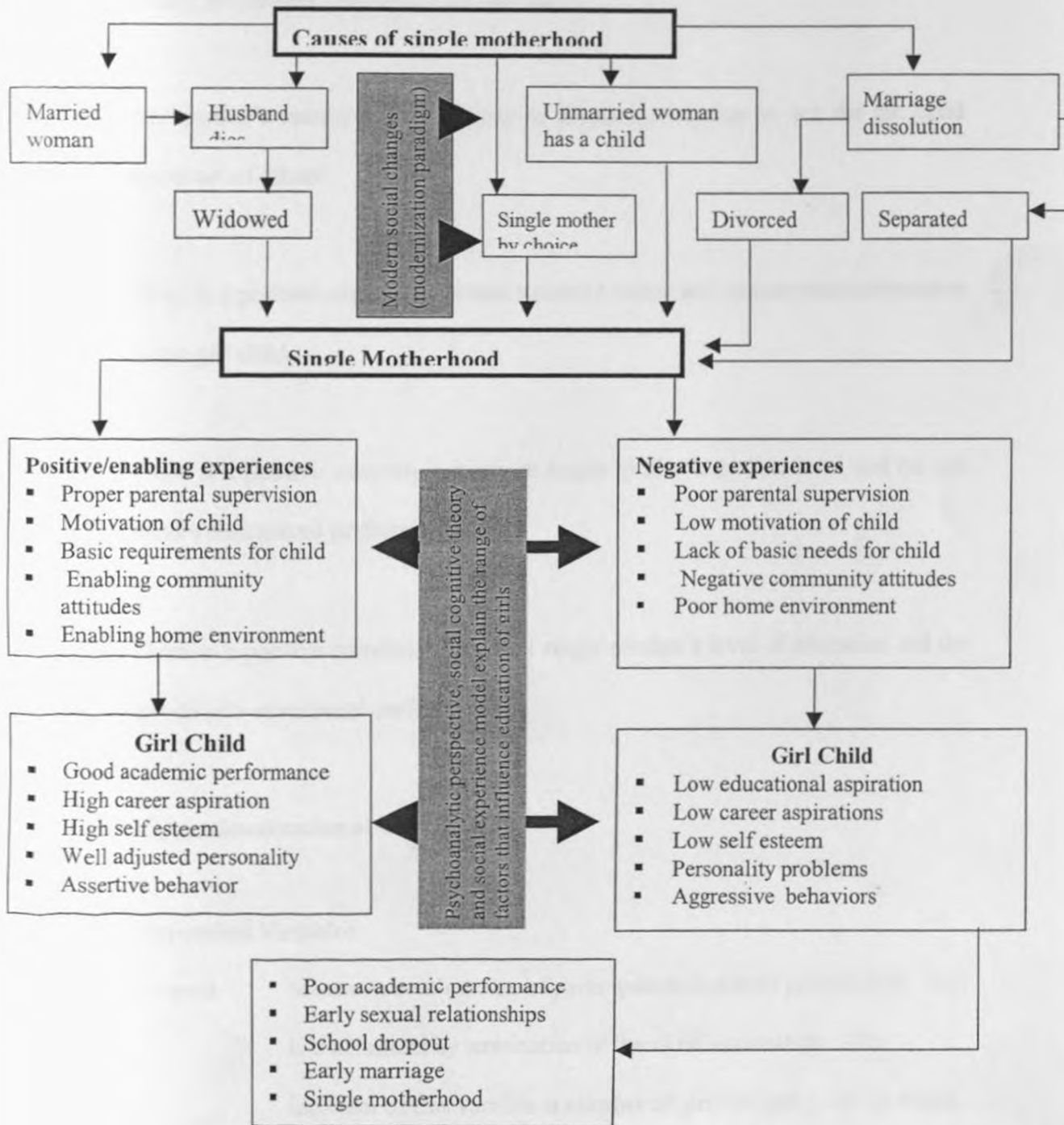
mothers and their daughters' educational performance, as well as other behavioral outcomes are not necessarily a result of single motherhood. It also shows that daughters of single mothers can turn out to be well adjusted and capable of satisfactory academic performance.

One of the interesting observations to note is the possibility of some of the girls from single mother families becoming single mothers, themselves, an observation that many scholars had made before. The framework suggests that some of the factors that may affect the education of the girl child may not necessarily be emanating from the mother, rather they may be society driven.

Some of the causal associations indicated by the arrows may not be obvious but they suggest that one variable may indeed have some effect on the other. There are direct causal lines between the child's work and the family, the schools and the child's personal characteristics. These direct lines simply tell us that any of these factors could affect children's achievement independently or in conjunction with other factors. Many factors and not merely marital status of the mother affect the educational performance as well as growth and development of daughters of single mothers.

Understanding the Implications of Single Motherhood on the Girl child's Education and Development – A Conceptual Framework

(Author: Radeny, S. 2003)



2.9 The Study Hypotheses

The following are testable hypotheses for this study:

- H₁. The mother's marital status is likely to determine whether or not the girl child drops out of school.
- H₂. There is a positive correlation between marital status and educational performance of the girl child.
- H₃. There is a positive correlation between single mother's income level and the girl child's educational performance.
- H₄. There is a positive correlation between single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance.

2.9.1 Operationalization of Variables

a) Dependent Variables

School dropout: Means discontinuation of participation in school prematurely. This is determined by termination of the child's education. The indicator of this variable is number of girls dropping out of school.

Educational performance:

Refers to how well a child is doing in class. The indicator of performance is class positions of the girl for at least four succeeding terms, and also her involvement in non-examinable activities such as sports, debates, and theatre or drama.

b) Independent Variable

The independent variables in this study are marital status, education and income levels of the mother.

Marital status:

Marital status is an indication of whether or not one is married. For single mothers, marital status is broken down into ever married, divorced, separated, or widowed. These are the indicators of this variable.

Education level:

Refers to the highest education level attained. It is determined by last class in school or level in college attained. The last completed class in school is the indicator of this variable.

Level of income:

Refers to money received during a certain period as wages or salary, irrespective of source. The indicator of income is the amount of money earned in a month or year.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the study looked at relevant literature and the theoretical orientations that not only help to put the research questions into perspective, but also establish the social connections between the phenomenon of single motherhood and its concomitant implications on girl child formal education and performance. These chapters basically are a reflection and synthesis of what exists and how they relate to the current research topic. In this new chapter, the study presents the methodology that is used to arrive at the key findings and to justify the conclusions and recommendations. Babbie, (1995) defines methodology as the science of finding out. It is a branch of epistemology, which the same author describes as the science of knowing. In other words methodology can be defined as a scientific procedure that guides the collection and analysis of data from research subjects. It is a description of how a study is conducted: how the data are collected, how they are analyzed and how they are presented. These three 'hows' are very crucial in social science research because they help the researcher to make conclusions based on the study questions, assumptions and hypotheses. The methodology also helps to justify the validity of the findings and facilitates replicability of a similar study in other environments.

This chapter represents an important part of the study, as it presents the various steps and means the researcher used to collect, analyze and present data. As most researchers (Babbie, 1995; Moser, 1971; Schutt, 1996) say, the quality of a study lies not on the scope and quantity of the data collected, but on the accuracy of the methods and efficiency of the tools used to collect the data.

In this study both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in data collection and analysis. This is a clear departure from the conventional approaches that are purely based on either quantitative or qualitative methods. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was deliberate, given the nature of the study topic. Studying single motherhood requires the use of creative methods if one expects the research to make substantial contribution to the field of sociology. Previous studies on other aspects of unmarried mother families (Liku, 1987; Mbabu, 1982) report that most single mothers are quite uncomfortable being questioned. Most of them feel intimidated and interrogated when researchers ask questions that relate to their private life. However, these feelings are likely to reduce significantly when the mothers are “interviewed” in groups. They are more likely to speak up about their experiences than when they are interviewed individually.

3.2 Description of the research site

Kisumu City⁵ was selected purposively as the site for this study. It was selected for being a small enough city that would not overstretch the logistics capacity of the research team. The municipal and administrative boundaries are few and relatively well demarcated unlike those in Nairobi and Mombasa, which make sampling and identification of households a tedious task. Unlike other major towns in Kenya, Kisumu has not been over-researched. In addition, previous studies show that single motherhood resulting from divorce or separation, and women choosing to remain unmarried is associated more with the urban than the rural communities. Such women are likely to receive more family support from relatives and friends. This makes them different than the single mothers in the urban areas, most of whom are likely to have ran away from the rural areas to avoid community or public ridicule, shunning and pressure on them to get married.

Kisumu is one of largest the nine districts forming Nyanza Province. It lies within Longitudes 33 20'E and Latitudes 0 20' South and 0 50' South. The district is bordered by Rachuonyo District to the south west, Kisii District to the south, Nandi District to the north east, Bomet District to the east, Vihiga District to the north west and Siaya District to the west. The district covers a total area of 2,660 sq. km of which 567 sq. km is under water. (District Development Plan, 1997-2002.)

The district can be divided into 3 topographical zones, namely the Kano plains, the

⁵ In 2001, President Daniel Moi upgraded Kisumu to city status during a public function in the lakeside town.

upland area of Nyabondo plateau and the midland areas of Maseno. The Kano plains lie on the floor of the Rift Valley, which is a flat stretch bordered to the north and east by the escarpment, while the upland area comprises ridges, which rise gently to an altitude of 1,835m above sea level.

The mean annual maximum temperatures range from 25 to 30 degrees centigrade, while the mean annual minimum temperatures range from 9 degrees centigrade to 18 degrees centigrade, following the altitude variation from 1,144 meters above sea level on the plains to 1,525 meters above sea level in the Maseno and lower Nyakach areas. This has influenced the type of rainfall received in the district.

Kisumu District is divided into eight administrative divisions, fifty-one locations and one hundred and fifty-eight sub-locations. The divisions are Winam, Maseno, Nyando, Muhoroni, Lower Nyakach, Kadibo, Miwani and Upper Nyakach. The divisional headquarters are fairly accessible in terms of telecommunications and the road network.

There are seventeen electoral wards in the City of Kisumu, twenty-eight in the County Council of Kisumu and six in Ahero Urban Council. The City of Kisumu, which is situated in Winam Division, is the largest and most important urban center in Western Kenya being the nerve center of various commercial activities.

The district presently has five constituencies, namely: Kisumu City, Kisumu Rural, Muhoroni, Nyando and Nyakach constituencies. Except for Kisumu town constituency,

which covers Winam Division and Kisumu rural constituency, which covers Maseno Division, all the other three constituencies cover two divisions each.

The district's population in 1989 was 664,086 people. Given an annual growth rate of 3.35 percent it is projected to rise to 868,167 by 1997, to 928,320 by 1999 and to 992,647 in 2001. In 1989 there were more females than males. This was particularly so in ages 10-29 years and 45-49 years. Over the plan period, the female population is projected to continue to dominate especially in the age groups indicated. The youthful population 0-19 years comprised 57.3% of the total population in 1989. This youthful population will continue to dominate the total population over the plan period. The increase in youthful population is attributed to improved health, which has reduced infant mortality as well as improved living standards.

Winam Division had the highest population in 1989 followed by Muhoroni/Miwani and Maseno, while upper and lower Nyakack had the least population. Over the plan period the first three divisions will continue to lead in population sizes while the other two will have the least. The high population of Winam is attributed to urbanization. Kisumu Town, the third largest town in Kenya, is found in this division. The town attracts people mostly from Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley Provinces. This population is expected to increase more during the plan period as more industrial activities are undertaken. Maseno Division has also high population, as it is an educational center. This is also expected to increase as more educational facilities are put up.

The district had an overall population density of 317 persons/km squared in 1989 and is projected to increase to 415, 443 and 474 in 1977, 1999 and 2001 respectively. Winam Division leads the district in population densities followed by Maseno, Upper Nyakach and Lower Nyakach. Muhoroni/Miwani had the least population density in 1989.

The high population density for Winam Division is attributed to the urban status of the division and its being the district and provincial headquarters. The low population densities for Muhoroni/Miwani are attributed to the large-scale sugar farms in the divisions. The increasing population densities are a threat to the available resources, especially land, which will require rational utilization to sustain the population.

The district had an urban population of 214,699 in 1989. It is projected to increase to 273,590, 290,685 and 308,844 in 1997, 1999 and 2001 respectively (Kisumu District Development Plan, 1997-2002). Kisumu is the largest urban centre in the district. Other urban centres are Ahero, Kombewa, Muhoroni, Sondu, Chemelil and Maseno. It has 130 primary and 27 secondary schools. Most of these, especially primary schools, are public and are run by the municipal council. Most schools are day with a few girls and boys-only boarding schools.

3.2 Research Methodology

This study adopted a social survey design with control and experimental groups. Although there are many other even better methods, this design was taken not only because of the universality of survey methods, but also a well-designed social survey can

enhance ones understanding of just about any social. Schutt, (1996: 266) a scientific process in which information is obtained from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions about themselves or others. A social survey can be designed to investigate a cause-effect relationship (like in child-single mother) or to shed fresh light on some aspects of a sociological theory (Moser, 1971).

This study takes a significant departure from the conventional methodology in social science research by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The major advantage of this approach is that the qualitative data illuminates quantitative data and therefore enhances the quality of the study (Debus, 1996). Instead of purely statistics-based (quantitative) approach to surveys, this study adds a dialogic angle to data collection and analysis. In collecting data, the researcher not only entered into dialogue with the subjects of the research but its participatory nature allowed them (subjects) to synthesize the relevance of the discussions to their lives and to interact in a personal way with the researcher and amongst themselves. The conventional research methodologies have always assumed that subjects are ignorant people who cannot participate in their own research and use the research to change their lifestyles (Arnfred, 1994; Walliman, 2001). In the current study, the subjects were able to learn through the focus group discussions and the case studies. The discussions were done openly and in a transparent way with the objective of helping the participants to benefit. Arnfred (1994) argues that by incorporating qualitative methods into quantitative research, the positions of the researcher and the subjects (researched) are open and shifting. The researcher becomes a kind of mediator in a mutual learning process, in which the participants find a

shared focus and a common language.

Since the study adopted a survey design, it focused on part (sample) of the population of single and married mothers and their daughters in Kisumu City. According to Babbie (1995:226), a sample is defined as a special sub-set of a population observed for purposes of making inferences about the nature of the total population. Sampling is therefore an important concept in social research. It is based on the premise that in doing research, it is impossible to interview all the subjects; you have to select some of them who would represent the entire group. The theory of probability requires that each subject in the population must have an equal chance of being included in the sample (Schutt, 1996; Babbie, 1995; Blalock, 1981). Probability sampling methods make it possible to calculate the size of the sample in order to give results with maximum precision (Moser, 1971).

3.2.1 Sources of data /units of analysis

The main sources of data for this study were single mother, married mothers and their sons and daughters. The mothers provided information regarding their role in either motivating or depressing the education of their daughters, while the girls provided information relating to how they perceived their own educational performance in comparison to that of girls and boys from two-parent families. However, schoolteachers were included in the study and provided supplementary information based on their experiences with the daughters of single mothers. The teachers were useful in confirming and/or clarifying some of the information and data collected from the girls and their mothers regarding the girls' academic performance *vis a vis* girls and boys for the two-

parent families.

3.2.2 Sampling procedure adopted by the study

The respondents in this study were selected from Primary and Secondary schools, and mothers living within the City of Kisumu. A multi-stage sampling method was used to identify the children and their mothers. Multi-stage sampling refers to the sampling procedure in which the researcher uses multiple stages to identify the sample (Babbie, 1995:217). For instance, the researcher may begin by selective a few clusters (also called cluster sampling), stratifying each, designing a sampling frame and using either simple random or systematic methods to select study respondents.

The first stage involved selection of five clusters (estates) from the City using a simple random method. Kondele, Manyatta, Nyalenda, Pand Pieri and Milimani were selected. In each estate, the number of primary and secondary schools was enumerated. Schools were of particular interest to this study because it was there that the study subjects were sampled. Each of the clusters had about 10 primary and 2 secondary schools. From each cluster two primary and two secondary schools were selected. (However, Pand Pieri, had no secondary schools.) Thus, a total of 10 primary and eight secondary schools were selected as shown Table 1.

Table 1: List of sampled schools

Primary schools	Secondary school
1. Kudho	1. New Kisumu High
2. Kisumu union	2. Kisumu boys
3. lake	3. Kisumu girls
4. Kosawo	4. Lions high
5. Joel Omino	5. Joel Omino
6. Kibuye mixed	6. Kodiaga
7. Highway	7. St. Teresa's
8. Manyatta Arab	8. Kisumu Day
9. Central	
10. Aga khan	
Out of about 130 primary schools (7.7 percent)	Out of 27 secondary schools (29.6 percent)

In each of these schools, girls from both two-parent and single-mother families in classes Seven, Eight, and Forms Three to Four, were identified for interview. The reason for choosing these four classes was because it was believed that at this stage the students are capable of responding competently to interview questions. Students in these classes were also assumed to have stayed in their schools long enough to allow for a realistic analysis of the performance and educational experiences. The choice of this group enabled the researcher to get a good record of the students' academic performance for a period of not less than a year. In each school, 10 girls from single mother-families and about eight from the two-parent families (including boys) were selected using simple random sampling method. The names of the girls and boys were listed and entered into a lottery, from which the required number was selected. A total of children from the two types of families to 312 were selected. The inclusion of boys and girls from the two-parent families was done to provide for control against which the results of the study would be compared.

The selection of mothers was conducted through their children who were identified and interviewed in schools. Each student interviewed in school was given a letter to take to his/her mother requesting her to attend a meeting at an identified place. The meeting places included church compound, homes and social halls where they were interviewed. Some of the interviews with mothers were conducted in the schools during weekends when the schools were not on session. The researcher decided not to interview parents in schools (or when they were on sessions) to avoid any suspicion or humiliation as would have happened if the mothers were called to and interviews held at the school. The response rate for mothers was rather low. As a result only 178 single mothers and 41 married mothers were interviewed. The 41 mothers from two-parent families were the control group.

In each school, one teacher, either the head teacher or in his/her absence the career or guidance and counseling master or mistress, was interviewed. The schoolteachers interviewed were 15. The complete study sample was distributed as follows:

Table 2: The survey sample

Target group	Male	Female	Total
1. Children – Experimental	--	173	173
2. Children-control	69	70	139
3. Mothers experimental	--	178	178
4. Mothers – control	--	41	41
5. School teachers	7	8	15
Total	76	470	546

Since the study included qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, some of the mothers who were interviewed using questionnaires were recruited for Focus Group

Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). To facilitate the arrangement of the focus group discussions, about 14 mothers were invited each day to participate in the FGDs.

3.3 Data collection techniques used by the study

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used. The quantitative methods relied mainly on questionnaires (interview schedules), while qualitative methods included, Focus Group Discussions⁶ (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs)⁷, and case studies⁸. The researcher conducted data collection with the help of four research assistants. The four research assistants, all from Kisumu City, were trained for a week on research methodology: data collection and recording. Some of them had participated in data collection before, but it was essential to train them again because the subject they were going to handle was a unique and sensitive one.

3.3.1 Interview schedules for collecting quantitative data

Since this was a social survey, two standard questionnaires, one for mothers and the other for their children, were used as the main tools for data collection. The questionnaires administered mainly through personal interview schedules by both the researcher and the

⁶ A focus group discussion is the use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan, 1988:12)

⁷ Ulin (2002:46) defines in-depth interview as an information gathering process in which the researcher establishes a one to one relationship with the informant or respondent. In an in-depth interview, information comes from the thoughtful reflection of one person, aided by exchange with the interviewer.

⁸ For the purposes of this study, a case study may be defined as a systematic documentation of a situation, experience or process meant to provide lessons to inform or guide a particular course of action.

research assistants.

The questionnaires contained both open and closed-ended and types questions. Walliman (2001) recommends the use of both types of questions together in the same questionnaires to arrive at more detailed generalization. Moser (1971) points out that while using a combination of open and closed ended questions, researchers should always ask a series of questions beginning with open types and going over to pre-coded ones as the subject becomes more clearly structured, enabling more specific questions to be asked. Open-ended questions were used to obtain data on the opinion of the respondents and to probe for further details.

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussions for collecting qualitative data

Fourteen (14) FGDs were held with single mothers from Kisumu City. A FGD guide was developed for this purpose. The mothers were selected from the group that attended the meeting at the church, school or social hall. The mothers were recruited into discussion groups according to the venues where they were interviewed. However, before the interviews and FGDs, mothers' consent was sought. Most of the mothers did not object to the interview or discussion. Only a few declined because they had other pressing commitments. A focus group discussion guide was used during the group discussion to enhance consistency and to capture the key issues that the study sought to investigate. All the FGDs were tape recorded to ensure that the note takers captured all discussions. The tapes were consequently transcribed to strengthen the hand written notes.

3.3.3 Key informant interviews for generating qualitative data

Thirteen (13) in-depth interviews (IDIs) were also conducted with schools teachers, especially the career masters or mistresses. Other in-depth interviews were conducted with selected key informants such as guidance and counseling teachers, mothers, and religious leaders. Appropriate question guides were used for this purpose. The researcher conducted all the in-depth interviews. An in-depth question guide was used for this purpose. During the interviews, the interviewer used a tape recorder to ensure that the whole discussion was captured.

3.4.4 Case Studies for generating qualitative data

During the fieldwork three single mothers were interviewed in depth over a couple of days. Their responses were recorded as case studies. The case studies provided additional insights on experiences of single women with regard to the education of their children. The decision to include case studies in this study was influenced by the assumption that single motherhood had varying effects on the education of the girl child, and perhaps a case study would be a powerful tool in determining the aspects of single motherhood that greatly affected girls' education. As we have pointed out before, interview schedules tend to be invasive of interviewees' privacy, but a case study conducted appropriately, creates a good atmosphere for the researcher and the respondent to develop rapport thereby enabling the respondent to provide information in a relaxed manner.

ble 3 shows the number of FGDs, IDIs, and case studies conducted in this study.

Table 3: FGD and IDI Sample

	Target	FGD	IDI	Case studies
1	Separated women < 30 years	1	--	--
2	Separated women > 30 years	2	--	--
3	Never married < 30 years	2	--	--
4	Never married > 30 years	2	--	--
5	Widowed women < 30 years	2	--	--
6	Widowed women > 30 years	2	--	--
7	Widowed women – 40 years	--	1	--
8	Mixed group	2	--	--
9	Community leader (female)	--	1	--
10	Community leader (male)	--	1	--
11	School teachers	1	10	--
12	Case studies (female)	--	--	3
	Total	14	13	3

3.4 Data Analysis

Data from the study's questionnaires were cleaned and entered in the computer. They were subsequently analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 8.0 for Windows Program. This program was used because it makes data entry less tedious and allows for multiple analyses such as test of significance, independence, correlation, and regression, all of which were crucial to this study. For qualitative data, manual transcriptions rather than computer software was used because of the relatively small amount of data that was collected. The case studies were described according to emerging themes and analyses of the key findings completed and compared to the survey findings.

Descriptive methods of data analysis, for instance, proportions, percentages, means and ratios were used and findings presented in tables, charts, frequency distributions and graphs. Quantitative (non-parametric test) methods of data analysis were used to test the hypotheses. The study hypotheses were tested using the chi-square test of independence.

The chi-square (X^2)⁹ test enabled the researcher to establish whether or not two variables are independent. Two variables are often by definition independent if the probability that a case falls into a given cell is simply the product of the marginal probability of the two categories defining the cell. A statistic often used by researchers to test the hypothesis that the row and column variables are independent is the Pearson chi-square. It is calculated by summing over all cells, the squared residuals divided by the expected frequencies.

Certain conditions must be fulfilled for the chi-square distribution to be a good approximation of the distribution of the statistic. The data must be random samples and the expected values must not be too small. While it has been recommended that all expected frequencies be at least 5, studies show that this is probably too stringent and can be relaxed. For that reason SPSS displays the number of cells with expected frequencies less than 5 and minimum cell value (SPSS manual, 1993). It also provides the minimum expected frequencies that must be observed in all cells for the analyses to be statistically meaningful. To measure the strength of association between variables the contingency

⁹ In a covariate or multivariate analyses, the chi-square test is used to determine whether or not the variables are independent. It is always assumed that the variables under investigation are independent. For this to be true, the pearson (P) value must be equal or more than 0.05. If it is less ($P < 0.05$) then the association between the variables is considered significant (SPSS, 1993)

coefficient¹⁰ was used.

3.5 Difficulties experienced during fieldwork

While the study was generally successful, a few difficulties were experienced. Most of these difficulties were anticipated and attempts were made before hand to deal with them. The first challenge was in the identification of children from single –mother families. The researcher used an anonymous method asking children to indicate yes or no to three key questions on a piece of paper: “Do you live with your mother and father? Is your mother currently married? Is your mother currently single? These three questions were used to identify girls from single-mother families. However, in some schools, most children indicated that they came from single-mother homes, which was not necessarily true. It was learned that around the same time some organizations had been to these schools trying to identify orphaned children who need to be supported in their education. Despite the clear explanation of the purpose of the study, the children obviously thought that the researcher was acting on behalf of one of the agencies. While it was possible to tell who was not from a single-mother home by the way the children answered the questions, it caused the research team twice the amount of time they need to spend in each school because they had to redo the sampling in such cases.

The number of widowed mothers was far greater than single or separated mothers contrary to the researcher’s expectation. While the reality is that there are many widows

¹⁰ Contingency coefficient measures the strength of association between two variables. For a perfect positive association, the coefficient value must not be less than 1. A value of 0 means there is no association, while any value below 1 means a weak association (SPSS, 1993).

in the area as a result of the HIV and AIDS scourge, this was to the disadvantage of the study since it overshadowed the other types of single mothers. The researcher assumed that there would be more or less a similar number of the various types of single mother. However, this problem did not affect the analyses of the study since this was done with the proportion of each category of single mothers in mind.

In a couple of instances, respondents asked for payment before or after they were interviewed. They told the researcher "you are going to be paid a lot of money for collecting information from us. Since we won't see you again, you should pay us."

The researcher had difficulties convincing them that he had no money to give away. The researcher told the mothers that he was a student and that the research would not only be useful in his education but would also be used by the government and concerned development agencies to advocate for implementation of activities aimed at improving the status of single mothers. The more understanding mothers helped to convince their colleagues.

Finally, a couple of times, mothers failed to honor appointments even though there was enough proof that they had received invitations. Apparently most did not attend when they learned that they would not be compensated in any way for their time. This problem forced the researcher to extend the period of fieldwork much longer than was originally planned. This was the most challenging difficulty. In an effort to correct the situation, the researcher sent children with another letter asking their mothers to confirm their availability before the date of the interview. This helped a great deal as it enabled the researcher to plan better knowing how many appointments he made had in a day.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented using a variety of methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data, including case studies, results of FGDs and IDIs are presented. The qualitative data is presented alongside quantitative data. Qualitative data are used to shed additional light on the emerging themes or key findings or to confirm quantitative findings. The findings are organized appropriately according to emerging themes and presented in frequency tables and graphs. Appropriate measurements such as percentages, fractions and ratios are used to present the data. The primary source of data were the single mothers. However, supplementary data was collected from their children, teachers as well as married mothers. The findings presented in this section relate to socio-demographic characteristics of mothers and their children, child enrollment, participation and performance in school. An attempt is made to identify core determinants of these variables and to determine to what extent they effect the education of the girl child.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Mothers

The study undertook to identify certain socio-demographic characteristics of respondents that could have effect on the educational enrollment and performance of the girls. These include age, marital status, ethnicity, occupation, income, and education. These characteristics for both mothers and children are described in this section and used for

analysis in subsequent sections of the thesis.

4.1.1 Mother's age

During the survey, 219 women were interviewed. Their ages ranged from 20 to 60 years.

However, most (35 percent) of those who participated in the study were aged between 30 and 44 years with the majority falling within the age group 30-34 years (23.3 percent).

Table 4 shows the distribution of mothers by age.

Table 4: Distribution of mothers by age

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative frequency
20-24	17	7.8	7.8
25-29	32	14.6	22.6
30-34	51	23.3	46.1
35-39	42	19.2	65.4
40-44	34	15.5	81.1
45-49	22	10.0	91.2
50-54	12	5.5	96.8
55-59	6	2.7	99.1
≥ 60	3	1.4	100
	219	100	

Respondents of focus groups discussions (FGDs) were divided according to two age groups: those who were younger than 30 years and those above 30 years. Most of the in-depth interviews (IDI) participants were more than 34 years old. The mothers were selected for interview through their children, and the researcher did not play a role in determining the age of respondents. However, as expected most mothers with children in class Five and above were likely to be at least 30 years of age. This shows that single mothers are mainly younger women below the age of 40 years, an age when most of women bring up their children. This could have implications on the way they bring up their children.

4.1.2 Ethnicity

The study sought to establish the effect of ethnicity on child education. The majority, (83.6 percent) of the respondents belonged to the Luo community. The City of Kisumu is located within Kisumu District, which is inhabited mainly by the Luo. Other respondents belonged to Luyia (7.8 percent), Gusii (3.2 percent), Kalenjin (1 percent) and other communities (4.5 percent). Equally, participants in the FGDs and IDI were mostly from the Luo community. This implies that most of the conclusions that will be drawn from the study will apply mainly to the Luo community rather than single mothers in general.

4.1.3 Marital status

Marital status is among the key independent variables of this study. The effect of marital status of the mother on girls' educational participation and performance is a central question for the study. The majority of respondents were widows (37.4%), followed by the unmarried mothers. Table 5 indicates the distribution of all respondents by their marital status.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Never married	47	21.5
Divorced	10	4.6
Separated	39	17.8
Widowed	82	37.4
¹¹ Married	41	18.7
Total	219	100

¹¹ The sample of married women should not be compared with other status since the methodology used to identify them was different (see methodology in chapter 3 for details)

The high proportions of the widows and never married mothers are particularly puzzling, especially when one compares it with the other groups of mothers. Perhaps this is a reflection of the realities in society where more women are choosing to remain unmarried and deaths, especially among men, is increasing as a result of the AIDS pandemic. These results show that indeed single motherhood is today widespread in Kenya. In the traditional African society single motherhood was rare of because strict mechanism for controlling behavior and enhancing social harmony were enforced by the society. Social deviants were either punished or isolated. Even widows were re-married to avoid single motherhood. But, today the control mechanisms have relaxed and liberalized. Certain behaviors such as celibacy and single motherhood, which were traditionally unacceptable, are today being accepted and justified. Indeed, the use of the new concept 'single-mother' family has become so common that one might think it has been in existence for as long as human history. The changes taking place in society are so rapid that they have ramified implications on the family institution. Conventionally, the family is defined as a group or social unit composed of a husband, one wife and their children. It is characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction (Nye, 1973; Goode, 1970). This is a typical western definition and disregards the African traditional family system. African traditional societies believed that individuals belonged to families and families to community, and therefore the nuclear type of family made absolutely no sense to them. It is also believed that an individual is raised by the community and not by individual parents only.

This study looked at four types of single motherhood (basically those that emerged from the sample). These include never married, separated, divorced and widowed mothers. There was a higher incidence of never married and widowed mother. A number of factors can be used to explain the incidence of mothers who choose never to get married. First it is important to take cognizance of the fact that some of these mothers are still looking for a husband. Perhaps, also, because age at marriage continues to increase (KDHS, 1998) and women tend to stay longer in their parents' home for much longer while pursuing a career or higher standards of education, they are more exposed to the risk of pregnancy outside marriage. Also, the demographic reality, which is confirmed by Population Census data, the population of women in Kenya is slightly higher than that of men. Thus, if more men continue to marry only one wife, then we shall continue to witness an increase in the number of never married single mothers.

The other factor that has contributed to the incidence of never married mothers is teenage pregnancies. Many studies have shown that unintended pregnancy is common both in and out of school (Fergusson, 1988; Okumu and Chege, 1994; Erulkar, 1998). Kenyan youth are sexually active. By age 20, over 60 percent of the youth have initiated coital activity (Ajay, 1991). Most of the youth have no or very little knowledge regarding contraceptives and therefore do not engage in protected sex. In a study in Kenyan primary and secondary schools by Fergusson (1988), it was estimated that about 10,000 students dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancy. Once pregnant most of these girls stay home and hope to get married. Unfortunately, most of the time the men who impregnate girls reject them forcing them to take responsibility for the pregnancy and

baby all by themselves. Traditionally, girls who got pregnant before marriage would be married to older men as younger wives, but today polygamy is becoming less common and the economic hardships prevailing in Kenya have discouraged men from bringing up children that they have not fathered. These changes in society have occurred as a result of modernization or transformation. Some women become single mothers because they were tricked into a relationship that did not work. Some women are known to have entered relationship and willingly got a pregnancy with the understanding from the man that it was only a matter of time before they got married. But young men are known to make such irresponsible statements and never keep their words. When they finally learn that the girl is pregnant, they suddenly change their mind and look for excuses. Tricked and rejected, the girls have to accept the reality and bring up their children to the best of their ability.

As explained by the social change theories that have been used in this study, it should also be borne in mind that the traditional mechanism for maintaining morality and controlling sexual behavior of members of society have also been rendered redundant with modernity. Thus, other forms of authorities such as churches and close family relatives have replaced the traditional mechanisms, but these are not as strict and effective as the ones enforced by clan elders in traditional African societies. This gives society room to involve in liberal behavior that is likely to lead to personal rather than community sanctioned choices. In a modernizing society, women increasingly acquire the freedom and inherent rights to make personal choices. They have the right to self-determination, which may include the choice to remain/become single mother. This

argument is supported by the modernization paradigm, anomie and the theory of rational choice theory, which are used in the study as part of the theoretical framework.

The study also observed a surprisingly high incidence of widowed mothers. The reason for this incidence is a matter of conjecture, because as much as we want to believe that certain reasons could explain the new trend, these may not be conclusive. In the last decade, the incidence of HIV/AIDS has been rising steadily in Kenya. It is estimated that about 2 million Kenyans are living with the AIDS virus and that about 500 people are dying everyday from the disease (NAS COP, 1999).

The high number of widows in the sample could be associated with the incidence of HIV/AIDS in the area. Kisumu District is among the areas in Kenya registering very high rates of prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Sentinel studies in selected health facilities show that Kisumu has the highest rates among women attending antenatal clinics (NAS COP, 1998).

The puzzling question is why men are dying leaving spouses behind rather than both dying at the same time or almost the same time. There are three possible explanations for this trend: First, the FGDs showed that most of the men who have died leaving their wives behind were previously working away from home and that they were infected earlier than their spouses. Secondly, demographic trends indicate that women generally live longer than their male counterparts (husbands). If HIV/AIDS is the cause of the high number of widows, then it will sadly be a matter of time before most of the widows die. However, there are chances that some of the men died of other causes than HIV/AIDS. Studies on sexual health (KDHS, 1998; NAS COP, 19998) show that men are more

sexually active than women and therefore their chances of infection with HIV and AIDS are much higher. The modernization perspective of change conceives single motherhood as a by-product of industrial growth. Kisumu City has become a major urban town and like other upcoming cities, is experiencing social and structural changes, some of which reflect in the increase in number of single mothers.

The AIDS prevalence varies from one region to another. Some places or regions such as Nyanza and Western have reported the highest prevalence rates. Sentinel studies in selected sites in Kisumu District for example have revealed catastrophic rates of 30-40 percent among pregnant women. As to why it is the men dying and women are left behind is yet another point for conjecture. It is believed that it is the men who infect the women. How true this point is we cannot tell. Infection of HIV can come from either woman or man. It all depends on who got it before the other. However, culturally and consistent with patriachal attitude existing within the Luo community, men are "free" to have extra marital affairs and marry more wives if they have a reason for doing so. Of course the reason can be as simple as "this sister or daughter of so and so is so beautiful." It was always beauty not love. Thus, when a sexually transmitted infection was discovered in the family – when a woman was infected – it was always believed that the man was responsible. The women were traditionally submissive and because they were overburdened with work, they hardly got any time to have extra marital affairs. But things have changed and we can confidently say that a number of HIV infections reported in Kenya today are caused by women as well. But let's assume for a while that the men are mostly responsible for new infections (of their spouses). If that assumption is true,

then it is possible that the men will have the virus earlier than their wives and will probably die sooner. It has also been observed that many men leave their wives at their rural homes while they seek employment in town. Most of these men have been reported to engage in extra marital affairs putting themselves at risk of infection. Since some of them only return home rarely, they infect their wives much later and so they are likely to die earlier because of re-infection and increase of the viral load in their blood.

The second point is that women are genetically believed to be much stronger and more immuned to illness than men. That is why demographically, they tend to live longer than men do. A study conducted in Nairobi among commercial sex workers a couple of years ago found that even though some commercial sex workers were not using protection, they were not infected with the HIV. This suggests probably that women have a strong immunity against disease than men. Thus, when they contract HIV or any other illnesses, they are likely to live longer than men are, before they die, even if they contracted the disease at the same time. All these factors could explain why there was a higher incidence of widowed mothers in the study sample.

Today, there are other forms of family arrangements that have emerged as the African traditional society becomes further liberalized (Goode, 1993). Single sex families (men marrying men and women marrying women) are becoming common and so are families based on temporal living arrangements. All these new developments have made the single-mother families become "socially acceptable" as results of liberalization process. They have not, however, become morally accepted because of the deeply rooted values

regarding expectations of marriage and family in most African societies. The reasons why women become single mothers are well known to us. There are both deliberate and non-deliberate reasons. Deliberate reasons include women deciding not to get married at all but to have children, divorce and separation. One may argue that in many cases divorce and separation may be the only option a woman has at her disposal and thus it might not be a deliberate choice. But morally, it can be argued that if two people have agreed to marry and live together because they loved each other, then the solution to their marital problems cannot be found in divorce or separation. The answer can be found through partner communication. We should not, however, diffuse or belittle the fact that many women have had to put up with abusive and overly aggressive husbands. In such cases it is justified for one to call off a marriage and even seek legal redress, for the law is against any form of violence whether at home (domestic) or otherwise. Non-deliberate causes of single motherhood include death of husband leading to widowhood, and desertion, which may also lead to separation and divorce. Whether deliberate or not, single motherhood is something that researchers and society as a whole must talk about and support as it forms a recognizable part of our society. The incidence of single motherhood in Kenya can be attributed to changes taking place in all rubrics of society, but particularly within the institution of the family. The modernization paradigm and the theory of anomie clearly illustrate the particular social and structural changes occurring in society that encourages the incidence of single mother families.

4.1.4 Number of children

The burden of childcare was an area of interest for this study. The study was interested in determining the effect of number of children on mother's ability to take care of their

children. The number of women having more than 3 children (boys or girls) is much lower than the number having less than three. Over 86 percent of the mothers had four or less children. Table 6 shows the number of children mothers had by gender.

Table 6: Number of children by gender

Number of children	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
None	36	16.4	17	7.8
1	58	26.5	72	32.9
2	58	26.5	66	30.1
3	35	16.0	37	16.9
4	20	9.1	13	5.9
5	7	3.2	9	4.1
6+	5	2.3	5	2.4

The data in the table corresponds with the national total fertility rate for a woman in Kenya which now stands at about 4.7 children per women according to the Kenya Demographic and Health survey (KDHS, 1998) The mean number of children according to the table is 4.5 (about 5 children)¹²

4.1.5 Mothers' level of education

Another independent variable this study focused on is education of the mother. The study sought to establish the effect of mother's education on girls' school performance. The education level of most mothers is surprisingly higher than one would expect though a majority possesses at least Form Four level of education. A trend similar to that observed in income levels emerges yet again; that most mothers (71.7 percent) had low

¹² This is obtained by multiplying number of children by number of mothers, the summation for all is then divided by the number of mothers with children (boys and girls separately) ranging from 1-6

level of education. Less than 15 percent of the mothers had attained above college level of education as shown in the Table 7.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by level of education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Standard 8 and below	84	38.4
Form 4	73	33.3
Form 6	4	1.8
Teacher college	27	12.3
Diploma college	21	9.6
University	10	4.6
Total	219	100

This pattern is almost similar to that for FGD respondents most of whom had form 4 and below level of education. The proportion of graduate single mothers is small but perhaps indicating the emerging role of economic autonomy in increasing the incidence of single motherhood. It is interesting to note that all the mothers had some formal education. This shows that literacy levels are improving even for women who have always had lower literacy rates than men.

4.1.6 Mothers' occupation and monthly income

Mother' occupation and income were important variables that this study undertook to analyze. Their effect on girls' education is a central concern in the study. The findings show that the majority of the mothers were employed (36.5%). Others were either self-employed or involved in some sort of petty trade (39 percent). Most of the women in this category reported that they run small business enterprises such as hawking second hand clothes, shop/kiosk-keeping and groceries. Roughly 10 percent of the mothers said they were unemployed and not involved in any income generating activity. This is a worrying

situation because these women have families and children to feed yet they have no income. It is disturbing therefore how they meet the needs of their families.

Overall, most of the mothers can be said to be relatively poor. Less than 12 percent of the mothers had a monthly income of Kshs. 10,000 and above. Most of the mothers (81.4 percent) had an income of less than 5,000. As shown in Table 8, a large proportion of mothers (29.7%) earned less than Kshs. 1,000 a month.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by monthly income

Monthly income (Kshs.)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative frequency
1,000 and below	64	29.2	29.2
2,000-1,000	50	22.8	52.0
5,000-3,000	52	23.7	75.7
9,000-6,000	27	12.3	88.0
15,000-10,000	15	6.8	94.8
20,000-15,000	8	3.6	98.5
30,000-20,000	3 ¹³	1.3	100.0
Total	219	100.0	100.0

Since most of the mothers were single (81.3 percent), one can observe that generally most single mothers in the sample were poor; a finding that is consistent with some previous studies. This study confirms that most single mothers receive low monthly incomes and experience poverty in their families. Other studies that have made this observation include Mbaabu (1982), Potash (1986), Onyango and Kayongo Male (1991), Marsden (1970) and Garfinkel (1986). But we should take note that not all single mothers are poor. There are many single mothers who have prestigious positions in the Kenyan society and have been a role model and source of encouragement and inspiration to many

¹³ The three women who earned Kshs. 20,000 and above included two graduates who

younger single mothers. Some of the single mothers started in poverty but have worked very hard to achieve their goals in life. A good example is the case study number one that is presented in this chapter. Thus, it would be erroneous to make the generalization that most single mothers are poor without recognizing those who have worked so hard against all odds to break the cycle of poverty that either they were born in or found themselves soon after they became single mothers.

Financial inadequacy/constraints in most single-mother families can be a source of distress and frustration for both mother and children. Most of the younger single mothers became pregnant perhaps while they were still in school. They had to drop out and without education or job had to settle down to a poor life. The study showed that most of the single mothers had less than form four level of education. In Kenya today, people with Form Four education and without further technical training have no guarantee of formal employment. Thus, the young women are forced to begin petty businesses, which bring very little income. Most of the income is used on meeting the most urgent family needs, even though the money can never be enough to do so. Kenya, unlike the developed west, does not have any social security system.

Poor people have no government support and single mothers have to rely on themselves to raise their children and meet the family needs. Financial problems, such as those found among families of single mothers can have serious negative implications on the mother and the children, especially the female children. Lack of basic needs such as food might

were professional women and one businesswoman.

lead to nutritional problems, while lack of essentials such as clothing and proper shelter might encourage deviant behavior and isolation. When children are isolated they may become withdrawn and exhibit further deviant and anti-social behaviors. Education of the children might be affected. From the FGDs with mothers, this study found that when faced with financial constraints, single mothers were more likely to educate the boy at the expense of the girl. Lack of school fees may force the girl to drop out of school in favor of the brother. This will affect the girl throughout her life. She might be married early and when married early there is always a tendency for girls to break such relationships within the first year, (Ahawo, 1981). They may also get pregnant prematurely and become single mothers. In fact, a study by Garfinkel (1986) found that girls/daughters of single mothers were more likely than those from two-parent families to enter into sexual relationships early, get pregnant and become like their mothers. Of course we have to take exception here because there are many families where girls have turned out very well and entered lasting marital relationships even though their mothers were single.

In view of the many demands that most single mothers experience in families, it would be hard for most single mothers to meet the needs of their families with the relatively low monthly incomes they receive.

4.1.7 Children's Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The total sample of children was 312 taken from both single-mother and two-parent types of families and distributed as follows: Boys and girls from single-mother families were 12 (6.5 percent) and 173 (93.5 percent), respectively; while boys and girls from two-parent

performance.

4.2.1 Enrolment of boys and girls

Data on school enrolment was collected both from the schools and from the mothers themselves. Sample enrollment data were taken from Central and Manyatta Primary Schools whose enrollment rates are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Enrollment rates – Central Primary School

Class	Number of boys	Number of girls
Class 1	50	70
Class 2	76	72
Class 3	75	65
Class 4	43	42
Class 5	48	50
Class 6	43	49
Class 7	44	47
Class 8	26	28

Field data collected in January 2000

Contrary to the researcher's expectation, enrolment rates in most schools were higher for girls in lower primary than for boys. The number of girls continued to be higher than boys through in Primary school but began to decline in secondary school. This shows that significant gains have been made in increasing enrollment rates for girls. The finding apparently contradicts what has been presented in most literature (CBS, 1972; Obonyo, 1994; MOE, 1994; UNICEF, 1999) and agitated by gender activists such as Federation of Women Educationalists (FAWE). However, it is important to note that this finding may not hold true in some parts of the country such as Kwale, Samburu, Mount Elgon and North Eastern districts where girls' education is still a serious concern. In these districts enrolment rates are likely to be much lower for girls right from Std 1 and the rate of drop out or wastage may be equally much higher due to the relatively less emphasis that these

communities place on girls' education (MOE, 1994).

Manyatta Primary School rates were quite interesting in that they did bring to light a trend that is not common: that in some cases there are more boys in lower primary than girls and the trend gets reversed by upper primary. This is shown on Table 10.

Table 10: Enrolment rates – Manyatta Primary School

Class	Number of boys	Number of girls
Class 1	87	80
Class 2	105	100
Class 3	122	94
Class 4	126	120
Class 5	120	98
Class 6	70	128
Class 7	96	106
Class 8	62	64

Data collected in January 2000

Mothers were asked if any of their school going children were not in school. A surprising 33.8 percent of the mothers (both single and married) said some of their children were not attending school. Most of those who were not attending school (79.2 percent) were girls.

This points to the fact that even though enrolment rates have increased for girls, they still have to fight many odds to be enrolled and more girls than boys are staying out of school.

The reasons for not attending school were given as follows: school fees problems; child refusal to continue with school; pregnancy; and lack of essential school items such as uniform. FGD participants gave the same reasons.

“Our children cannot be in school because we cannot afford to pay school fees, buy uniforms and the other thing required for learning,” a mother of six children reported.

Her colleagues echoed the same in chorus in almost all the FGD sessions. Similarly,

most of the children whom they reported staying at home were girls, especially those from widowed families. It was also reported in a FGD with never married mothers aged above 35 years that some of their daughters were not interested in school and thus stayed at home.

To establish whether or not marital status of the mother had any effect on the enrolment of the children, further analysis was conducted. The analysis on Table 11 shows that a larger proportion of children from the single-mother families (94.6 percent) than those from the two parent families (5.4 percent) were staying home, even though they should have been in school at the time of the study.

Table 11: Variation of enrolment by marital status of the mother

Marital status	Attending	Not attending
Unmarried (Single mother)	108 (74.5 %)	70 (94.6 %)
Married	37 (25.5 %)	4 (5.4 %)
Column Total	145	74

The findings of this study suggest that suggests that there is likelihood that children from single-mother families are less likely to be enrolled in school compared to those from two-parent families. The findings show that generally, there were higher enrolment rates for girls than for boys in primary school. This, however, reveals a divergent pattern from that featuring in most literature and purporting that enrolment rates are still much lower for girls compared to boys. However, they are consistent with recent findings (UNICEF, 1998), which showed that Kenya now experiences higher enrolment rates for girls in primary schools. Enrolment rates are still lower for girls in secondary schools and

beyond. The upsurge in enrolment rates for girls in primary schools must be attributed to efforts by agencies such as UNICEF and Ministry of Education to encourage girls' participation in education. Massive community education, awareness and sensitization campaigns were launched by these agencies in targeted districts and these have borne fruit. For instance, during the last five years, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in conjunction with other agencies launched campaigns directed at increasing girls' enrolment in schools. They systematically tried to discourage cultural and other factors that constrained the participation of the girl child. A popular musical campaign by the famous "Musikly speaking" is still a fresh testimony of these efforts. Their pet campaign song "Take your girl child to school" has become a household song among children who are exposed to the media and those who participated in the shows when the group toured several districts in the country.

The other probable factors that have influenced a change in enrolment rates include increased gender education and advocacy activities that have also been championed by women development activists who have been campaigning for equity among the genders. The international conferences in the last decade such as the International Conference in Population and Development (ICPD, 1994) and the Beijing conference of 1995, both helped to keep the flame burning. The two conferences advocated for equity for men and women and urged governments to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women and the girl-child. Various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) took up this call and designed projects in various parts of the country to promote gender equity.

Though many determinants of enrolment affect girls equally, there are some factors that uniquely affect daughters of single mothers. The poverty situation cannot be over emphasized. When girls are forced to stay home, most of the time when schools are in session, they lose interest and slowly begin to get involved in other non-education activities. Single mothers also engage their daughters in domestic work and sometimes in duties such as taking care of sick siblings. When this is done over a prolonged period of time, they are likely to consider abandoning school, especially if they do not have someone to encourage and motivate them. Thus, because these girls don't attain higher standards of education, which can earn them better employment, they are trapped in the same cycle of poverty that they inherited from their parents.

The FGDs showed that son preference exists in the community where the study was conducted. It was even found to be more common among poorer single mothers than the two parent families. Many of the mothers felt that in the event of financial difficulties and are unable to educate both boy and girl, they would strive to educate the boy, even if they have to beg or borrow. The girl is always viewed in relation to another person – a husband. Many single mothers believe that the girl will be married and therefore, they don't have to struggle to educate her. The girl is viewed as a stranger who is in the family only temporarily. Thus, many see her as someone not worth investing on because she will only benefit the family to which she is married. The boy on the other hand is viewed as an investment for the mother and a security against old age. The mother believes he will stay in the family and support her when she gets older. Those who hold these positions think traditionally. They do not realize how much and fast society is changing.

Girls are increasingly taking up positions of authority and leadership. It has been proven that when girls/women are enabled to go to school, they are likely to be good managers or leaders. They are also likely to support their parents, even better than the boys. Thus, it is important that girls are given equal opportunities as the boys for this is the only way they can effectively find a place in the fast changing and competitive society.

Generally, there were evidently higher enrolment rates for girls than for boys in primary school. This reveals a divergent pattern from that featuring in most literature and purporting that enrolment rates are still much lower for girls compared to boys. However, they are consistent with recent findings (UNICEF, 1998), which showed that Kenya now experiences higher enrolment rates for girls in primary schools. Enrolment rates are still lower for girls in secondary schools and beyond. The upsurge in enrolment rates for girls in primary schools must be attributed to efforts by agencies such as UNICEF and Ministry of Education to encourage girls' participation in education. Massive community education, awareness and sensitization campaigns were launched by these agencies in targeted districts and these have borne fruit. For instance, during the last five years, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in conjunction with other agencies launched campaigns directed at increasing girls' enrolment in schools. They systematically tried to discourage cultural and other factors that constrained the participation of the girl child. A popular musical campaign by the famous "*Musikly speaking*" is still a fresh testimony of these efforts. Their pet campaign song "Take your girl child to school" has become a household song among children who are exposed to the media and those who participated in the shows when the group toured several districts in the country.

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No doubt increase in literacy levels has also contributed to the enrolment rates. There are higher chances that educated parents will also educate their children. Educated parents are more likely to understand the need to educate the girl child than uneducated ones. That is why regions in Kenya that are still characteristic of traditional lifestyles register much lower enrolment rates for girls than boys. It is common belief in Kenya, even among the poor, that both girls and boys need to know how to read and write. For this is an important necessity in their life. If they don't attain higher standards of education, this minimum literacy will help them both now and in the future.

Though many determinants of enrolment affect girls equally, there are some factors that uniquely affect daughters of single mothers. The poverty situation cannot be over emphasized. When girls are forced to stay home, most of the time when schools are in

session, they lose interest and slowly begin to get involved in other non-education activities. Single mothers also engage their daughters in domestic work and sometimes in duties such as taking care of sick siblings. When this is done over a prolonged period of time, they are likely to consider abandoning school, especially if they do not have someone to encourage and motivate them. Thus, because these girls don't attain higher standards of education, which can earn them better employment, they are trapped in the same cycle of poverty that they inherited from their parents.

There are also other attitudes that may affect girls' enrolment. Some single mothers believe that girls are naturally not bright. If people hold such views they are likely to discriminate against the girl in favor of the boy. They are more likely to educate the boy arguing that after all, the girl is not bright. For mothers to be able to educate their daughters, they need to build a positive image of the girls and provide suitable environment supportive of their education. Community attitudes can equally affect enrolment of girls from single-mother families. Community attitudes towards single mothers are negative, not less the education of their daughters. Children of single-mothers are ridiculed and abused by both adult members of the community and their peers. They are viewed as a result of immoral behavior and therefore morally unclean. Such attitudes can affect the self-esteem of girls and influence them to stay away from school – from the source of their unhappiness.

4.2 School dropout

The study sought to establish the relationship between marital status and girls' participation in school. It sought to find out whether or not daughters of single mothers

were likely to drop out of school than girls from two-parent families. Indeed school drop out, especially for girls, was found to be a common phenomenon. About 18.3 percent of the mothers said their daughters had dropped out of primary school prematurely (before completing standard 8); 9.1 percent had dropped out of secondary school. Most (77.5 percent) of the single mothers whose daughters had dropped out were aged between 30 and 49 years.

4.2.1 Determinants of girls' drop out from school

Several probable factors may explain the incidence of school drop out, especially among single-mother families. One of the determinants that this study investigated is teenage pregnancy. The study found that girls from widowed families were more likely to drop out due to unintended pregnancy than girls from the other single mothers' homes. They are for instance almost twice as likely to get unintended pregnancy than the daughters of divorced mothers as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Marital status and drop out due to unintended pregnancy

Marital status	Ever dropped out	Drop out due to pregnancy
Never married	4	2 (50%)
Divorced	4	2 (50%)
Separated	11	5 (45.5%)
Widowed	18	10 (55%)
Married	3	2 (66.7%)
Total	40	21

The last two columns of Table 12 indicate that of the 40 mothers reporting that their daughters had dropped out of school, 52.5 percent had terminated their schooling because of

unintended pregnancy. Thus, unintended pregnancy is a major determinant of school drop out among girls from both single and two-parent families. Previous studies have shown that unintended pregnancy is among the major causes of school drop out for girls in Kenya (Ferguson, 1988; Okumu and Chege, 1994).

In-depth interviews with schoolteachers revealed that pregnancy was one of the causes of drop out for girls. Almost every school had experienced a case of girls dropping out of school due to unintended pregnancy irrespective of the type of family they came from. The FGDs with widowed, separated and never married mothers also revealed that unintended pregnancy caused drop out among their daughters. The implications of drop out are serious for girls, themselves, their families and the economy in general. For the girl, there is lost opportunity to pursue a dream career and to hope for a pleasant future while for the family, the investments in educating the girl up to the point she dropped out may be considered a loss. For the economy, drop out depresses the process of economic growth because the persons who would have contributed to growth have nothing or little to contribute.

4.3 Performance of boys and girls in school

Education performance was a key variable for this study. The study attempted to establish the performance of daughters of single mothers in relation to the son and children from two-parent families. Most FGD participants reported that their daughters' performances were either average or below average. Some expressed their dissatisfaction with the performance and felt that their daughters could perform better. They pointed out that their sons performed better than their daughters for a number of reasons. Many of

their daughters 'fear' certain subjects such as mathematics, physics and chemistry in primary and secondary schools. Others said girls have to carry out many household chores unlike their brothers and therefore often have less study time. They also absent from school to take care of younger siblings. In some cases, the boys are given preference when there's little or no money for school fees. Most girls lose interest in education. The mothers explained that from Std seven, when girls are about 14 to 15 years old, they begin to engage in boy-girl relationships, which draw them away from their studies.

Table 13 shows better performance for girls from two-parent families over daughters of single-mother families. For instance, while 87.5 percent of single-mothers' daughters had 'below average' performance, only 12.5 percent of the two-parent daughters had a similar performance.

Table 13: Comparing performance of girls from single and two-parent families

Mother's marital status/family type	Performance			
	Very good	Good	Average	Below average
Single mother	32 (53.3%)	26 (56.3%)	31 (88.6%)	28 (87.5%)
Two-parent (married)	28 (46.7%)	20 (43.5%)	4 (11.4%)	4 (12.5%)
Total	60	46	35	32

The schoolteachers who were interviewed confirmed that that boys generally performed better than girls. About 67 percent of the teachers noted that the boys' performance was better than the girls' while 22 percent thought that there was no difference. When asked

if there was a difference in performance between girls from single-mothers families and two-parent families, 75 percent of the schoolteachers indicated that girls from two-parent families performed better than their counterparts from single-mother families. Only 18.2 percent thought there were no differences. To explain their point the teachers said that girls from single parent families faced a couple of problems that hindered their performance. These included lack of supervision at home – in single-mother families, inability to cope with all demands and responsibilities in the home; single mothers are not economically stable and may not meet the educational requirements of their children; they may also be unable to provide suitable environment at home for their daughters to study; and that girls from single-mother families find it difficult to study at home because they have to participate in household work. .

All these responses point to an important necessity for girls' education: a supportive environment both at school and at home, and includes availability of resources required to support their participation. Unfavorable school environments such as unfriendly teachers, poor sanitary conditions, and gender discrimination may discourage girls from continuing with school. Similarly, a hostile environment at home that involves abuse, excessive labor, negative community attitudes, and the lack of parental love and support may pose challenges for girls' education and curtail their classroom performance.

4.3.1 Reasons for girls' poorer performances

Several factors were proposed by the mothers to be affecting their daughters' school-performance. Irregular attendance of school was mentioned by 27.7 percent of the mothers as a factor contributing to the poorer performance of girls in school. As observed earlier, girls were more likely than boys to be absent from school. They were also more likely to be asked by the parents, especially in the single-mother families, to stay home to assist with household activities when schools were in session. Frequent absence from school either because of school fees or to perform household duties can hinder the ability of the girl to follow and absorb the content of the syllabus. About 6 percent of the mothers said that their daughters were involved in much housework that could also affect their performance.

The FGD results show that some mothers actually thought that girls were naturally not meant to compete academically with boys. They thought girls were inferior and naturally cannot perform better than boys in class. *"Girls are not like boys, you cannot compare girls with boys. Boy are always brighter,"* an FGD participant said. This attitude was also expressed by 6.8 percent of the mothers who responded to survey questions. Perhaps this is yet another reflection of cultural orientation. In most African communities, women were traditionally considered inferior in terms of thinking ability. Such negative attitudes can be very destructive to the girl child especially when she has no one to motivate and encourage her. When such attitudes prevail, girls are more likely to be content with poor performance and measure themselves only up to, or even less, the performance of the boy. They are likely to be discouraged and to drop out of school.

About 10.7 percent of the mothers said that poor teaching and hostile school environment had contributed to their daughters' poor performance. The mothers said that teachers in some schools had lost morale and were not effective in their teaching. They also complained about the school environment and teachers' attitudes. Both in and outside classrooms their daughters were ridiculed, they said. Such ridicule demoralized many of their daughters and affected ability to do well. These findings correspond with previous studies on girl-child education by Wamahiu (1992a) and Obonyo (1994). In these studies, the authors argued that hostile school environments coupled with negative and discriminatory attitudes against girls were a major cause of girl's drop out from school. In many schools, as reported by FGD participants,

"girls are asked to perform tasks such as fetching water and firewood for teachers, cleaning classrooms and teachers' houses, while the boys enjoy their recreation activities."

The girls neither have the opportunity to recreate nor to concentrate on their academic work. This is a great source of discouragement and obstacle to academic performance.

Another possible factor is girls' involvement in sexual relationships. Some mothers (4.4 percent) reckoned that sexual relationships could adversely affect girls' performance. When girls are not properly guided and educated about sexuality issues, they are likely to be affected by boy-girl relationships in two ways. First; they may be so much emotionally involved in the relationship that they spend so much time thinking about and/or trying to please the boyfriend; and they may also suffer stress when the relationship is not working too well or when it breaks down. As one key informant, a mother of four children put it,

“adolescent girls’ involvement with older men may be particularly destructive, as the girls may not be able to stop the men’s demands.” The power relations will obviously work against the girls putting them in an inferior position in the relationship. It is absolutely important for parents to talk to their children and provide appropriate guidance about sexuality, in both single-mother and two parent families. It is especially, crucial for single mother to provide appropriate sexuality education to their daughters, many of whom may be predisposed to relationships at an early age. Unfortunately, as mentioned before, many single mothers are preoccupied with earning a living for their families that they have no or little time to talk to their children about emerging sexuality. In fact, this study shows that 46.1 percent of the mothers don’t talk to their children about sexuality or reproductive health.

Lack of parental involvement in the educational affairs of the child could be a hindrance to good academic performance. During the FGDs, mothers reported that some of them could not help with their children’s homework. They said some mothers were either illiterate or had lower educational standards than their children and thus could not contribute much in their daughters’ private studies at home. Others said that some mothers worked late and came home just before or after their children had retired to bed (FGD for separated mothers aged 30-37 years). Some said they had acquired the services of tutors and therefore did not want to get involved.

Participation in household work was mentioned as another factor that negatively affected the academic performance of girls, especially from single-mother families. About 92 percent of the mothers said that both their sons and daughters were involved in household

chores regularly. But as Table 14 shows, the girls seem to perform more work than the boys.

Table 14: Girls' involvement in household and domestic work

Participation in household activities/chores	Boy	Girl
1. Washing clothes	83 (48.8%)	136 (71.2%)
2. Washing dishes	94 (55.3%)	172 (90.1%)
3. Fetching water	97 (57.1%)	128 (67.0%)
4. Cooking for family members	72 (40.1%)	133 (69.3%)
5. Cleaning house and surrounding areas	108 (63%)	141 (73.8%)

Apparently, boys are equally involved in domestic work. They are getting involved in roles that have traditionally been set-aside for girls and women. But the girls consistently do much more domestic work than the boys do. It's this excess labor they provide to the family that denies them adequate opportunity to study as the boys do, which possible explains why the boys perform better than the girls academically. Washing of clothes, dishes and cooking for family members is almost the domain of girls. The boys' involvement is very minimal.

Son preference is another contributing factor to girls' poorer performance. Mothers were asked whom between a girl and a boy they would educate if they had limited financial ability. Surprisingly, majority of the single mothers (67.1 percent) said they would not have preference in educating their children in case they faced financial limitations. However, 20.7 percent said they would prefer to educate the boy if they did not have enough money to support both boy and girl.

Though there were no benchmarks to compare the preference rates, it's believed that the findings of this study portray a much progressive picture in education of the girl child. In the past, there were open feelings in this community that educating a girl would not be productive and would only benefit another family, where the girl gets married. Thus, there was a propensity towards educating the boy since it was seen as an investment to the family and a security to parents in old age. Despite the progressive indications, there is much to be done to encourage the 20.7 percent (could be higher if we looked at a rural setting and interviewed a large cross-section of parents including fathers) to treat all the children equally.

An analysis of marital status and child preference in education showed a statistically insignificant association between the two variables ($P:0.08528$, $P > 0.05$). Though the association was insignificant there was a consistent tendency among the single mothers (never married, separated and widowed) to prefer educating the boy as opposed to the girl as shown in Table 15. However, among the married (two-parent families), the situation was a reverse of what was observed in the other groups. Most married mothers (80 percent of those who said they would make preference) would prefer to educate the girl. Thus, married mothers were likely to educate a girl while single mothers were likely to educate their sons than daughters.

Table 15: Marital status and child preference

Marital status	Preference		
	Boy	Girl	No preference
Unmarried	43 97.7%	22 84.6%	109 76.2%
Married	1 2.3%	4 15.4%	34 23.8%
Column Total	44	26	143

Among the unmarried who would make a preference, 97.3 percent said they would choose to educate the boy while only 2.3 percent would educate the girl. There is obviously a difference between the way married and unmarried mothers look at the issue of preference. Perhaps mothers from the two-parent families are assured of relative financial security from their husbands than their single counterparts who have to rely on their own efforts and ability to raise the required resources to sustain the family. The old fashioned argument that boys acted as security in old age could be playing a part in these mothers choice to educate their sons rather than daughters. Such stereotypes need to be continuously discouraged so that boys and girls can have equal access to available opportunities.

Among the single mothers, never married (29.8 percent) and widows (23.5 percent) were more likely to prefer to educate the boy. The study found that unmarried mothers were roughly 75 percent more likely than married mothers to prefer one child to the other (boy or girl). Further analysis of those who would have any preference in educating either a boy or girl revealed the unmarried mothers were roughly 75 percent more likely than

married mothers to educate a boy than a girl.

These findings are consistent with the FGD and key informant responses. For example, in four FGDs with never married mothers (less than 30 years and over 30 years) and separated (below and above 30 years) three separate reactions emerged. One group said they would not have any preference. This was the majority and the finding is consistent with what the quantitative survey results show: that about 67 percent of the mothers would have no preference in educating their male or female children. The second group said they would educate the child that seemed to be more promising, interested in school and performing well in class¹⁴. They did not discriminate between the boy and the girl. Those who gave this option were not very many. But the third group said they would prefer to educate the boy- a good number of mothers were in this group and obviously outnumbered the former group. There was clearly no person or group saying they would prefer to educate the girl. Again the FGD results confirm the survey findings. These findings indicate that the girls are disadvantaged; in fact, their own mothers discriminate against them.

Low educational and career aspiration are yet other factors that may affect girls' academic performance. Mothers were asked to share what level of education they hoped or expected their sons and daughters to achieve and the careers they wished they would pursue. The mothers were asked to indicate their aspirations using two measures; highest

¹⁴ Some participants who held this opinion added that even though they would educate the more promising child, they knew that boys tended to perform better than girls. This assertion suggests that these participants would be more inclined to educate the boy because he would perform better than the girl.

level of education and preferred occupation/profession. There was clear evidence that mothers had higher aspirations for their sons than their daughters as shown in Table 16. For instance, 84.9 percent want to educate their sons up to university while 78.3 percent want to do the same for their daughters. This could be a reflection of the gender-based stereotypes that favor the educational progress of the boy than the girls.

Table 16: Mothers' education aspiration for their daughters and sons

Education	Mother's educational aspiration for their children	
	Boy	Girls
University	146 (84.9%)	141 (78.3%)
Post high school college	9 (5.2%)	12 (6.7%)
Form four	13 (7.6%)	17 (9.4%)
Standard eight	2 (1.2%)	4 (2.2%)
Other	2 (1.2%)	6 (3.3%)
Total (n)	n=172	N=180

Lower aspiration for the girl as opposed to the boy, may greatly affect the girls motivation to achieve academic excellence in her education.

A similar trend was also observed in the second measure where the mothers indicated better aspirations in careers for their sons than for their daughters as shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Mothers' career aspiration for their daughters and sons

Career	Mothers' career aspiration for their children	
	Boys	Girl
1. Nurse	8 (4.8%)	69 (31.5%)
2. Doctor	71 (42.3%)	47 (25.3%)
3. Teacher	16 (9.5%)	17 (9.1%)
4. Pilot	9 (5.4%)	4 (2.2%)
5. Politician	0	2 (.9%)
6. Engineer	30 (17.9%)	6 (3.2%)
7. Other	11 (5.5%)	11 (5.9%)
8. Don't know	23 (13.7%)	30 (16.1%)
Total (n)	168	186

The results in Table 17 clearly indicate that gender role stereotypes still persist in this population. Mothers tend to aspire for their sons and daughters, careers that have traditionally been associated with each gender. For instance, they want their daughters to be nurses and less so doctors and engineers. Even the higher proportion of mothers indicating, "don't know" may be is a manifestation of the fact that these mothers are likely to have an aspiration for the boy but not the girl. (There are fewer don't knows for boys).

An analysis of the association between marital status and aspiration was conducted. The results are contained in Table 18.

Table 18: Marital status and mothers career aspirations for their children

Marital status	Career aspiration (selected)			
	Nurse	Doctor	Teacher	Engineer
Never married				
Girls	14 (40%)	7 (20%)	4 (11.4%)	--
Boys	--	10 (32.3%)	4 (12.9%)	7 (22.6%)
Divorced				
Girls	4 (50%)	-	2 (25.0%)	--
Boys	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	--	1 (11.1%)
Separated				
Girls	17 (48.6%)	7 (20.0%)	1 (2.9%)	-
Boys	1 (3.3%)	14 (46.7%)	3 (10.0%)	5 (16.7%)
Widowed				
Girls	23 (32.9%)	16 (22.9%)	8 (11.4%)	3 (4.3%)
Boys	3 (4.6%)	25 (38.5%)	7 (10.8%)	11 (16.9%)
Married				
Girls	11 (28.9%)	17 (44.7%)	2 (5.3%)	3 (7.9%)
Boys	2 (6.1%)	17 (51.5%)	2 (6.1%)	6 (18.2%)

Even though to a great extent the trends in parental aspirations reflect the general pattern in Kenya, there are a few interesting observations. The findings suggest that overall single mothers have lower career aspirations¹⁵ for their children in general but more so for their daughters. For instance, while 44.7 percent of married mothers want their daughters to become doctors, only 20.0 percent of the never married, 22.9 percent of widows, and 20 percent of separated want their daughters to be doctors. It clearly shows that married women have higher career expectations/aspiration for their children than single mothers.

A similar trend was observed with educational aspiration. Married mothers seemed to consistently have higher educational aspirations for both their sons and daughters, particularly their sons, than unmarried mothers as shown in Table 30. For instance, while

¹⁵ Career aspirations were determined using a list of careers that responses spontaneously mentioned during the interview.

89.5 percent of married mother want their daughters to attain university education, a smaller proportion of single mothers aspire the same for their daughters (69.7 percent of never married, 74.6 percent of the widows, and 78.1 percent of separated mothers).

Table 19: Marital status and mothers' educational aspirations for their children

Marital status	Educational aspiration			
	University	Post high school/college	Form 4	Standard 8
Never married				
Girls	23 (69.7%)	3 (9.1%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (3.0%)
Boys	24	1 (3.4%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4%)
Divorced				
Girls	8 (100%)	-	--	--
Boys	6 (100%)	-	--	--
Widowed				
Girls	53 (74.6%)	4 (5.6%)	11(15.5%)	2 (2.8%)
Boys	54 (78.3%)	4 (5.8%)	9 (13.0%)	1 (1.4%)
Separated				
Girls	25 (78.1%)	3 (9.4%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (3.1%)
Boys	26 (83.9%)	3 (9.7%)	2 (6.5%)	--
Married				
Girls	34 (89.5%)	2 (5.3%)	2 (5.3%)	---
boys	34 (97.1%)	2 (2.9%)		--

However, there was a surprisingly high expectation/aspiration among divorced women (100 percent for both boys and girls). Though the samples (n) are much smaller the findings could reflect the fact that the children have lived in two parent families and thus still have high motivation and expectations in their education. As already observed, the trend towards higher aspirations for boys than girls could be a reflection of traditional beliefs that boys would support the parents in the future while the girls would be married to other families. At the same time the small differences in some cases and among widows in particular could be a reflection of the general change of attitude that is occurring in society.

Educational and career aspirations of children were equally analyzed. MaClelland (1960) argues that achievement motivation is positively correlated with academic excellence. This study sought to establish the effect of education and career aspirations on children's academic performance. The children were equally asked to state their education and career expectations. Most respondents (84.8 percent) aspired to attain university education. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in educational aspiration between children from single-mother families and two-parent families. For boys, 75 percent from single-mother families and 85.7 percent from two-parent families had higher educational aspirations. Equally, as far as girls were concerned, those from the two parent families had higher aspiration than those from single-mother families. About 92.8 percent of the girls from the two-parent families hoped to reach university, while 80.1 percent from the single-mother families aspired for the same level of education as shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Girls educational aspiration by mother's marital status

Mother's marital status	Aspiration in education				Row Total
	University	Post high school	High school	Primary school	
Single mother	129 (80.1%)	28 (17.4%)	2 (1.2%)	2 (1.2%)	161
Two parent	64 (92.8%)	5 (7.2%)	--	---	69
Column Total	193 (33.2%)	33 (14.3%)	--	----	230

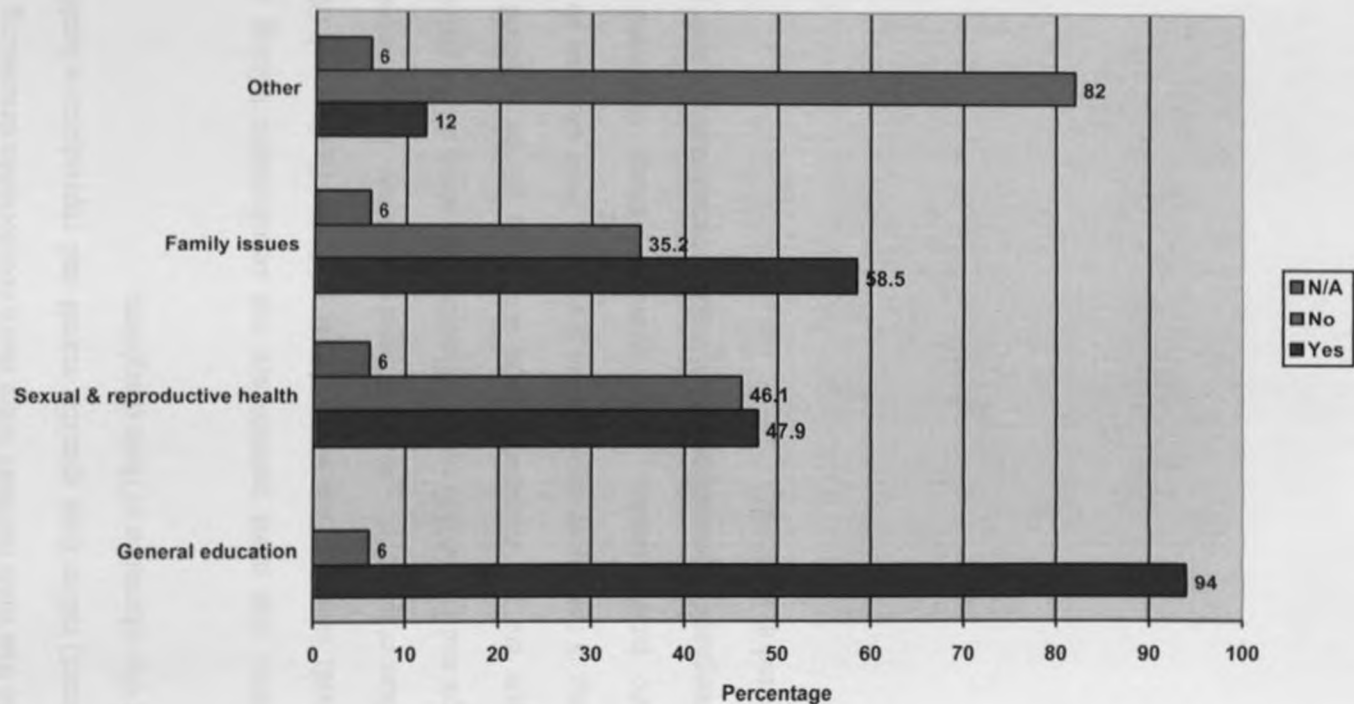
Table 20 indicates that some girls from single-mother families had very low aspiration in their education. Four girls did not aspire to attain above high school level of education.

They did not aspire to reach university. Compared to boys, no one aspired to attain anything less than post high school education, which in essence could be university, or other post high school training.

As far as career aspirations are concerned, girls from single-mother families tended to like being, engineer, pilot, and doctor and accounted more or less the same career choices that their counterparts from the two-parent families aspired to be in future. There were no marked differences in terms of the career aspirations between girls from single-mother families and two-parent families. Asked what they would do to achieve their desired career choices, most girls said they would study to attain the highest level of education and study professional courses.

Lack of open communication between parents and their children is another obstacle to girls' academic performance. Open parent-child communication can be a useful way to enhance openness among children to share their feelings and concerns regarding their health and education, especially when they approach teenage years. The issues of relationships and how to handle them become important to young people and can be a source of frustration and distress to many young people. Parent-child communication can be used as a vehicle to provide motivation to children's education and at the same time to address challenges they face in school. That is why the current study sought to establish whether or not communication on sexual matters played a role in academic achievement. Figure 1 shows the issues that mothers discuss with their daughters.

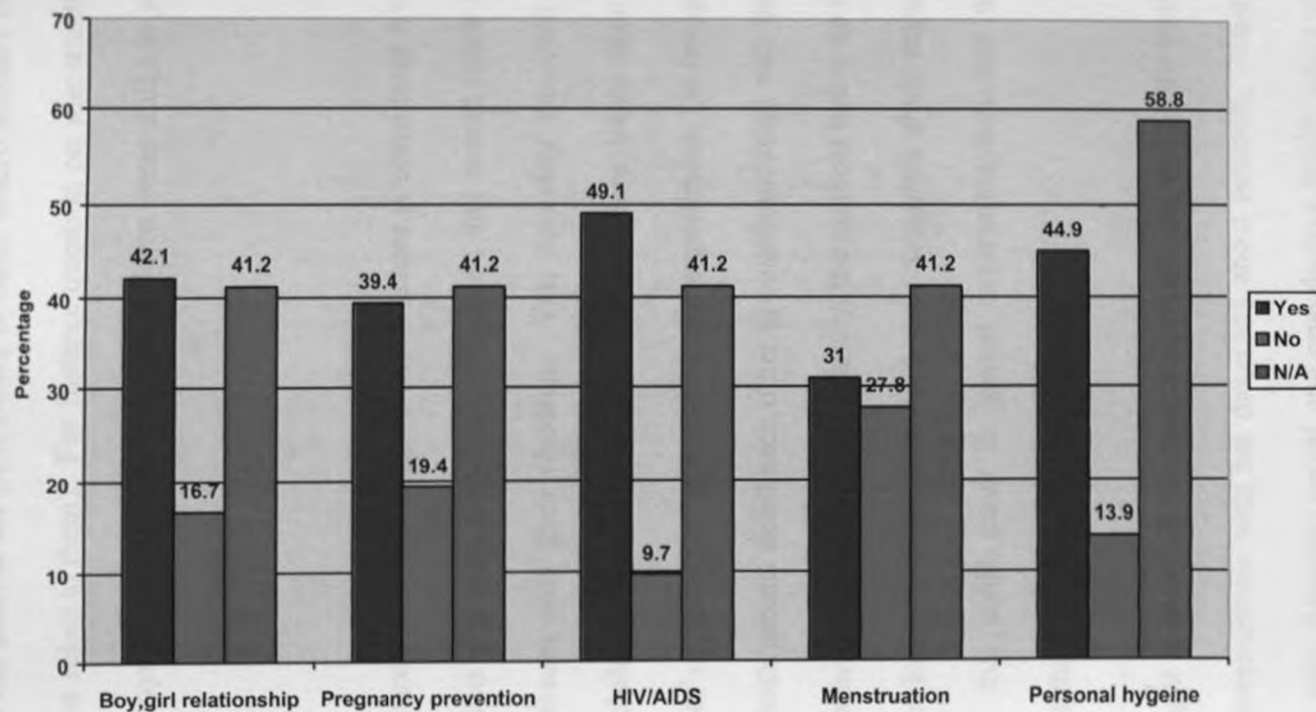
Figure 1: Proportion of mothers discussing various issues with their children



Most mothers (94 percent) said that they normally have discussions with their daughters. The results show that most mothers were more comfortable discussing general education issues (82.5 percent) rather than specific sexual and reproductive health issues that may negatively affect the education of their daughters.

Figure 1 illustrates that most parents are not comfortable talking about sexual and reproductive health issues. This is consistent with the findings of Okumu and Chege, (1994) and Erulkar *et al* (1998). In a previous discussion, it was noted that issues to do with relationships and HIV/AIDS could affect the education of the girl-child. When these issues of concern are not discussed, girls are likely to be affected negatively. The encouraging thing is that some mothers are involving their children in discussing sexual and reproductive health issues. The common issues discussed include boy-girl relationships, pregnancy prevention, HIV/AIDS, menstruation and personal hygiene. These are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proportion of mothers discussing sexual and reproductive health issues with their daughters



Unfortunately, there are large proportions of mothers who did not discuss any of the issues listed in the chart at all (N/A refers to cases where mothers felt that the issue in question did not relate to them). For instance question on menstruation only applied to girls and not boys or the mothers felt their children were still too young to talk about these issues.

Discussion of sexual and reproductive health issues is considered a taboo issue in most families. Parents shy away from such discussion and would rather have someone else discuss such issues with their children. Yet, sexuality has such heavy bearing on education of children, especially girls. Girls are more likely than boys to suffer the consequences of negative sexual outcomes and experiences. In two-parent families, it is assumed that both parents assist each other in communicating with their daughters about sexuality. However, in a single-mother family, the mothers had to do this alone. If single mothers are not keen to communicate with their daughters about sexual and reproductive health issues, this could result in sexual experimentation that may have negative implications of the girls' education and future.

The study sought to establish the relationship between age of the mother and whether or not she will communicate with her daughters about sexuality. Majority of the mothers (75.7 percent) who discussed sexual and reproductive health issues with their daughters were aged between 30 and 49 years. Mothers aged below 30 and above 50 years were much less likely to discuss sexual and reproductive health issues with their daughters than those in the age bracket 30-49 years. There was also a statistically significant association between mother's age and communication over sexuality and reproductive health issues.

The analysis showed that the older the mother, the more the chances that she will discuss sexuality and reproductive health (SRH) issues with her daughter.

Perhaps discussion of sexual and reproductive health issues is much dependent upon the age and developmental stage of the child. It is possible that mothers begin to talk about sexuality and RH issues as their daughters grow and perhaps as they approach puberty. That's why, perhaps, fewer younger mothers engage their daughters in communication regarding sexuality and RH issues than the older ones. Also, it's possible that mothers discuss these issues with their daughters as they begin to emerge or when an opportunity appears that befits this discussion, for example when a girl begins her menstruation, someone discovers he/she is positive or someone dies of AIDS. These may be possible avenues to begin SRH discussions.

When children participate in activities that are likely to take them away from schoolwork, they may not be motivated to apply maximum efforts in their work in school, and their performance may be affected. The study attempted to establish the effect of children's involvement in domestic work on their class performance. Children's participation in household activities beyond a certain limit can affect their growth and development and hinder academic performance. It is common practice for children to assist parents to carry out certain responsibilities. However, some parents fail to draw the limits and overly engage the children, especially girls thereby limiting their opportunities to put maximum effort in their studies. Children were asked to state the household activities they were involved in, and what proportion of the entire household work did they do.

Over 98 percent of the respondents said they assisted their parents with domestic and household work. About 40 percent thought they did most of the household work, while 19.6 percent and 21.5 percent thought they did about half and less than half the work respectively. Nineteen percent either did nothing or very little. A sex analysis of those who did most of the work showed that girls were more burdened with housework than boys (30.4 percent against only 15.2 percent for boys). Further, the analysis showed that girls from single-mother families were likely to do most of the household work than their counterparts from the two-parent families (35.0 percent compared to only 28.6 percent of girls from two-parent families). Most likely these girls have to do more work than their colleagues do from the two-parent homes because they have to supplement the labor force at home. Most of the time their mothers are preoccupied with activities geared towards generating income to support and meet family needs. While doing so, their daughters are expected to cook for siblings, wash cloths and perform other day-to-day household chores. As a result of their participation in household activities, some girls indicated that they never find any time to study privately and quietly at home. Those mostly affected were girls from single-mother families. About 29 percent of girls from single-mother families and 17.4 percent of those from two-parent families said they never had any time to study at home. Fortunately, about 60 percent of the girls from both types of families noted that their brothers sometimes assist with the work. But it is worrying that the remaining 40 percent do not assist.

Involvement in household work, therefore, is yet another factor that can explain the disparity in academic performance between girls from single-mother families and those

from the two-parent families. In addition to affecting their academic performances over-involvement in household activities may also interfere with the process of growth and development for these girls and might influence them to begin taking parental responsibilities early and prematurely. These findings are consistent with Garfinkel (1986), Njau and Wamahu (1994), who argue that early initiation of adult roles interfere with girls' growth and maturation.

Negative attitudes of community towards single mothers and their children can also affect children's and particularly girls' performance. During the FGDs and in-depth interviews single mothers expressed varied views regarding the attitude of the community towards them and their children, and women in general. The widowed participants said that men are generally thought to be superior to women. One woman said this to qualify their assertion "Men are the leaders right from the household to the national level." They noted that men usually look down upon women and see them "as foreigners" meaning they don't really belong to their homes. When they are married to a home, they are seen as foreigner. Their own parental homes also view them as "foreigner" because they are in those homes temporarily and will soon be married. The mothers added that men also see them as beasts of burden to be exploited. In general, they said women are discriminated against. That is why they are not appropriately represented in politics, leadership and promising careers. They work so hard yet they have no right to own or inherit property.

Regarding community attitude towards single mothers, the FGD participants said that community in general has a negative attitude towards single mothers. They think that women/mothers living alone are promiscuous/prostitutes. (FGD with widowed

participants). In a FGD with never married, participants pointed out that women are only seen to be successful when they manage to secure a husband. Thus, single women are considered failures in life. In many fora “single women have no voices even when they express their opinion, it’s not likely to be taken.” (FGD participant-separated). In a never married FGD, some participants noted that married women never want their husbands to be greeted by single mothers, perhaps emphasizing the point that the community views them as prostitutes, people who only want easy life. This group also noted that some people in community think that single mothers are a disgrace to their own families and to the society as a whole. While none of the women put a face on “community”, it is no doubt that the views expressed here include those maintained by the single women, themselves, because they are part of the community, and society has socialized them to believe in these attitudes. The society has put in them a road map or mental map, which helps them to interpret the world around them. Thus, they use this road map to interpret what happens to them as single mothers and to interact with the world around them.

It is important to note the potential damage such attitudes can create on single mothers – a damage of their self-esteem and creation of bitterness with the world around them. Such bitterness may reflect negatively on the education and well being of their children and themselves.

Participants in the FGDs for never married, separated and widowed groups pointed out that children of single mothers were despised by the community. The children are viewed as the outcome of sexual immorality. They are seen as people from poor and unclean background/upbringing and are given derogatory nicknames such as “*kimirwa*” (Luo

word for illegitimate child). They are not popular among their peers or playmates and are generally despised. The FGD for separated mothers was told that though the community discriminated against children of single mothers, some of them turned out to be outstanding personalities. Negative community attitude can be a real source of frustration to single mothers and their children. Children may resort to deviance as a result of the bitterness with the community and this will affect their education.

4.3 Possible ways to improve girls' performance

Single mothers were asked to state if there was anything they or others could do to improve the academic performance of their daughters. The mothers made a number of suggestions. Some of the suggested solutions are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21: Suggested solutions for improving girls' performance

Suggestion	Frequency	Percent
Regular attendance and provision of more school books	28	20.4
The girl should concentrate and work harder	32	23.4
Motivate, encourage the girl and improve school environment	21	15.3
Provide guidance and counseling to the girl	5	3.6
Take her to a better (town) school	5	3.6
Provide tuition and assistance encourage girl to study at home	39	28.5
Improve facilities and school environment and change the curricula	7	5.1
Total	137	100

As indicated in Table 24 most mothers thought that providing tuition (28.5 percent) and encouraging the girl to concentrate and work harder (23.4 percent) would be the two best ways to improve the performance of their daughters. Unfortunately, the first option may not be affordable to most of the mothers, as we saw from a previous discussion where only 6.2 percent of the mother had used the services of a tutor.

A high proportion of the mothers said they were involved in matters pertaining to education of their children such as helping with homework, discussing their progress with teachers and girls themselves. However, this involvement did not seem to be translated into improved performance of their daughters. Over 72 percent of the mothers said their daughters received assistance at home when they study (91.5 percent said their daughters study at home). However, 77.9 percent of mothers actually provided some form of assistance to their daughters during study time at home. In the single-mother families, uncles (7.3 percent) were mentioned as a source of assistance to the girls at home. It is not clear who the uncles were – whether real or referring to the mother's boyfriends. It is common for children to be told by their mothers that so and so are their uncles, when they are actually the mothers' boyfriends. Elder brother and sister were mentioned by 21.3 percent. In the two parent families, the father (9.0 percent) and tutor (6.2 percent) were mentioned. However, mothers provided the most assistance to their daughters. The role of the father in supporting and motivating education of the girl child seemed to be minimal. Thus, even though it is widely believed that the fathers play a significant role in the education of the children, this study has confirmed that it is the mother who plays a key role in the children's education. This implies that single mothers can still provide the

necessary support and environment for their children to excel in education as noted by William (1963), Lamb (1978), William (1969), and Schlesinger, (1970).

The FGDs revealed similar results. The FGD participants pointed out that creating a conducive environment at home that would encourage their daughters to concentrate on their academic work was one of the actions they could take to improve the academic performance of their daughters. They also thought that ensuring that their daughters actually studied at home, by avoiding involving their daughters in excessive domestic and household work could help to improve their daughters' performance. An FGD participant said, "*We mothers can personally provide assistance with daughter's homework, and where applicable contract the services of tutors to coach our daughters.*" But the question is whether this is realistic given the low education level of many of them. At the same time, very few of the single mothers would afford to contract a tutor to help their daughters with their kind of incomes. The mothers reckoned that communicating openly with their daughters about issues that affect their education, and taking appropriate steps to address these obstacles could be another way to help their daughters improve performance. As already intimated, few mothers openly discussed sensitive sexuality issues with their daughters, yet is much needed especially by adolescent girls.

4.4 Absenteeism of Children from School

Absenteeism was considered an important determinant of both performance and participation of children in school. The study attempted to establish how absenteeism affected the academic performance and participation of girls in school. Children were

asked to state how often they had been absent from school the previous year. On the general level 86.2 percent of the respondents said they had been absent from school in the past. A remarkable 13.8 percent had not been absent at all. Most of the boys who had been absent were from the single mother families (100 percent for boys) against 96.4 percent from the two parent families. Conversely, for girls, most of those who had been absent were from the two-parent families (92.6 percent against 79.2 percent for the single-mother families). However, this situation reversed when respondents were asked to indicate how often they missed school. The rate of absenteeism for girls from single-mother families went up. For instance those absent every week were 10.6 percent compared to only 3.5 percent from the two-parent families. Table 22 has details of this analysis.

Table 22: Type of family and girls' absence from school

Type of Family	Every week	Once a month	Twice a month	Once a month	Row Total
Single (single mother)	12(10.6%)	23(20.4%)	11(9.7%)	67(59.3%)	113 66.5
Married (two parent)	2(3.5%)	11(19.3%)	8(14.0%)	35(13.2%)	57 33.5
Column	14	34	19	103	170
Total	8.2	20.0	11.2	60.6	100

In some of the cases when children were absent from school, their parents did not know about it. Further analysis of the data showed that overall, 11.2 percent of the children had been absent without their parents' knowledge, at least once. Girls were found to be more likely than boys to be absent from school without parents' knowledge. For instance, none of the boys from single parent families and 15.2 percent of girls from the same families said they had been absent without parental knowledge. It was further revealed that girls

from the single mother families were more likely than their counterparts from the two-parent families to be absent without parents' knowledge (15.2 percent against 7.9 percent). Interestingly, two-parent families were more likely to discover that the daughters had been absent from school than single mothers (44.4 percent against 42.7 percent). These findings have implications for parents' availability and keenness about what happens to their children when they go to school. Some of the reactions of mothers when they discovered their daughters were absent suggest that the girls were involved in activities that their parents were unhappy about. Involvement of girls in activities that their parents don't approve of can be a real source of disruption of their school life and their classroom performance.

There are a number of issues such as the lifestyles of single mothers, environment at home, coping mechanisms and perceptions of themselves *vis a vis* married women that the study could not uncover without applying further in-depth qualitative approaches to data collection. Case studies were therefore used to provide an opportunity to get to the depth of such issues without making the informants feel socially and morally invaded.

4.5 Case Study Results

In this section of the thesis the researcher presents additional qualitative data through case studies that help to fill up some of the gaps that the survey did not address. Three case studies were conducted among single mothers from the study sites. Two of the single mothers were elderly and had relatively succeeded in bringing up their children. They had, for instance taken their children through high school and college, and supported

them to find employment. One of the case studies was conducted with a younger single mother whose children are still attending primary school. The main reason for conducting these case studies was to find out and document the current and past experiences of single mothers regarding education of their daughters. These experiences and lessons learned by the mothers are used in the study to shed more light on the key findings, especially those related to the objectives and research questions. The experiences of the mothers have also been used to show that contrary to what is argued in some literature (Garfinkel, 1986 and Marsden, 19970) single mothers can provide enabling environments that supports their daughters education and to show that not all single mothers and their daughters are disadvantaged poor people requiring mercy and support. In fact, as the case studies show, some of them are well-focused managers of their families capable of providing the basic requirements for their children and to motivate their daughters accordingly to perform well in school.

4.8.1 Case Study 1

A single mother can be happy but the effect of father's absence on the way children turn out can be devastating. Grace thought she worked hard to provide most of the things her children needed, but there was something she could not provide. Could she provide for the influence fathers have on children, even when they are only seen? The case study of Grace Maitura provides some answers.

Grace Maitura - Money Alone is not the solution

Introduction

Grace is a 48 year-old career teacher. She currently teaches at Manyatta Arabs primary school where she is the deputy head-teacher. Before moving to Manyatta Arabs, Grace taught at Agha Khan primary school for about 23 years. She belongs to the Kisii ethnic community and currently lives in Kisumu town in a rented but fancily furnished house. Grace has a monthly income of Kshs. 20,000. In addition to her teaching job Grace is a businesswoman. She runs a shop in town and rents a maize farm in Sotik. She studied up to Form 4 and proceeded to Siriba Teachers Training College between 1972 and 1974. She is a single mother. Her husband deserted her about 20 years ago and married a younger woman (a widow).

Family History

Grace was born in 1952 in Kisii District to a devoted Seventh Day Adventist couple. The father, Mr. Peter Chief Maitura, was a Pastor and worked in many places in Kenya and Uganda. The mother was a housewife and a small-scale farmer. Both her mother and father are alive. They are now farmers in both Kisii and Sotik, having retired from service to the church a year ago. Pastor Maitura reached Form 2 in his education. Grace said with a light touch, "*We actually went to school with our parents.*" When Grace went to secondary school in Kamagambo, the father, who then had become a pastor also enrolled for the Kenya Junior Examinations because he wanted to obtain a certificate, having dropped out in Standard Eight.

Grace has four siblings, a brother and three sisters. She is the eldest in the family. Her brother is a businessman in Nakuru, while her sisters work in Kisii, Nakuru and Kisumu. Grace herself has five children, three sons and two daughters. She rents a room for two of her sons, but lives with her last born son. Her daughters are both working, one in Nakuru with Valley Hospital, while the other works in Nairobi with Africa on Line, an Internet service provider. Her eldest son is a graduate of Kenya Polytechnic, and is currently unemployed. According to Grace, this young man drinks alcohol uncontrollably because of frustrations and bad company from other estate boys. The second son helps her with the shop business in Kisumu town. He is a Form Four-drop out, but has an interest in business. The last-born completed Form Four last year, from Nairobi school. She is planning to send him to the United States of America for further studies. Thus, all of Grace's children have attended school. None of them dropped out before Form 4.

Challenges of a Single Mother

Before she became a single mother, grace was a happily married woman. The husband owned a construction company, which was doing very well, and he managed all the family needs. Suddenly, a lot of things began to change in the family. The man's business began to perform poorly, he became an alcoholic and unfaithful and used the family money to entertain mistresses. In an effort to salvage the situation, Grace took a bank loan and opened a shop for her husband to run. The shop was run down within a few months, and Grace was left in debt. The bank loan generated interest; four times the borrowed amount and she had to painfully work hard to pay it back. When the construction business finally collapsed, the man was so ashamed with himself and deserted her to go and live in their rural home with a younger woman, a widow.

Grace admits that single motherhood is not an easy way of life, but with determination and hard work it is possible to make significant achievements in life. As a single mother, she has had to pay school fees for all her children, cloth and feed them. She said, "It is certainly not easy for a school teacher whose monthly salary is very little." Her husband deserted her when her children were very small. They were attending Agha Khan primary, an expensive school in Kisumu town. She had to transfer some of the children to cheaper schools because she could not afford to pay for all of them at Agha Khan. A couple of times Grace had no money to pay school fees and her children would be sent home. She would borrow from friends or take loans and pay back when she got her monthly pay.

Fortunately, Grace had many friends, especially from the Indian community, who taught at the Agha Khan, same school where she was teaching. She says her friends helped her quite a lot whenever she experienced difficulties. Her parents were equally supportive and kept sending her food and sometimes money to support her children's education.

Grace realized how difficult life had become with the departure of the husband, but was determined to make a future for her children. She decided to venture into business. However, Grace admits that initially it was not her own idea to start a business. Her Indian colleagues at the Agha Khan school realized the difficulties she was experiencing and advised her to start a small shop. They offered to stock the shop for her and allowed her to pay slowly. "*This is the business that has made me and my children who we are,*" she said.

The biggest problem Grace has experienced in her life, as a single mother is lack of school fees. She notices that other single mothers in her neighborhood also experience the same problem. But, she adds that there is another equally demoralizing problem she experiences. This is to do with public ridicule of herself and her children. *"The community attitude towards single mothers is not good,"* she says. She adds, *"Even if you are morally upright, they will still tell bad things about you, sometime in the presence of your children."* Grace says she has been called names, such as 'Malaya' (prostitute). They say,

Where does a single woman like this get money to buy a car, rent a good house, and run a business? She must be a thief or a prostitute eating from other women's husbands¹⁶! Others say to the children, how come your mother is so rich yet she is only a teacher, what does she do. Yet others say, this woman should be investigated; she must be having some shady deals. Such talk really affects me.

The children are affected as well. Not only do they hear what the community says, but they also have their own share of the statements. Grace says, their playmates were often reminding her sons that they did not have a father, that their father was a failure, a drunkard, and an irresponsible man. She found it difficult to explain to the children why she was not living with their father yet he is alive. But, she tried to tell them, the truth, and some of them understood. Grace says that the children witnessed the suffering they endured when their father deserted them. They lacked school fees, ate poorer food and

¹⁶ Grace has worked very hard. She owns a car, a shop, and rents a nice house. With a primary school teacher's salary, many people find it hard to believe that she can afford to do all these things. However, she explained that she has been farming for the last few years and God has blessed her work. She has maize, vegetable, and potato farms in Sotik.

used poorer clothing. Grace narrates a painful incidence when the father of the children showed up once. The last born son was so happy to learn that his daddy had finally shown up, though he could not recognize him (the father) because he left when the boy was only a few months old. He went and told his friend to come to their house and see his father. He made sure he told all his friends about his father, and begged him to stay with them permanently. The father was kind enough to stay for two days. Grace laments,

It is from that day that I realized how important a father is in the life of a child. Sometimes it is better to go through separation, but it is really sad to part. With much bitterness, Grace adds, "Now I am facing another problem. The father wants to take my children. It is really painful to remember what he put us through. He does not know what I went through to educate the children to the levels they have reached.

Grace's advice to single mothers is that they should seek to be honest, trustworthy, and practice chastity. Knowing that they are the only providers in their families, single mothers should work hard to meet the needs of their children. Grace says,

It is a big challenge in life, but I do not regret it. I think I have enjoyed it, because I am a boss of my own, no one bothers me. If I was married, maybe we would be having many problems, maybe we would not be happy, as we had started to be before the man left. I have taken my status positively and I am proud of my family and myself.

Asked what she would do if she were to start life a fresh, Grace hastened to say,

I would not get married and be tied down by a man. I would remain single, and perhaps become a single mother, because I love children. I believe it is possible to be an organized single mother and be proud about it. If I were to start life over again, I would further my education, and not just stop at Form 4.

Children's education and behavior

Even though Grace experienced financial difficulties, she never discriminated against any of her children. She considered all of them, male or female, the same, with equal rights.

She wanted each of them to receive the best education, and reach the highest level they wanted. However, Grace reckons that there are families in her neighborhood who discriminate against the education of girls.

Grace spent time to supervise her children's education, although she reckons she could have done a better job if she had a resident partner. She would stay late in school providing tuition to other kids. This was a source of additional income for her. She used some of that time to tutor her own children. All the same, all her children were above average in their schoolwork. Two were average, while three were above average. One of her daughters performed very well, but the other was only average. She did not notice any marked differences between the performance of the boys and the girls.

Grace wanted her children to reach the highest possible levels in their education. However, she is being cautious.

I didn't want to force them to do what they did not want to do. I wanted them to have freedom of choice of subjects and careers and supported them in pursuit of what they thought they wanted to do." Grace says she supported her children at all time, "And prayed God to give me longer life so I could live to take care of my children.

In terms of character, Grace says,

My girls are very well behaved, even more than the sons. They have never disappointed me. None of them has ever been pregnant. Whenever they want to do something, they will come and ask me. They will come to me to ask about boy-girl relationships and things like that.

However, she fears that what their father did may affect them in future. One of her daughters has told her repeatedly, "Mom if this is what men do, I would better remain

unmarried." She is afraid that the daughter may not get married. But she consoles herself by saying, "If she can work hard now and secure a better future, I have no worries, because she will be independent and will not rely on a man to meet her daily needs." The boys were equally good when they were young, two have remained very disciplined. But, her first son worries her. He drinks a lot and has no job. She fears he might become reckless and be a failure in life. He has very bad company. Grace thinks the boy's behavior would not be this bad if he had a father. She adds that in the process of trying to sustain the family by working extra hard, she forgot to bring up the children in a Christian way. Grace says regrettably,

I never took them to Church. Every Sunday I would be busy in the shop and the children would be playing on their own with friends in the neighborhood. She says.

She reckons that the presence of a father (paternal authority) is a crucial aspect of the growth and development of children. She says, when the father is absent, the children may follow wrong role models picked from the neighborhood.

Since Grace was determined to create a better home for her children, she employed a house-help, who has worked for her for 24 years. Asked how she managed to keep the house girl for this long, Grace said,

If you believe that no human being, including yourself is perfect, then you can learn to admit and cope with people's weaknesses. That is what I have done and that is why my girl has stayed with me for these many years." She adds, "This woman has taken care of all my children. Most of them were born when she was here, so she has developed a good relationship with them. She is a like a real Auntie to them.

Grace's children were involved in minimal household chores. The house girl did most of the work. That is how she was able to encourage them to study.

Discussion of sexual issues

Grace discusses sexual issues with all her children. *"I am the only parent so I have to talk to my children about these issues."* In the past, Grace has discussed issues such as boy-girl relationships, sex, HIV/AIDS, safe sex and protection. Her children are open and discuss with her freely. Grace admits, however, that her first born son is not as open as the others and often does not want to participate in such discussions. Grace reckons that these discussions have helped to model the behavior of her children, especially the daughters.

What we learn from this case

This case study looked at the life of a woman who was deserted by the husband and left with the responsibility of taking care of her children alone, with a primary school teacher's salary. At the time of desertion her salary was no more than Kshs. 2000. But she worked hard to give them what she thought was a reasonable education, especially for the children who were interested in school. This case study points out that the absence of a father has several negative implications on the children. The father's absence affects children's personality and educational performance. The mother is happy with her position as a single mother but is very uncertain about the behavior of the children. It seems even the mere presence of a father means a lot to the children. They would like to be identified with someone as a father. At the same time they would like to be protected from abuses and ridicule by their play mates from the two-parent families

4.8.2 Case Study 2

If one decided to become a single mother, would her destiny and that of her children be pre-determined? Would she end up being poor? Would her daughters perform poorly in school? Would they drop out of school, marry early and separate soon after? This case challenges the popular notion and illuminates the prospects of daughters of single mothers even when they grow up and live through a life of economic deprivation.

Paschalia Opany- fighting all odds for the sake of children

Introduction

Paschalia Opany Akech is a retired schoolteacher and administrator. She is 62 years old and belongs to the Luo ethnic group. She currently runs a personal business, which brings her about Kshs. 16,000 per month. She lives in her own house in Kisumu City. Paschalia and her husband parted “many years ago when my children were teenagers.”

Family History

Paschalia was born in 1940 in Nyangoma, Siaya District. Her father was a butcher but the mother was a housewife. The father died when she was only two years old. After her father’s death, the mother did not remarry as required by the traditions of the Luo people at that time. Even though the community put pressure on her to do so, she felt it was not necessary for her to remarry. Paschalia had three siblings, two sisters and a brother. Her brother currently works in Nairobi, while the sisters are businesswomen dealing in Fresh Fish in Western Kenya.

Paschalia went to school in Nyangoma Kogelo in Ngiya in 1950. In 1955 she went to Ngiya boarding school for the rest of her primary school education. On completion she was admitted at Ngiya Teachers College. During those days, it was in order for one to go to college after primary school. However, they were only allowed to pursue a P3 course since PI course was reserved for Form Two or Kenya Junior graduates. She completed her training as a teacher in 1959 and was immediately posted to Ramba primary school as an assistant teacher. Paschalia has since then taught in several schools in Siaya, Kisumu, and Eldoret. These additional qualifications earned Paschalia a number of Promotions including her last position as a Schools Inspector.

Paschalia was a hard working teacher and had a passion for further education. In 1970, despite having married only a few years, she enrolled for the Kenya Junior Examinations as a private candidate and passed. Encouraged by her performance she went further to enroll for the Kenya Certificate of Education Examinations, which she equally passed. Finally, she enrolled for Kenya Advanced Certificate Examinations in 1977, but did not do very well. She attributes her relatively poor performance in this examination to responsibilities at home and 'disturbances' by her husband. She later separated with the husband after what she terms persistent domestic violence, drunkenness, and infidelity. Paschalia says she did not pursue a divorce because she did not want her children to grow up without a father. The husband worked in Nairobi with Kenya Breweries before being transferred to Kisumu, where he adopted the violent and unchaste behaviors. She recalls,

I constantly and repeatedly ran away from this man and returned home to my parents. But, my mother always advised me to return for the sake of my children. I had to endure the abuse, beatings, and horrible behaviors of an alcoholic. My mother told me not to run away. If I did, my children would become like their father because there would be no one to provide proper role modeling. I even

developed ulcers in the process.

Paschalia even involved the Police at one time when the violence reached its peak. Her husband would come home and beat her and the kids ruthlessly for no reason. He would even *“beat us for finding us asleep when he returned from the bar.”*

Paschalia has five children, a daughter and four sons. All the four sons except one, who studies in the United States of America, are working. He is Studying Business Management. The daughter is currently a housewife after getting married in Botswana, but she worked for a Business Firm in America prior to her marriage.

Children's Education

All of Paschalia's children have done very well in school. Four of the five have university degrees, while one has a Diploma in Accounting. Paschalia has educated all her children single handedly since they were in Nursery school. She admits that even though her children have been successful in their education, it was not an easy task. Her greatest difficulty was in providing school fees and clothing for the children. This was particularly intense immediately after she separated. Feeding was not a problem because Paschalia received much support from her mother. The mother was subsistence farmer and had much food in her store most of the time. Asked how she managed to take all her children to school, Paschalia says, . . .

I did what I could afford. I did some business besides my job. Above all I had faith that I could do it well. I made sacrifices, lots of them. I bought cheap clothes for my children and myself and saved for their education.

Paschalia had no gender preference while educating her children. She treated all of them equally. Three of her children were average in primary and secondary school. But afterwards they performed very well. Two of her children were above average right from the beginning. The daughter is among the two who have consistently performed well. Two of her children were affected by the violent behavior of her husband before they parted. Paschalia helped her children with their homework and coached them as much as she could. She had the advantage of being a teacher.

Paschalia provided much motivation for her children. She discussed with them all the time and encouraged them to work very hard.

I discussed with them and they all promised to become graduates and not to let me down. They have actually lived up to their words except for one, but he is still pursuing further education, and hopefully will have a degree soon. I wanted the children to have more education than I had myself. My mother refused to send me to school because she wanted to educate my brother and not me, a girl. I was offered a chance at Alliance Girls High School. I was the only one from our school, but I could not attend.

Paschalia believes that her children would have performed much better, if she had not been married at all. "I would have been more organized and planned my life without relying on someone else." She says her former husband's behavior and the separation disorganized her family and initially negatively affected the education of her children.

Obstacles to girls' education

Paschalia admits that girls, particularly those from single-mothers families face many obstacles in education. These include negative peer influence, negative parental attitude towards education of girls, hostile school environments, lack of school fees, lack of

parental support and supervision, and excessive cruelty of some parents.

What we learn from this case study

The case of Paschalia demonstrates that it is possible for a single poor mother to work hard to achieve the best for her family and herself. She separated from her abusive husband and had to work hard to feed and educate the children. Her efforts have paid off. She is a good example of a single mother whose children turned out well. Though she and her children grown through economic deprivation, her children performed well in school and are responsible people today. This case shows that single mothers can still make a difference in their lives and that of their families, and the way children turn out. It disproves the popular notion that children of single mothers often perform poorly, engage in early sexual relationships and probably marry early or separate soon after marriage.

4.8.3 Case Study 3

Do poor, less uneducated single mothers experience similar or different challenges as the educated and well to do? How do their children turn out compared to other single mothers? The case of Mary Obat explains the differences.

Mary Obat – “It hurts to be poor”

Introduction

Mary Obat is 30 years old. She is single with three children and has not been married before. She belongs to the Luo community and is self-employed (working as a trader in the market). Mary earns between Kshs. 1,000 and 2000 every month. She left school

after completing Std Eight.

Family History

Mary was born in Gem Kathomo, Siaya District in 1969. She went to a primary school in Kathomo, but was unable to continue with her education. She became pregnant at an early age and her parents refused to take her back to school. She stayed for a while but soon got involved in a sexual relationship that did not work very well.

Mary's dream career was to become a doctor on completing her studies but this was not to be for she terminated her education quite early. She therefore started selling farm produce at Kisumu's Jubilee Market, having failed to go to the university to study medicine.

Mary has three children, two girls and one boy. She, however, neither owns a home nor a farm in Kisumu City because she cannot afford it. Mary's relationship with her relatives living in the neighborhood is cordial. She relates well with them, by discussing together and giving each other assistance where necessary.

Children's Education and Welfare

Mary's three children attend school although she has problems in paying their school fees. She says,

It is really difficult to support myself and my family in terms of giving them food, shelter and clothing and even education.

This is because her income from the business she runs at the Jubilee market in Kisumu

City is not enough to cater for all these needs. All the three children attend primary school. Last year, she paid a total of Ksh. 9,500 for the education of her children. She had a problem paying this amount of money because her monthly income is much less than the fees required.

If she was to choose whom to educate between her daughters and son in case of limited financial ability, Mary says she would prefer to educate her son as opposed to her daughters. According to Mary,

Leaving the boy child without taking him to school would expose him to numerous problems such as negative peer influence, drug taking, getting involved in early sexual activities, among others. On the other hand, Mary argues that the girl child even if not educated by the parents is not a big problem since she will be married elsewhere.

None of Mary's children have ever dropped out of school because of pregnancy. Her two daughters are still young. Neither have they dropped out of school due to problems with school fees, in-discipline, or refusal to go school. Mary assists her daughters with their schoolwork. She helps them with Mathematics and English homework, which she says she was good at while in school. She also makes follow-up in order to ensure that her daughters are up to date with what was taught in school everyday. She spends about two hours everyday after supper in order to assist her daughters with their homework work. She feels this time is usually enough because at the end of the two hours usually they do cover a lot.

According to Mary, the performance of daughters in school is good. This is because they usually get between position 1 and 5, in their end of term examination. She is satisfied

with her daughters' performance. She is satisfied because they have up to date shown some consistency in their performance despite the problem of school fees. However, she feels that their performance can be further improved by buying them school textbooks that they currently lack, paying for them school fees in time, giving them extra coaching by a trained tutor, and providing them with a conducive atmosphere at home and providing new school uniforms. Mary has one son. Her son's performance in school is equally good when compared to that of her daughters.

Mary does not usually prevent her daughters from attending school for any reason. The major reason that has often caused her daughters not to attend school is lack of school fees. Whenever her children are sent home for fees, she has to work extremely hard and sometime borrow from friends and relatives to send them back.

Mary would like to educate all her children up to the university. This is because she hopes that her children may be able to achieve her own cherished dream of becoming a doctor, which she failed to realize. Secondly, she feels that after going to the university, her children will be able to live a far much better life than her current life.

Mary reckons that there are lots of obstacles to girls' education in her community. These include: *'involvement in activities that distract them from education;*' in the event of limitations in finances/school fees boys are given first priority over girls; girls are given a lot of overwhelming domestic activities/chores to perform at home; girls are involved in a lot of play that some times distract them; girls like 'walking around' looking for male companion at an early stage; use and abuse of drugs; and negative peer-group influence.

She reckons that some of these obstacles not only affect girls but also boys. She notes that these obstacles can be resolved by: providing constant guidance and counseling to the girl child; responsibilities at home should be shared equally by both girls and boys so as not to over burden the female gender alone; enough time should be created for the girl child to study both in school and at home; where possible girls should be taken to boarding schools to enable them to concentrate more on their academic work; and the girl child should be helped to develop self esteem.

Challenges of a Single Mother

Mary attributes her being single to her boyfriend who was unloving, uncaring and even irresponsible after she became pregnant with her first baby. Her boyfriend disowned her and refused to take responsibility for the pregnancy. He also refused to take care of the child when she was born. In order to take care of the baby, Mary got into another sexual relationship with the hope that the man would provide for her upkeep and probably marry her. She was disappointed because soon after the man had deserted leaving her with another pregnancy. Mary became disillusioned with men and marriage. She felt that she had been cheated and used. Asked what she would do if given a fresh chance to start life again, Mary says she would think of marriage, but would fear for her life, given the high HIV/AIDS incidence in this area. She says she would be very cautious if it came to choosing a husband to start life a new. Mary reckons the importance of having a husband who could care for her and her children.

It is so hard to be a mother and a father in the home. If I had a husband, I would have someone to assist me financially and also to bring up the children. It is hard when the children are depending on one person. My

son needs a father to play with, but he is nowhere to be found.

Mary is comfortable being a single mother especially because she can make all decisions on her own without having to look for consent elsewhere, she is not coerced to do things which she does not believe, and she is not involved in a lot of unnecessary quarrels and is free from domestic violence. However, she notes that there are various problems that she faces as a single mother, in terms of bringing up and education her children. These include problem of paying school fees, providing for family needs (food, clothing, shelter and health), and bringing up children in the absence of a father. The attitude of the society towards single women is another problem that Mary has noticed. *"Many people look down upon us thinking we are rebellious and morally weak."* She believes that society can help single mothers to overcome most difficulties they face by supporting them rather than look down upon them, and that NGOs could also come in to support single mothers. Mary adds that society should be sensitized to know that single parenthood might not be ones' liking or making. Some single mothers are victims of circumstances. Hence society should be more understanding and accommodating rather than condemn single mothers.

The community's attitudes towards single mothers are negative. Community views single mothers 'as not living an upright kind of life.' Their attitudes towards children (both boys and girls) of single parents is also negative. This attitude is expressed in a number of ways: children of single mothers being given nick names, children of single parents are mocked, 'for instance that they have different fathers,' and 'in the estate play grounds, other children do not interact with single mothers' children freely.

Discussion of sexual issues

Mary usually talks with her children about sex and their emerging sexuality. She specifically discusses HIV/AIDS, personal hygiene, boy girl relationship, and other family life issues. She usually discusses with both her son and daughters. However, she discusses with the daughters and son separately. This is because there are certain issues such as personal hygiene of the girl that she believes the boy need not know about.

What we learn from this case study

This last case reflects the experiences of a typical single mother. With less education, no job and no money, the youthful single mother is faced with real challenges. Her case confirms what is popularly believed about single mothers: they are poor, uneducated and have no or little income. The case points to the importance of having a spouse or father not just for economic survival but also to support the development of children and security for the woman. Mary Obat confirms that having a man in a home or family is important. She believes that some of the problems she is facing in bring up children would not be there if she had a male spouse. Surprisingly, her children are doing very well in school, which disproves popular belief that children of single mothers always perform poorly in school. One can be a single poor and uneducated but still manage to inspire her children to perform well in school.

4.8.4 Analysis of the Case Studies

The three case studies reveal interesting findings, some of which did not emerge from the

FGDs or the IDIs. Each case represents a voice and feelings of single mothers who are determined to raise good families despite numerous obstacles at the family and societal level. The three agree that life is not just about having spouses, rather, it is about setting goals, planning the family and taking every opportunity to offer the best for ones self and children.

The example of Grace and Paschalia is an indication that single mothers who have the vision for their families can provide good education for their daughters. Hard work and commitment is what matters, not fatalism. Many single mothers begin from a wrong footing. Some believe that they cannot manage because they have no education, are poor and have many children. Therefore, they think that whatever they do, they cannot succeed. While education is crucial for a mother, as in the case of Paschalia and Grace, the drive to educate girls must be paramount. Once the goal to educate is set, the single mother would have to find ways to achieve the goal. But often the problem is that they do not set the goal in the first place. Perhaps cultural orientations stop most single mothers from doing so. The society thinks they are failures, which affects their own self-esteem and they begin to believe that they are failures. This does not have to be because the fact that one is a single mother does not mean that her destiny is already decided.

The two single mothers who went through separation indicate that there is a significant difference in life before and after separation. The most important difference is a shift in the living conditions of the family. While previously the family enjoyed a comfortable home, good food, pleasant clothing and attended good schools, these may not be the case after separation. In most cases, fathers shoulder most of the family responsibilities.

When separation occurs, mothers have to make significant adjustments to cope with the shortage created. This may affect the children in many ways. They may be dissatisfied with the efforts of the mother and think she is the problem. Because certain necessities and niceties that they enjoyed may not be available, some children may begin to beg or frequent other homes rather than their own leading to possible adverse behavioral changes. The children may have to change schools, as in the case of Grace, or stay home while the mothers look for money to pay their fees. Staying out of school may be destructive for the girls particularly. Being idle is one of the worst things teenagers, especially girls, should experience. It is at this time that they may lose interest in school and develop interest in the opposite sex. The children may also go hungry either because there is no sufficient food or the food they frequently ate in the past may be too expensive for the mother to afford as she tries to adjust her spending. All these outcomes may affect the performance and participation of children in school. The result can be worse for teenage girls, whose unique needs may be affected more than the boys. Fortunately, for Grace and Paschalia, the separation happened when their children were small, and so they did not experience this problem.

The three case studies reveal that single mothers are uniquely discriminated by society. They are viewed as morally liberal, especially in matters related to sex. Married women think single mothers are capable of taking their husbands away, while men think they (single mothers) are available to be used for sexual needs. Single mothers are viewed with much suspicion. The older widows receive a rather different treatment than the younger ones. They receive sympathy from almost all segments of society, perhaps because they are older and less sexually attractive. The society is unfair in making such

generalizations about single mothers. There are many young single mothers who are determined to live an upright life, especially in these days of HIV and AIDS. They are guided by the commitment to live and take care of their children until they are able to be on their own. It is wrong for such mothers to be lumped up with others who may not be moral upright. These negative attitudes are not only expressed against single mothers, but to their families in general. Their children are abused and ridiculed. In some cases, the girls are thought to be living like their mothers. This affects their self-esteem and relationships with other children, and if they are in school, affects their concentration and inhibits their performance.

There is some evidence in literature that daughters of single mothers have the propensity to become single mothers, themselves (Marsden, 1970; Garfinkel and MacLanahan, 1986; Lamb, 1978/1976). Both Grace and Paschalia said they observed attitudes in their daughters that would easily have convinced them to stay unmarried. Their daughters were very sympathetic with their mothers for what their fathers did. They wondered why anyone would get married to a man if all they would end up with is maltreatment and desertion. Such experiences can easily influence daughters of single mothers not to marry. No wonder, the theory of reasoned action, which is part of our theoretical framework emphasizes the potential roles of significant others and past experiences in determining ones' behavioral choices and outcomes. Daughters of single mothers have a strong role model in the name of a mother. As they grow up they model after their mothers and they are convinced by the experiences they have gathered that they can be successful single mothers. But, becoming single mothers is not the problem. The fear is that once they become single mothers, then the cycle of poverty and discrimination

repeats itself and their own daughters remain uneducated, at least for a majority of single mothers. Of course some think in the contrary. The negative experiences of denial and scarcity may provide very strong influence against the choice to become a single parent.

Though two of the three cases noted they did not discriminate against their daughters in education, the women did point out that they knew several families in the neighborhood where girls had either dropped out of school or repeated classes so that the boy would go first. This happens despite the fact that some of these girls perform better than the boys they have to give way for. Though such discrimination was observed in community generally, the women noted that single mothers were among the worst abusers or discriminators of their own daughters because of their weak financial abilities. All the three mothers interviewed knew of single mothers who had treated their boys favorably at the expense of the daughters. It is sad, that single mothers, themselves play a part in perpetuating this negative practice instead of standing up for the girl child. Forced discrimination of the girl child in education is therefore one of the most important obstacles to the education of girls among single-mother families in Kisumu City.

Another observation that emerges from the three case studies relates to the issue of child discipline. The three women believed that with a father at home child in-discipline could be minimized. They recognized the crucial role of a father in providing discipline to the children. In two cases, incidence of in-discipline including use and abuse of drugs was mentioned, and the mothers believe that such things would not happen if the father was living with the children. In fact, the very strong desire of the children to see and live with their father is an indication that something misses in the socialization of children by

single mothers. No wonder, Sigmund Freud (1974) attaches great importance to the Oedipus complex and modeling. The way a father relates with the daughter is not the same way the mother does. Therefore, where the mother is the sole socialization agent, the girl's affinity to the father is denied and she may not be completely responsive to the mother's instructions. This may lead to cases of in-discipline, rebellion including dropout from school and early marriage.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

5.0 Introduction

In chapter four the findings of this study were presented using descriptive statistics. In this chapter we undertake an in-depth analysis of data in relation to core variables of the study and to generate major findings and conclusions. The findings analyzed in this chapter are compared to previous studies on single motherhood and girls' education. The applicability and relevance of the theoretical framework is equally discussed. The key measurements used in analyzing the data include the chi-square test of independence or significance, which is used to test the study hypotheses, and contingency coefficient, which is used to measure the strength of association between the key variables. The study hypotheses are as follows:

- H₁. The mother's marital status is likely to determine whether or not the girl child drops out of school.
- H₂. There is a positive correlation between marital status and educational performance of the girl child.
- H₃. There is a positive correlation between single mother's income level and the girl child's educational performance.

H4. There is a positive correlation between single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance.

The core independent variables to be analyzed in this chapter include marital status, mothers age, education, income and level of education, while the dependent variables include girls' enrollment, class performance, and drop out. A few intervening variable such as girls' involvement in household work, sexual activity, and absenteeism are also analyzed to determine the extent to which they affect girl's education generally, and school performance in particular.

5.1 School drop out among girls

School drop out was one of the key variables in this study. The educational achievement of children depends on their ability to stay in school. Dropping out often implies that they will hardly ever have the opportunity to continue schooling. This study attempted to investigate the prevalence and factors associated with school drop out among daughters of single mothers. As we have pointed out in chapter Four, drop out was a common phenomenon among daughters of single mothers. The first hypothesis for this study was based on this variable.

5.1.1 Testing Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: The mother's marital status is likely to determine whether or not the girl child drops out of school.

The relationship between marital status and girls' drop out from school was a major concern for this study. The findings show that girls from single-mother's homes are more likely to drop out of primary school than the ones from two-parent families. For instance, of all the 40 reported cases of drop out, daughters of single mothers accounted for 92.5 percent, while daughters of married mothers accounted for only 7.5 percent. This therefore suggests that the phenomenon of drop out is more widespread among single mother families than in two-parent families as shown in Table 23.

Table 23: Mother's marital status and girls' school drop out

Marital status	No drop out	Dropped out	Row total
Single mothers	138 78.9% 78.9 %	37 21.1% 92.5%	175 81.5%
Married mothers	37 92.5% 21.1%	3 7.5% 7.5%	40 18.6%
Column Total	175 81.4%	40 18.6%	215 100.0%

($P = 0.0998$ DF:4 $P < 0.05$)

The analysis showed a strong association between marital status and school drop out (contingency coefficient of 0.916). The association is statistically significant ($P=0.0998$). Table 23 indicates that girls from single parent families are more likely to drop out of school than girls from the two-parent families. Further analysis of the data showed that daughters of single mothers are almost five times more likely than daughters of married mothers to drop out of school. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no correlation between marital status and girl's dropout, is rejected. The study hypothesis number one is accepted. The analyses reveal that daughters of single mothers are likely to drop out from school than their counterparts from the two-parent families.

Therefore, we could conclude that single motherhood indeed affects girls' participation by increasing drop out rates from school.

This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Garfinkel (1986), which pointed to a similar trend. It has been argued that girls from single-mother families receive limited supervision and motivation to continue with schooling. Unlike the two parent families, it is argued that the mother in single-parent families has less energies to invest on supervision of children because most of their energies are spent looking for money to feed, cloth and house their children. Thus at adolescence when the children need their guidance more, they are not available. This may lead to girls, particularly, dropping out either to elope or get married early.

The study attempted to establish the relationship between the single mother mother's age and the rate of girl's drop out from school. This association is shown in Table 24.

Mother's aged between 30 and 49 were more likely than those aged below 30 and over 50 years to have daughters who dropped out of school. For instance, 77.5 of the mothers who had girls who dropped out of school were aged between 30 and 49 years.

Table 24: Mother's age and school drop out (girls)

Mother's age	No dropped out	Dropped out	Total
20-29	45 ¹⁷ 95.7 % 26.0 %	2 4.3 % 5 %	47 22.1 %
30-39	78 85.7 % 45.1 %	13 14.3 % 32.5 %	91 42.7 %
40-49	38 67.8 % 22.0 %	18 32.2 % 45 %	56 26.3 %
50+	12 63.2 % 6.9 %	7 36.8 % 17.5 %	19 8.9 %
Total	173 81.2 %	40 18.8 %	213 % 100.0

(P: .00127 DF: 6 P < 0.05)

The analysis of these findings show that daughters of mothers aged 20-29 were 5 percent less likely to have daughters who had dropped out of school than the daughters of mothers aged 50 years and above. Daughters of mothers aged 30-39 years were 1.5 times more likely than the 50 and above year olds to drop out of school. And finally, the analyses show that daughters of mothers aged 40-49 years were roughly 1.5 times more likely to drop out of school than daughters of mothers aged 50 and above years.

Age of the mother, therefore, is a significant determinant of girls' drop out from school. The table indicates a statistically significant relationship between mother's age and level of girls' drop out from school. The younger women (below 30) years and older ones (50

¹⁷ The three statistics in each of the cells in the 2 middle columns plus the rest presented in the same way in this section represent COUNT (FREQUENCY), ROW PERCENT, and COLUMN PERCENT, respectively. The last column represents the ROW COUNT

years and above) are less likely to have children dropping out. Perhaps, the fact that the younger women are not old enough to have children in the upper classes explains the lower drop out rates, while the older women (50 years and above) are less likely to have school-going children. But the middle-aged women are likely to have many school-going children, thus increasing chances of drop out. Therefore we can conclude that mothers aged between 30 and 40 years are more likely to have children dropping out of school than the others.

An attempt was made to establish the effect of mother's occupation on girls' of school drop out. The study found as a statistically significant relationship between mother's occupation and the level of girls' drop out from school ($P: 00949; P < 0.05; DF:4$) as shown in the Table 25. Dropout rates were higher for the self-employed/petty traders (70 percent). In contrast, drop out rates among the employed (15 percent) and the unemployed (7.5 percent) were quite low. This finding suggests that self employed mothers and petty traders may not be providing a suitable environment and motivation for their daughters to participate in schooling. Perhaps, being traders, they may be out of the home more often or even long hours and the children could take the advantage of their absence and lack of supervision to participate in non-school activities. These may lead eventually to drop out.

Table 25: Mothers' occupation and girls drop out from primary school

Occupation	No drop out	Drop out	Row total
Employed	73	6	79
	92.4 %	7.6%	36.9%
	42.0 %	15.0 %	
Self employed/petty trade	78	28	106
	73.6 %	26.4%	49.5%
	44.8 %	70.0 %	
Unemployed	18	3	21
	85.7%	14.3%	9.8%
	10.3%	7.5%	
Other	5	3	8
	62.5%	37.5%	3.7%
	2.9	7.5	
Column total	174	40	214
	81.3%	18.7%	100.0%

(P= 0.000949 P < 0.05 DF: 4)

An analysis of association between occupation and drop out showed that employed mothers were 62 percent less likely than unemployed mothers to have girls who had dropped out of school. Similarly, self-employed mothers were twice less likely than unemployed mothers to have daughters who had dropped out of school. Most of the self-employed mothers interviewed included shopkeepers, vegetable and fish businesswomen and traders in clothing. These kinds of businesses can be quite challenging to single mothers. It might make child supervision difficult. Also, the income generated from such trade may not be adequate to take these children through school, thus leaving room for drop out. As will be seen presently, whenever mothers are faced with financial difficulties, many times it is the girl child who suffers.

The study sought to establish the relationship between income levels of mothers and girls'

level of drop out from school. School drop out rates were particularly higher for mothers with incomes of less than Kshs. 3000 compared to mothers whose incomes were higher. For instance, 87.2 percent of drop out cases were found among mothers whose income was less than Ksh. 3000. Among the mothers with incomes of at least Ksh. 10,000, drop out rates fell drastically to a mere 5 percent. Though there was a statistically insignificant association between income and drop out. There seem to be an observable tendency of more girls from poorer homes to drop out of school than girls from the relatively economically stable families. There was a statistically significant association between mother's income and girl's drop out from primary school. Table 26 shows this association.

Table 26: Mothers' income and girls' level of drop out

Income	No drop out	Dropped out	Row total
10,000 and above	22 ¹⁸ 84.6% 12.8%	4 15.4% 10.2%	26 12.3%
9,000-6,000	25 96.2% 14.5%	1 3.8% 2.6%	26 12.3%
5,000-3,000	45 86.5% 26.2%	7 13.5% 17.9%	52 24.6%
2,000-1,000	40 81.6% 23.3%	9 18.4% 23.1%	49 23.2%
1,000 and below	40 69.0% 23.3%	18 31.0% 46.2%	58 27.5%
Column Total	172 81.5%	39 18.5%	211 100.0%

(P= 0.0166 P< 0.05 DF: 6)

¹⁸ The three statistics in each of the cells in the 2 middle columns plus the rest presented in the same way in this section represent COUNT (FREQUENCY), ROW PERCENT, and COLUMN PERCENT, respectively. The last column represents the ROW COUNT. (FREQUENCY) and ROW PERCENT.

The analyses of the data showed that daughters of mothers with 5000-9000 were 71¹⁹ percent more likely to drop out of school compared to daughters of mother with incomes of Kshs 10,000 and above. Those with 3000-5000 level of income were 80 percent more likely to drop out; those with incomes ranging between 1000 – 2000 and less than Ksh. 1000, were 66.3 percent and 60 percent more likely to drop out of school, respectively, compared to daughters of mothers with incomes of Ksh. 10,000 and above. Therefore, level of income is an important determinant of girls' level of drop out from school. The findings show that the higher the income of the mother the lower the likelihood that her daughter will drop out of school. In almost all the FGDs and some IDIs with key informants, participants said they had daughters who had dropped out of school because they could not pay their school fees.

Mother's education was found to be an important determinant of school drop out. The findings of the study indicates that drop out rates increased with lower levels of education for the mother. For instance, 86.5 percent of mothers with at least Form Four level of education reported that their daughters had dropped out of school compared to less than 15 percent of the mothers with at least Form Six level of education, as shown in Table 27.

¹⁹ These statistics are generated by calculating the percentage differences between two variables being compared.

Table 27: Mother's education and girl's drop out

Mother's education	No drop out	Dropped out	Row total
University	9 90.0% 6.3%	1 10.0% 1.4	10 4.6%
Diploma college	19 90.5% 13.3	2 9.5% 2.7%	21 9.7%
Teachers' college	22 81.5% 15.4%	5 18.5% 6.8%	27 12.4%
Form 6	3 75.0% 2.1%	1 25.0% 1.4%	4 1.8%
Form 4	49 67.1% 34.3%	24 32.9% 32.4%	73 33.6%
Standard 8 and below	41 50.6% 28.7%	40 49.4% 54.1%	81 37.3%

($P=0.00138$ $P < 0.05$ DF: 5)

Further analysis of the data shows that daughters of mothers with at least Std 8 level of education accounted for more than 50 percent of all drop out cases. This was the highest for any of the four school level categories. Even though each category of mothers had experienced a drop out, the rates are obviously higher for mothers with less education than those with higher levels of education. There was a statistically significant association between mother's level of education and girl's drop out ($P=0.00138$ $P < 0.05$ DF: 5). Perhaps mothers with higher level of education are better able to provide for and participate in the girl's education than are the mothers with less education.

Further analysis of the data showed that daughters of mothers with post-secondary school education were about 79.5 percent less likely to drop out of school than were daughters of mothers with primary school education. Similarly, daughters of mothers with secondary school education were 74.4 percent less likely to drop out of school than were daughters of mothers with Primary school education. Therefore, we can conclude that mother's level of education is a determinant of whether or not her daughter will drop out of school.

The relationship between mothers' marital status and girls' drop out from school was a major concern for this study. In fact the first hypothesis of the study was based on the relationship between these two variables. The hypothesis number 1 states: The mother's marital status is likely to determine whether or not the girl child drops out of school. A Pearson-chi-square test of independence was used to determine the correlation as shown on Table 28.

Table 28: Mother' marital status and girl's drop out of school

Marital status	No drop out	Dropped out	Row total
Unmarried	138	37	175
	78.9%	21.1%	81.5%
	78.9 %	92.5%	
Married	37	3	40
	92.5%	7.5%	18.6%
	21.1%	7.5%	
Column Total	175	40	215
	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%

($P=0.00998$ $P < 0.05$ $DF:4$)

There was a statistically significant association between marital status and girl's drop out from school ($P:0.00998$) at 5.0 percent level of confidence. The association between marital status and girls' drop out from school, as measured by contingency coefficient, was found to be strong (0.8942). The findings indicate that girls from single parent

families are more likely to drop out of school than girls from the two-parent families. For instance, 92.5 percent of single mothers compared to only 7.5 percent of married mothers reported that their daughters had dropped out of school. This therefore suggests that the phenomenon of school drop out is more widespread among daughters of single mother families than in two-parent families. The findings of this study show that girls from single-mother's homes are more likely to drop out of primary school than the ones from two-parent families.

These findings are consistent with the studies conducted by Garfinkel (1986), which pointed to a similar trend. Garfinkel (1986) argues that girls from single-mother families receive limited supervision and motivation to continue with schooling. Unlike the two parent families, it is argued that the mother in single-parent families has less energies to invest on supervision of children because most of their energies are spent looking for money to feed, cloth and house their children. Thus at adolescence when the children need their guidance more, they are not available. This may lead to girls, particularly, dropping out either to elope or get married early. The participants in FGDs confirmed that many times they find it difficult to spare time to talk to their girls and provide guidance on education and sexuality issues. In one FGD with mothers who have separated, a 40-year-old participant said,

We are often in the market late and when we return home, we have to prepare food for the children. It was not only the girls who are affected, even the boys dropped out of school. Some of them start by absenting themselves without the mother's knowledge and eventually withdrawing from school. But in my opinion girls drop out more than boys.

5.1.1 Determinants of school drop out among girls

An important determinant of girls' drop out from schools is teenage pregnancy. This study attempted to investigate the factors that explain the incidence of teenage pregnancy and how it affected the girls' future. The analyses show that number of families had experienced pregnancy outside marriage, whether or not they were in school. Again, higher rates were observed among widowed and separated families. The rates for married homes remained the same while that for single-mother families increased from 40 to 53 (32.5 percent).

The incidence of pregnancy outside marriage among the widowed mothers (46.4 percent) is particularly disturbing. It is possible that perhaps men are likely to take advantage of girls from these families after the death of their father. The loss of a father's love might force girls to look for a replacement causing premarital sexual activities and unintended pregnancies.

Even though there is a new policy within the Ministry of Education (MOE) that girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy should be re-admitted, this did not seem to be applied in most of the schools visited. Few of the girls who got pregnant ever returned (1.4 percent) to school and none had returned to their previous schools. The key informants most of whom were head teachers and school masters/mistresses said they supported the idea that girls should be re-admitted after they deliver, but they admitted their concern for the influence such a girl would have on other girls. They pointed out that currently the community, as a whole did not favor the re-entry policy, which had affected the attitude of

girls who would be willing to return to school. Many girls were therefore discouraged and de-motivated to return unless they had very supportive parents or guardians. Unintended pregnancy has negative implications both for the girl and her family.

Teenage pregnancy has occupied the minds of educationists and planners for several years. Unintended pregnancy is indeed common in both primary and secondary schools, just as previous studies have found (Fergusson, 1988; Njau, 1993; Njau and Wmahiu, 1994). Young teenage girls are forced to terminate their education because of unintended pregnancy. According to Fergusson (1988) about 10,000 girls dropped out of primary and secondary schools due to unintended pregnancy every year. Five years later in 1994, Njau and Wamahiu (1994) estimated it to be 13,000 girls per year with about 36 girls dropping out everyday. At this rate the implications are serious because within one week, a girls' school could be closed down because it will not have students.

In this study a drop out rate of 18.3 percent was found. Drop out rate due to pregnancy among single mother families is almost three times higher than the drop out rate among two-parent families. Most single mothers are very busy most of the time looking for money to feed their family. They leave early in morning for work or business and most of the time return when their children are either asleep or about to sleep. Thus they hardly find opportunity to talk to their children about sexuality and provide appropriate guidance. The mother in a two-parent family has a partner who can compliment her role or who shares in some of the family responsibilities. But being alone, the single mother only has herself to do everything in the family. In the process of trying to do everything, some things either do not get done very well or are not done at all. The supervision and

guidance of children may be the first culprit since it borders with discussion of sexuality, which many parents feel uncomfortable talking about.

Thus their daughters may easily fall prey to negative peer pressure to get involved in premarital sex or to older men who entice them with goodies and niceties to get sexual favors. The fact that most young people are least aware of contraceptives is well documented (Njau, 1993; Ajayi, 1991; Okumu and Chege, 1994). Even those who are aware or knowledgeable about contraceptives do not use them during sexual encounters. They don't use them because most times those encounters are unplanned and take place very fast. They never plan to have sex and those who do, have negative attitudes towards use of contraceptives. Even if they wanted to use contraceptives, the power relations between girls and boys (women and men) often favor the men. Women have no power in sexual relations to determine when, how and whether or not a contraceptive should be used. Therefore, the chances of these girls getting pregnant are much higher than for older women.

Most of the girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy never return after their babies are delivered. It has been estimated that only 14 percent of these girls returned (Njau and Wamahiu, 1994) and that even those who returned most did not go back to their schools, they looked for new schools (Wamahiu and Kireka, 1996). This study found consistent results with those in previous researches. For many years, girls' return to school after delivery has been the center of a prolonged discussion between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and gender activists and female educationists in Kenya. Coupled with negative community and schools' administrations' negative attitudes, the return to

school of a girl who had dropped out because of pregnancy was very difficult. In the community she is seen as a failure and an embarrassment to her family and at school she is a bad example to the others. She is seen as a girl who cannot control her sexuality. She is viewed as a loose woman. But nobody thinks negatively about the boy or man who caused the pregnancy. He is probably most likely to be seen as a hero. Such double standards are still entrenched in the society and they actually make girls' education very difficult.

Unfortunately, even with this supportive policy in place very few girls across the country return to school after delivery. There are four major obstacles to girls' return. First, the re-entry policy was never properly disseminated to communities and to schools. In many parts of the country, people still believe that the MOE does not support girls' re-entry and some schools have maintained the pre-policy attitudes that girls who get pregnant must be expelled from school. This has always been the response for most schools and the action serves as punishment to the girl (not the boy) so that other girls can be deterred from being pregnant. But punishment of the victim cannot discourage the incidence of teenage pregnancy in schools. If anything, it completely destroys the future of the innocent girl.

Negative attitudes of mothers towards education of girls could be yet another determinant. Key informant and FGD participants reported that negative community attitude towards education of single mothers, their children and education of girls from these families was yet another factor. The preference for education of the son rather than the daughter can equally discourage and frustrate girls who would - given a chance - perform very well and attain higher educational standards. Many girls drop out not

because they are not good in class, but because the prevailing environment at home, school and community are not conducive to their education. If the society thinks they should not be in school, it would be very difficult for them to stay in school, however hard they try.

The incidence of HIV/AIDS affects families and more so education and development of children. HIV/AIDS has reduced life expectancy not only of Kisumu District but Kenya as a whole. It has terminated the education of many children, especially girls. The single-mother families have been severely affected by AIDS. Girls have had to drop out to take care of their mother or sister suffering from AIDS. Traditionally, the society expected women to be caregivers or care takers of the young, aged and sickly. Thus in the event of a family member falling sick, the girl will most likely be asked to stay home and look after the sick. The boy on the other hand, is seen as the one that will support the family if the mother dies. He is thus allowed to go to school. In some instances, the girl may even be taken away from her own home to take care of a relative (an auntie, cousin or niece). It should also be borne in mind that a number of girls same age as our respondents had personally been infected with the AIDS virus. According to NASCOP (1999) girls aged 15-24 years were almost four times as likely to be infected than boys. The girls are more vulnerable because the older infected men are infecting them. Most of the older men who might be infected but are not aware they are infected, think it is safer for them to have sex with the younger school girls because they are thought to be cleaner or virus-free. Yet they do not know that many other men, including the infected, think along the same lines. The result is that these innocent girls get infected and have to terminate their education leaving the mother even poorer, having invested in their

education and now have to incur further expenses on health care.

Poverty leading to inability of most single mothers to pay their daughters' school fees could be another contributing factor. In an economy that is getting worse by the day, many single mothers cannot cope with high cost of living that prevails. Most of them have been forced out of formal and informal employment due to retrenchment. Those who have been doing business can no longer make meaningful profit margins, others have despaired and closed businesses and those who have been relying on support from relatives and friends can no longer expect much from these people. The end result is that single mothers are pushed further and further to the bottom of the poverty scale. Poverty not only has negative serious ramified complications for girl-child's education, it affects health care, and basic needs, relationships and self-esteem. Drop out is more common in poorer single-mother families. When the mother is too poor to provide for the family's immediate basic needs, the education of the girl-child is the first to suffer and the girls are victims. Payment of the girl's fees especially in secondary school becomes an "unnecessary expense" that can be avoided.

But, perhaps one of the things that single mothers need to think about immediately they have a child, whether a son or daughter, is saving for education. As evident from interview with most mothers, very few, plan for their daughter's education. By the time their daughters are going to school, they have no money set aside to pay their fees and by books and other requirements. This situation could be avoided if the mothers began to save some money once their children are born, so that by the time they are going to school, they are in a position to pay for most of the requirements.

The other determinants of girls drop out of school could be the negative attitude of the schools' administration who maintain that girls who become pregnant are a bad example and may negatively influence innocent girls into premarital sex and increase rate of pregnancy in the school. Of course this has not been proven to be true and is only based on administrators' values and assumptions. In fact, her return may be a lesson for other girls to learn from, rather than a negative influence. They may actually identify with the problems girls' experience when they become pregnant while in school and learn to restrain themselves. They are also more likely to begin having open discussions regarding teenage pregnancy, which is a healthy way towards finding solutions to the problem of teenage pregnancies in schools. The third and fourth obstacles are personal in nature. The girl may refuse to return for fear of ridicule and stigmatization. She may be isolated and may no longer have friends. These fears may discourage her from going back to school. Finally, in most cases, girls may not find someone to take care of their babies. The re-entry policy only gives them a one-year break. Therefore, they cannot take care of their babies for more than a year and still get re-admitted. If they hope to return to school, they have to find someone whom they can trust with their babies.

One of the most commonly mentioned causes of girls' drop out from school in this study was lack of school fees. Overall, 14.6 percent of all mothers (married and single) observed that their daughters had dropped out of school because they could not pay fees. As indicated before, most of those who could not pay school fees were single mothers with monthly incomes lower than Kshs. 5000 per month. Since these were the majority, school fees therefore is a major problem in these families. In all the FGDs, school fees was apparently a

major concern for the mothers. Some cases were more desperate than others as was expressed by a lady in a FGD for the separated mothers.

"My two daughters completed standard 8 but could not proceed with their education because of lack of school fees."

This lady added that one of her daughters actually got pregnant while staying at home and lamented that had she been able to pay school fees, her daughter would not have been pregnant. All these point to the poverty situation that most single mothers find themselves in. Most of the children of those mothers were attending primary and secondary day schools within the City. Most of these were public schools whose fee requirements were not very heavy, especially for primary schools. However, despite the low cost, most mothers were still unable to pay. Lack of school fees therefore does not only lead to drop out but may also cause unintended pregnancy for girls who are forced to stay home. Such girls are also likely to get married early. The data shows that 1.4 percent of the mothers whose daughters had dropped out eventually got married early.

When children are often sent away for school fees they begin to lose interest in their education and may actually drop out because of this reason. About 3.2 percent of the mothers said that their children dropped out because of disinterest. In a FGD for never married women aged 35 years and above, a mother said

"... One of my daughters, however, lost interest in school because of being sent home persistently for lack of fees."

One of the things that single mothers could do to avoid the unnecessary termination of their daughters' education is to plan and save for their education. If single mothers were able to save consistently once their daughters were born, they would not lack money to take the

girls to school. If they were able to save any money received from their children's fathers, they would have a sure investment in their daughters' education. A mother from the two-parent family said this when she was interviewed, "...If I was a single mother, I would invest on my daughters' education." Most single mothers are caught unawares when the demands for children's education creep in, but for some proper planning can help a great deal to reduce the magnitude of this problem. For others, the choices for economic survival are so limited that they do not think much about the future and what it holds for them and their families.

Parents were asked if they knew of children who had terminated their education because one or both of their parents had died of HIV/AIDS. Over 51 percent of the mothers said they knew a family where children had been forced to drop out of school because their parents either had HIV or had died of AIDS. As pointed out earlier, the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Kisumu district is high and this is likely to cause many problems with education of children. In many cases as observed before, it is the men who die first but then women left behind may be too sick or emotionally unstable to support the education of the children. She may also not be able to provide motivation to the children leading to disinterest and drop out.

5.2 Academic Performance

Academic performance of the children was one of the key dependent variables for the study. The study attempted to establish the academic performance of daughters of single mothers *vis a vis* boys from the same type of family, on the one hand, and boy and girls

from the two-parent type of family on the other. During fieldwork, children were asked to indicate their class positions for various terms²⁰ between 1997 and 1999.

5.2.1 Testing Hypothesis 2

The study sought to establish the relationship between marital status and performance of the girl-child. To do so, a hypothesis was used to determine whether or not the two variables were correlated. The hypothesis read:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive correlation between marital status and the girl child's educational performance. The null hypothesis (H_0) used to test the alternative hypothesis maintained that there is no positive correlation between single mother's income and the girl-child's performance. The analysis was conducted as shown in the Tables 29. Term one of 1999 was selected randomly for this analysis.

²⁰ Each year has three school terms, in some schools examination were only done twice thus not all students gave their positions for all the terms. An average size of class was worked out and categories used to grade students where they belonged to facilitate easy and quick analysis. Average size of a class was 50 students. The students' performances were graded as follows: Positions 1 – 10, very good; 11 – 20, good; 21 – 30 average; and over 31, below average.

Table 29: Marital status and girl's academic performance

Mother's marital status/family type	Performance				Row Total
	Very good	Good	Average	Below average	
Single mother	32 ²¹ 27.4% 53.3%	26 22.2% 56.3%	31 26.5% 88.6%	28 23.9% 87.5%	117 67.6%
Two-parent (married)	28 50.0% 46.7%	20 35.7% 43.5%	4 7.1% 11.4%	4 7.1% 12.5%	56 32.4%
Column total	60 34.7%	46 26.6%	35 20.2%	32 18.5%	173 100.0

(P=0.00011 P < 0.05 DF:3)

There was a statistically significant association between marital status and girl-child's educational performance (P:0.000110). The association between marital status/type of family, as measured by contingency coefficient was very strong (0.9875). The analysis showed that daughters of married mothers were more than two times likely to perform better than daughters of single mothers. The three analyses showed a consistent correlation between marital status and girls' academic performance. Therefore, the hypothesis that there's a positive correlation between marital status and girl child's educational performance is accepted. The null hypothesis is rejected.

The findings showed that the performance of girls from single-mother families was much less than the performance of girls from the two-parent families. For instance, while 50 and 35.7 percent of girls from the two-parent families had very good/good performance, only 27.4 and 22.2 percent of the girls from single-mother families had similar

²¹ Note: The three statistics in each of the cells in the 2 middle columns plus the rest presented in the same way in this section represent COUNT (FREQUENCY), ROW PERCENT, and COLUMN PERCENT, respectively. The last column represents the ROW COUNT.

performance. Similarly, while 23.9 percent of girls from single-mother families performed below average, only 7.1 of the girls from the two-parent families had that kind of performance. In addition, while only an average of 12 percent of daughters of single mothers had between average and below average performance, about 86 percent of the daughters from single-mother families had a similar performance, thereby confirming that daughters of single mothers consistently performed poorer than daughters of married mothers.

The differences in performance between girls from single mother families and those from two-parent families are therefore quite apparent, thereby confirming that daughters of single mothers consistently performed poorer than daughters of married mothers. Type of family/marital status therefore is an important determinant of girls' academic performance. However, one can observe that a large proportion (27.4 percent) girls from single-mother families achieved a "very good" performance, which shows that even though generally they tend to perform poorer, they can equally put up a good performance.

The cross tabulation and chi-square test for Hypothesis 1 revealed that girls from single-mother families performed poorer than their colleagues from the two-parent families. There are several factors that can explain this disparity. The theoretical framework used in this study attempts to explain this incidence. The psychoanalytic perspective maintains that paternal presence is necessary for cognitive development of the child – both boy and girl. Though paternal authority is universally understood to be positively correlated with child performance (Lamb, 1976), this study did not establish an appreciable paternal

influence on educational participation and enrolment of the girl-child. However, it is important to note that there are likely to be salient characteristics within the father that may positively encourage educational performance of the girl child. In addition, it is possible as explained by the psychoanalytic perspectives that due to identification and modeling processes, the father may have more influence on cognitive development and performance of the son than the daughter. This, however, may not be apparent.

5.2.2 Testing Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis for the study was also related to the performance of the girl-child

H₃: There is a positive correlation between single mother's income level and the girl child's educational performance. The null hypothesis used to test this hypothesis stated that there is no positive correlation between the single-mother's income level and the girl child's educational performance. The test is shown on Table 30.

Table 30: Mother's income and girl's academic performance

Mother's income	Girl's Performance			Row Total
	Good	Average	Below average	
Middle	19 45.2% 29.7%	18 42.9% 29.0%	5 11.9% 10.5%	42 24.1%
Low	45 34.1% 70.3%	44 33.3% 71.0%	43 32.6% 89.6%	132 75.9%
Column total	64 36.8%	62 35.6%	48 27.6%	174 100.0

($P=0.03300$ $P<0.05$ DF:2)

The analysis showed a contingency coefficient of 0.341 indicating that the association between mother's income and girls' performance is very weak. However, analysis

indicated a statistically significant ($P:0.03300$) association between single mother's income level and girl child's performance²². Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the income of the mother is likely to determine the performance of the daughter. More specifically, the higher the income of the mother, the better the class performance of the daughter.

5.2.3 Testing hypothesis # 4

It is assumed that parental education is a determinant of good performance irrespective of the type of family (MOE, 1994; UNICEF, 1999). This study attempted to establish the effect of single mother's education on academic performance of her daughter. The hypothesis used in this analysis sought to establish whether or not there was a correlation between single mother's education level and the girl child's educational performance.

The hypothesis stated that:

Hypothesis 4: There is a positive correlation between single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance. The null hypothesis used to test this hypothesis stated that there is no correlation between single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance. Table 31 suggests that daughters of mothers with higher education levels performed better than those with lower levels of education. For instance, while 68.8 percent of daughters of mothers with at least Form Four level of education had a 'good performance,' only 31.3 percent of daughters of mother with less than Std. 8 level of education had a 'good' performance. However, for

²² Note that the cells were collapsed to reduce number of empty cells and increase the value of expected frequencies. For the purposes of our analysis in this study, all income above Kshs. 5,000 per month was grouped under middle income while all those below Kshs. 5,000 were categorized under low income.

'average' performance, daughters of mothers with less than Std. 8 level of education seemed to be more represented (38.7 percent) than daughters of mothers with secondary and post-secondary education (37.5 and 27.4 percent, respectively). The differences, however seemed to be quite minimal, therefore suggesting that education of the mother may not have much effect on girls' academic performance.

Table 31: Mother's education and girl's academic performance

Mother's level of education	Performance			Row Total
	Good	Average	Below average	
Post-primary	22	17	7	46
	47.8%	37.0%	15.2%	26.4%
	34.4%	27.4%	14.6%	
Secondary	22	21	18	61
	36.1%	34.4%	29.5%	35.1%
	34.4%	33.9%	37.5%	
Primary school	20	24	23	67
	29.9%	35.8%	34.3%	38.5%
	31.3%	38.7%	47.9%	
Column total	64	62	48	174
	36.8%	35.6%	27.6%	100.0

($P=0.18512$ $P>0.05$ DF:4)

There was a weak association between mother's education and girls' academic performance (contingency coefficient of 0.1792). The analysis showed a statistically insignificant association between the two variables ($P:0.18512$). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis is accepted: that there is no positive correlation between the single mother's level of education and the girl child's educational performance. These findings imply that children can perform well irrespective of parent's (mother in this case) level of education. Perhaps, children whose parents have low education try to work hard to accomplish that which their parents did not achieve. Perhaps, the environment at home may encourage them to work hard to break the poverty

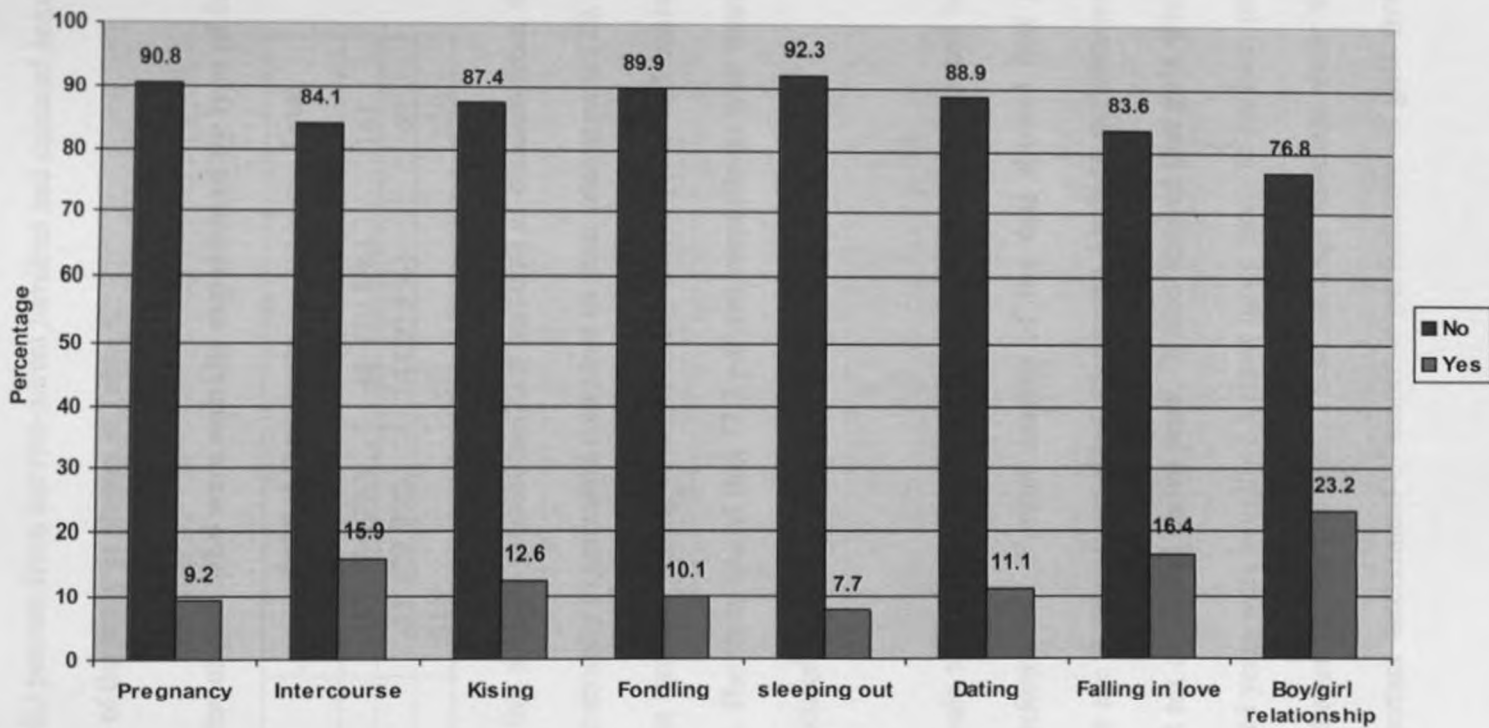
cycle or the lower social status associated with people whose levels of education are low.

5.3 Involvement in sexual matters as a determinant of performance

Involvement in sexual activity can draw teenagers away from schoolwork, if they do not receive guidance from parents and guardians. Youth involvement in sexual matters can be a critical determinant of their participation and school performance. The respondents were asked to state sexual activities they had participated in. The study attempted to establish the effect of girls' involvement in sexual matters on their education (participation and performance). This issue was of great interest for this study, especially given the evidence in some literature that involvement in sexual activity may affect girls' academic performance, particularly during early adolescence (MOE, 1994; Garfinkel, 1986). The concern of this study was therefore to establish the relationship between sexual involvement and school performance.

Figure 3 indicates that the young people were already involved in various sexual activities, though this involvement was minimal. It shows, for example, that 9.2 percent of the respondents had been pregnant and 15.9 percent had already initiated sexual activity by the time of the study.

Figure 3: Respondents' involvement in sexual matters



A larger proportion of children from the single-mother family (29.8 percent) compared to only 20.3 percent from the two-parent families had initiated sexual activity by the time of the study as shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Proportion of girls who were sexually experienced by type of family

Type of family	Sexual experience		Total
	No	Yes	
Single-mother	113 (70.2%)	48 (29.8%)	161
Two parent	55 (79.9%)	14 (20.3%)	69
Total	168	62	230

The study showed that a larger proportion (29.8 percent) of children from the single-mother family were sexually experienced compared to their counterparts (20.3 percent) from the two-parent families. Some of the sexually active youth had initiated coital activity quite early. The study found that 17.2 percent respondents who were sexually experienced had initiated coitus as early as 9 years.

An attempt was made to establish the effect of early initiation of sexual activity on girls' academic performance. Further analysis of the data showed that girls who initiated sex before age 9 years were about 48 percent likely to perform poorer than those who initiated sex at 15 and above years. It also showed that girls who initiated sex between 10 – 14 years were roughly 2.3 times more likely to perform poorer than those who initiated after 15 years of age. These findings therefore show that age at first sex is an important determinant of academic performance of girls from single-mother families.

An analysis of the association between mother's marital status and daughter's age at first sexual intercourse showed a statistically significant association for the females (P:0.03953) as shown on Table 33.

Table 33: Mother's marital status and age at first sexual activity (intercourse)

Mother's marital status	Age at sexual involvement			Row Total
	Below 9 years	10-14 years	Over 15 years	
Single mother	5	28	11	44
	11.4%	63.3%	25.0%	75.9%
	50.0%	87.5%	68.8%	
Married two parent	5	4	5	14
	35.7%	28.6%	35.7%	24.1%
	50.0%	12.5%	31.3%	
Column Total	10	32	16	58
	17.2%	55.2%	27.6%	100

(P=0.03953 P<0.05 DF: 2)

The findings indicate that most of the sexually active girls had initiated sex by age 14 years. For example, 75 percent of the girls from single-mother families and 64 percent from the two-parent families had experienced sex by 14 years. This is quite a young age for young people to be involved sexually. But more disturbing is the fact that 11.4 percent (from single mother families) and 35.7 percent (from two-parent families) of the sexually experienced girls had initiated coital activity by age 9. The data shows that those from the two-parent families were more likely to initiate sex by age 9 than their counterparts from the single-mother families. This suggests that problems with sexuality are not only common among single-mother families, they are equally prevalent among the two-parent families. However, as you move on to the 10-14 years age group, there was a sudden upsurge in the proportion of girls from single-mother families over those from two-parent families (63.6 percent against 28.6 percent). This

suggests that even though the two types of families experience problems of young people involving in sexual activity, the rates overall are higher among children of single mothers.

Involvement in premarital sex can have negative implications on the education of the girl child. They can get pregnant and drop out of school, or their performance may be affected by their involvement in a relationship. Children from single-mother families are likely to be more affected because the mother may have less time to discuss sexual matters with her daughter. Thus, these girls unlike their colleagues from the two-parent homes are more disadvantaged and are more likely to suffer the consequences of negative sexual relationships.

5.4 Conclusions

In concluding the discussion on this chapter, we observe that type of family, income and education level of the mother, child and mother's aspirations and motivation, as well as a myriad of societal factors play an important role in either enhancing or depressing education of the girl child. On the one hand, these factors can provide the required environment for girls to excel in their education, but on the other hand, these same factors can work against the education of the girl child. Since there is evidence that a large proportion of girls from single-mother families actually do well in school, this study concludes that girls will not only perform poorly because their mothers are single or by virtue of the type of family they come from. Rather, they will perform well because a suitable environment that promotes learning and academic pursuit exists

at home and school.

CHAPTER SIX

There are obviously other factors such as the intelligence of the child that were not covered in the study but which this study recognize as pertinent and could possibly play a part in determining the performance of a child. This could therefore be an area that future researches may venture into to establish the extent to which intelligence affects child performance in school.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This section of the thesis summarizes the key findings of the study drawn from both chapters four and five and attempts to provide a further understanding of the meaning and implications of these findings. It looks at the results obtained from mothers and how they relate to those obtained from their children, on the one hand, and how this relationship affects the girl's educational achievement, on the other.

6.1.1 School enrolment for girls

The study found that in general, there were evidently higher enrolment rates for girls than for boys in primary school. This reveals a divergent pattern from that featuring in most literature and purporting that enrolment rates are still much lower for girls compared to boys. However, they are consistent with recent findings (UNICEF, 1998), which showed that Kenya now experiences higher enrolment rates for girls in primary schools. Enrolment rates were still lower for girls in secondary schools and beyond. The upsurge in enrolment rates for girls in primary schools must be attributed to efforts by agencies such as UNICEF and Ministry of Education to encourage girls' participation in education.

The other factors that may have influenced the change in enrolment rates include increased gender education and advocacy activities that have also been championed by women development activists who have been campaigning for equity among the genders. This study looked into the differences in the enrolment between girls from single-mother families and those from the two-parent families. It was found that girls from single-mother families had lower enrolment rates than those from the two-parent families.

It is important to note that some factors affecting enrolment may apply to girls equally, irrespective of whether or not they come from single-mother families. However, there are some factors that uniquely affect daughters of single mothers. The poverty situation in some single-mother families cannot be over emphasized. When girls are forced to stay home, most of the time when schools are in session, they lose interest and slowly begin to get involved in other non-education activities. Single mothers also overly engage their daughters in domestic work and sometimes in duties such as taking care of sick siblings. When this is done over a prolonged period of time, they are likely to consider abandoning school, especially if they do not have someone to encourage and motivate them.

The study revealed that the practice of son preference to the girl in terms of school participation is still evident. About 21 percent of the single mother reported that they would prefer to educate a boy if they had to choose between a boy and a girl. The girl is always viewed in relation to another person – a husband. Many single mothers

believed that the girl would be married and therefore, they didn't have to struggle to educate her. The girl is viewed as a stranger who is in the family only temporarily. Thus, many see her as someone not worth investing on because she will only benefit the family to which she is married. The boy on the other hand is viewed as an investment for the mother and a security against old age

6.1.2 School drop out among girls

This research found out that school drop out, especially among daughters of single mothers, was indeed common. While only 7.5 percent of the married mothers reported having had a girl who dropped out of school prematurely, among the single mothers school drop out had been experienced by 24 percent of them.

Several factors were suggested to explain the incidence of school drop out, especially among single-mother families. Some of them include negative attitudes of community towards education of girls, girl's participation in household labor including care for the sick, and economic deprivation. Teenage pregnancy was also reported by single mothers as a contributing factor to school drop, especially among single daughter of single mother.

6.1.3 Girls' academic performance

The study revealed that daughters of single mothers performed poorer in school than their counterparts from the two-parent families. The Pearson's tests of independence showed that girls from the single-mother families performed poorer than their

counterparts from the two-parent families. They were between 1.2 and 1.5 times likely to perform poorer than girls from the two-parent families. However, we should note that the analyses also show that a good number of girls from single-mother families performed very well. This suggests that being a daughter of a single mother does not necessarily mean that a girl will perform poorly in school. Perhaps the mother is able to provide a good environment needed for her daughter's education. If such an environment is lacking in two-parent families, then children from such families may equally perform poorly. Therefore, we can conclude that under supportive environments girls from single-mother families are able to perform better than many girls from the two-parent families.

Mother's income and was found to be positively correlated with good performance of girls. The study showed that daughters of mothers with middle level income were 1.5 times more likely to perform better than daughters of mothers with lower income.

Surprisingly, mother's education did not have any appreciable effect on performance. While it was expected that the higher the education of the mother, the better the performance of her daughter, the study found a statistically insignificant association between these two variables. This implies that, children can still perform very well in school even if their parents had little education.

The observed poorer performance of girls from single-mother families is attributable to several factors. Lack of motivation and negative attitudes towards girl's education can be great hindrances to girls' performance. Some single mothers believe that girls

are naturally not bright and have much lower educational and career expectations than for their sons. They are not likely to provide encouragement and motivation, which girls require in confronting the many challenges that they experience in their education. As already noted earlier, a large proportion of single mothers reported that they were too busy to supervise their daughters education and were therefore unable to know whether or not their daughters were making good progress in school.

Girls' participation in domestic and household work and absenting from school on a regular basis are other constraints on the performance of girls. It has been noted before that girls are expected to provide care in the family and assist with household chores, most times when the boys are either studying or playing. Because the girls are unable to study at home, they are always behind other students and hence cannot perform as expected.

6.1.4 Role of the father

Results of the qualitative study show that even though the father may not be taking much time to supervise the children's schoolwork, his influence in child personally growth and building of self-esteem was found to be enormous. Even though many single mothers were comfortable with their single status, they were disturbed by the many issues that they felt only a father would do to and with the child.

6.2 Conclusions

The objective of this study was to determine the impact of single motherhood on education of the girl-child. The study has brought to the fore various factors that affect the education of the girl child from single-mother families. Single motherhood is a challenging experience and can bring about disappointment and frustrations if mothers don't give it a careful thought and take appropriate action to combat possible negative consequences and outcomes. But it can be a source of joy and motivation if single mothers realize their unique position in society and learn appropriate mechanisms to cope with the challenges and realities they face within their families and from the community. Single mothers and their children can live happy and satisfying lives contrary to the common belief that they are unhappy and frustrated lot. But the mother has to be focused and provide both the nurturing and motivating environment for their daughters in order to bring their academic performance to the same level or even better than the performance of children from the two-parent families.

The study makes a significant contribution to the sociology of the family. It is the first attempt ever made to re-define the African family and to look at the girl child from an academic perspective. The study has shown that the understanding of single mothers and their families cannot be achieved from a purely social change perspective, but rather, through a combination of social change and behavior change perspectives. As much as urbanization and industrialization have been the major causes of single motherhood, individual factors such as experience and relationships with significant others have equally played part. The final contribution of the study is in the area of

methodology. This study has confirmed that researching single motherhood and the girl child requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. So much is unspoken that questionnaires cannot unveil. The use of key informants and case studies are a effective ways to complement quantitative data.

Multiple factors rather than single motherhood alone presents serious challenges to the education of the girl child. Familial and community factors obviously affect girl child education - performance, aspiration and achievement motivation. The relatively less motivating family environment coupled with excessive labor and limited opportunities for studies are a major obstacle to girls' education in most single-mother families. The negative parental and community attitudes equally play a key role in destabilizing girls' school enrolment and continuation opportunities. The widely pervasive poverty in most single-mothers' homes has led to the withdrawal of many girls from school. Though enrolment rates are generally said to be higher for girls in primary schools, those for single mothers' daughters is comparatively lower and efforts have to be made to bring this to parity. The girl child from single-mother families has also consistently performed poorer than her counterpart from the two-parent families. This is not due to any factors within the child but in the environment in which she grows. The environment is less supportive, at home, school and in the community. The girls should be treated like other children because it is not their mistake to have been born in such a family. They need understanding and encouragement from the community and parents have a responsibility to build their esteem and aspiration.

Parental involvement and interest in the education of girls is an important determinant of girls' positive educational performance. The important role parents play in motivating performance and achievement cannot be over-emphasized. In single-mother families, mothers are often over-committed to the search for livelihood for her family and in many cases the development of a career. Little or no time is set aside for supervision of children's education, and girls are the immediate victims given the many obstacles they have to contend with both at home and school.

The lack of proper parental guidance, counseling and supervision for girls is a major obstacle to girls' education in single-mother families. At adolescence the girls experience rapid physical, social and emotional growth, which create many demands and feelings. These feelings must be expressed or handled in ways that are socially acceptable and that will not result in negative outcomes such as unintended pregnancy. This is the time when the girls need their mothers to provide guidance on sexuality and consequences of negative sexual behaviors. Because most single mothers are busy and away from home most of the time, the girls don't receive this guidance and may easily be misled. They may suffer emotional stress leading to poor performance in school, disinterest in education and may get involved in sexual activity leading to unintended pregnancy and school drop out. While recognizing that these issues also affect girls from the two-parent families, this study has established that girls from single-mother families are much more affected than their counterparts from two-parent families.

Absenteeism, inability to study at home and enjoy recreation pose serious challenges to girls' performance in school. Frequent absence from school is a great hindrance to good performance of girls from single-mother families. Whatever the reasons for absenteeism, these girls are obviously disadvantaged and cannot be expected to compete equally with girls from the two-parent families. Their involvement in household work affects more than educational performance. Children need time to grow and develop. They need to play and discover themselves. When they are exposed to adult roles much early and engaged in more demanding work than they can cope with, their opportunity to develop cognitively, physically and emotionally is curtailed. This affects her aspirations and achievement motivation.

But all is not lost for single mothers and their daughters. In fact, daughters of single mothers could be highly motivated achievers not only in academic circles but other spheres of life as well. They can perform better than children from two-parent families can if the mother provides a supportive and conducive environment for their learning. If single mothers could enable their daughters to attend school all the time, study, participate in recreational activities, and be available to discuss her emotional, social and academic concerns, then there is absolutely no reason as to why the girls cannot perform well in school. Thus, much as there are society obstacles to the girl-child's education, tremendous gains can be achieved if single mothers recognized girls' disadvantaged position and played their part in providing friendly environments at home and responding to girls' emotional and social needs.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the key findings of the study and the realization of the unique challenges faced by single mothers and their daughters in education, a couple of recommendations are made. It is the researcher's hope that these recommendations will be taken up by the appropriate authorities to improve both the well being and education of the girl child, especially those living in single-mother families. Consideration should be given to the following:

6.3.1 Stimulate Academic Performance among girls

In view of the relatively poorer academic performance of daughters of single mothers, the Ministry of Education (MOE) should be explore ways to promote academic performance first for all students and secondly, realizing the special circumstances of girls from single-mother families work towards addressing the major obstacles to their performance. For instance, the MOE should provide a policy guideline instructing schools to pay more attention to children in especially difficult circumstances including those from poor and single-mother families. Teachers should spend more time with children, especially girls from single-mother families particularly those that seem to perform poorly. Through the PTA, school teachers should set up a forum to address the unique challenges that daughters of single mother experience and assist their mothers to initiate meaningful responses and actions towards the challenges.

6.3.2 Address negative attitudes towards single-mother families

This study revealed that negative societal attitudes towards single mothers and their children play a key role in suppressing girl's academic performance. In view of this finding, the Ministry of Education should heighten campaigns against such discriminatory practices in schools. The Ministry through the Kenya Institute of Education should incorporate Single-mother family as one of the emerging types of families in its curricula and textbooks. This will help school children to recognize and respect children from single-mother families. At the same time, the ministry working closely with the department of gender should launch national campaigns to advocate for the recognition of single-mother families and respect for the mothers and their children.

6.3.3 Promote Poverty Reduction Activities

The researcher recognizes the fact that it is impossible for a country like Kenya to eradicate poverty and that efforts must concentrate on reduction rather than eradication. Single mothers should be identified as a unique economically underprivileged group that should benefit from the current poverty reduction efforts. The Ministry of Physical Planning should work closely with that of Home Affairs, Culture and National Heritage to identify appropriate mechanisms for supporting mothers to be more self sufficient. Financial institutions such as Kenya Rural Enterprise Program (K-Rep) and Kenya Women's Finance Trust (KWFT) should set aside resources to support underprivileged groups such as single mothers, provide loan

and credit facilities as well as technical support to enable them implement small scale micro-credit enterprises.

6.3.4 Improve School Enrollment for girls

While appreciating the efforts made thus far by the Ministry of Education in promoting school enrolment for the girl child, additional energies must be spent on improving enrolment for girls from single mother families, both in primary and secondary schools. Deliberate attempts should be made to improve enrollment rates for daughters of single mothers, especially those who are economically deprived. The Ministry of Education should put in place mechanisms for encouraging and motivating girls' enrollment, while at the same time addressing obstacles that still prevent the enrolment of girls from single-mother families. Perhaps, a free education policy for low-income families should be introduced. Though this would improve enrollment rates in all families, it would greatly benefit girls from single-mother families who are not in school because their mothers cannot afford the fees required by schools.

6.3.5 Promote retention of girls enrolled in school

While improving enrollments would be a desired goal, this cannot proceed successfully without mechanisms for encouraging girls' continuing participation. The schools should be instructed to promote conducive environments for girls' learning. Through the PTAs, parents should be advised to address conditions that encourage girls to drop out of school such as household labor and provision of educational requirements. Schools should follow up girls who drop out to establish cause of drop

out and to assist the girls to return to school. The Ministry of Education should use the available bursary funds to support girls and boys who drop out of school due to lack of fees. At the same time PTAs should be encouraged to set up their own funds to support needy children.

6.3.6 Provide Sexuality Education to girls and boys in schools and at home

Lack of parent-child communication on sexuality may contribute to some of the challenges girls from single-mother families face in education. Parent – child communication must be the first step towards assisting girls to identify their needs and find appropriate solutions to them. Parents should understand that family life education is their responsibility and other institutions are only serving as a backup. Though most parents are not equipped to provide adequate sexuality information to their children, they can learn to be more open about issues and to create a suitable environment for such discussions. Parents should be encouraged by responsible government departments such as Ministry of Education and religious institutions to be more involved in sexuality education for their children. Sexuality education should be availed to both boys and girls. Single mothers, in particular must be reminded that their daughters need them as they experience the challenges of puberty. Relevant agencies including government must take an active role in designing and implementing sexuality education programs for young people. The Ministry of Education should work closely with other relevant agencies to implement school programs that provide education on sexuality and reproductive health. This is the only way the incidence of teenage pregnancy and resultant school drop out will be curbed.

6.3.7 Strive for Equity in children's education

Girls, particularly daughters of single mothers experience a wide range of challenges that deny them access to opportunities for enhancing their educational achievements. Because some single mothers prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters, the Ministry of Education must heighten its campaign for equity for both boys and girls. The Ministry should particularly pay attention to disadvantaged groups such as single mothers and encourage schoolteachers to offer equal opportunities to both girls and boys. Secondly, schools' administration through the Teacher-Parents' Association, should encourage mothers to treat their children equally and emphasize each child's right to education and health care among other things.

6.3.8 Prevent the Spread of HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS affects families equally. However, it has further negative implications for single-mother families. The girls from such families may be taken away from school to take care of a sick mother, sister or relative. Single mothers should realize that this is a contravention of the rights of the girl child. They should explore other options of providing care for the sick and encourage the girl to go to school. HIV/AIDS education efforts must be strengthened to reduce the currently high incidence in Kisumu. The many organizations currently involved in HIV/AIDS interventions, including government should combine forces and implement programs that will have impact. Current efforts are segmented and less effective. They have managed to increase level of awareness but the behavior of communities is least changing. Thus,

these groups should re-think their strategies and promote approaches that will create behavioral change.

6.3.9 Provide Role Modeling and Support for single mother

Progressive single mothers who have succeeded in bringing up and educating their children to highest levels should come out and educate younger single mothers. They should openly discuss their experiences with younger mothers and inspire them to educate their girls. They should champion the cause of poor single mothers and help them to explore opportunities for support. It is recommended that such mothers should help to register associations for single mothers that would provide opportunities for younger and poorer single mothers to learn how to cope with challenges that they experience and link them up with groups and institutions that could offer social support.

6.4 Recommended areas for Future Research in Single Motherhood and Education of the Girl Child

While every attempt was made to add new knowledge in the area of single motherhood and education of the girl child, the researcher recognizes a few themes that other researchers may want to address or investigate. This study was not able to venture into the following areas due to limitations in funds and scope:

- The effect of sexuality education on performance of girls from single mother families. This will require a controlled study.

- Single fatherhood is on the increase even though it is less discussed. A study should be conducted to investigate the implications of single fatherhood on the education of the girl child. Again, a controlled study would be needed.
- The actual role of a father in educational performance is not clearly understood. This study found that few fathers play an active role in stimulating the girls' performance. This should to be studied further to establish to what extent the absence or presence of the father in a home would affect the education of the girl child. Is it just the presence of the father in a home or are there qualities that a father may exhibit that will help to stimulate a girl's performance? What qualities can these be?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX # 1: QUESTIONNAIRES / QUESTION GUIDES

APPENDIX 1A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

MOTHERS

Serial Number: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Start time: _____ End time: _____

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

1. Age:

20 - 24 years -----

25 - 29 years -----

30 - 34 years -----

35 - 39 years -----

40 - 44 years -----

45 - 49 years -----

50 - 54 years -----

55 - 59 years -----

60 years and above-----

2. Ethnic group:

Luo -----

Luhya -----

Gusii -----

Kalenjin -----

Akamba-----

Other (specify) -----

3. Marital status:

Never married -----

Divorced -----

Separated -----

Widowed -----

4. Number of children: -----
Boys ----- Girls -----

5. Occupation:
Employed -----
Self employed -----
Unemployed -----
Petty trade -----
Other (specify) -----

6. Average monthly income:
Kshs. 30,000 - 20,000 -----
Kshs. 20,000 - 10,000 -----
Kshs. 10,000 - 15,000 -----
Kshs. 9 000 - 6 000 -----
Kshs. 5 000 - 3 000 -----
Kshs. 2 000 - 1 000 -----
Kshs. 1 000 and below -----

7. Highest level of Education attained:
University -----

Dip College -----
Teacher college -----
Form 6 -----
Form 4 -----
Std 8 and below -----

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

8. How many of your children are going to school?
One -----
Two -----
Three -----
Four -----
Five -----
Six and above -----

9. Is any of your school going age not attending school?

Yes ----- No -----

10. If yes, how many? Boys ----- Girls -----

11. What are the reasons for not going to school? -----

12. Are the reasons the same for boys and girls?

Yes ----- No -----

13. If no, please explain why? -----

14. Are there times when your daughter(s) do not go to school?

Yes ----- No -----

15. If yes, what are the reasons?

Sickness -----

Sent home for school fees-----

Mother asking them not to go to school-----

Daughter refuses to go to school-----

Daughter attending to household chores -----

Others (specify) -----

16. Who pays your children's fees?

Myself -----

Father -----

Friend -----

Relative -----

17. In the event of financial difficulties which of these children would you prefer to take to school?

Boy -----

Girl -----

No preference -----

18. Explain the reasons for the above answer -----

19. Has any of your daughters dropped out of school before completion of:

Primary School Yes ----- No -----

Secondary School Yes ----- No -----

20. What was/were the reason/s for dropping out?

Lack of fees -----

Marriage -----

Teenage pregnancy -----

Disinterest -----

Expulsion -----

Other (specify) -----

21. What was your reaction when the child left school? (Please explain) -----

22. Has any of your daughters ever become pregnant outside marriage?

Yes ----- No -----

23. If yes, what was your reaction to this incidence/s?

24. Was your daughter/s in school when this happened?

Yes ----- No -----

25. Did she/they drop out of school to deliver the baby?

Yes ----- No -----

26. Did your daughter/s return to school after delivering the baby?

Yes ----- No -----

27. If not, please explain why? -----

28. Do you know of children who terminated her education because the parents were infected with HIV/AIDS?

Yes ----- No -----

29. If yes, how many: -----⁰

Boys ----- Girls -----

CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

30. What is the general performance of your son (s) in school?

Son #	Excellent	Satisfactory	Good	Fair	Poor
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

31. Are you satisfied with the performance of the child(ren) in question?

]

Yes -----

No -----

32. If yes, explain why? -----

33. Do you think his/their performance can be improved?

Yes-----

No -----

34. How can it be improved: -----

35. What is the general performance of your daughter(s) in school?

Daughter #	Excellent	Satisfactory	Good	Fair	Poor
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

36. Are you satisfied with the performance of the child(ren) in question?

Yes -----

No -----

37. If no, explain why?-----

38. If yes, explain why? -----

39. Do you think her/their performance can be improved?
Yes----- No -----
40. Please explain your answer: -----

41. What do you think has prevented your daughter from performing excellently (you may number in order of significance if more than one reason)?
- Irregular attendance of school -----
 Girl is not bright -----
 Lack of books -----
 Inadequate teaching at school -----
 Too much work at home -----
 Girl plays a lot -----
 Involvement with a boy friend -----
 Other (specify) -----
42. Do your children study at home?
Yes ----- No -----
43. If, yes, when they study do they get assisted?
Yes ----- No -----
44. If yes, who assist them?
- Mother -----
 Father -----
 Uncle -----
 Elder sister or brother -----
 Tutor -----
 Other -----
45. Do your daughters receive the same assistance as your sons?
Yes ----- No -----
46. Do your children participate in household work?
Yes ----- No -----

47. If yes, What kind of household work do they do? (Check all that apply)

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITY	SONS	DAUGHTERS
Washing Clothes		
Washing dishes		
Fetching Water		
Fetching firewood		
Garden work		
Cooking for family members		
Cleaning house and surrounding areas		
Other (specify):		

PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS

48. Up to what level of would you like to educate your son/s and daughter/s?

EDUCATION LEVEL	BOYS	GIRLS
University		
Post High school College		
Form Four		
Standard Eight		
Other (specify):		

49. Please explain your answer? -----

50. What would you like your children to be in future?

ASPIRATION	BOYS				GIRLS			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Nurse								
Doctor								
Teacher								
Pilot								
Politician								
Engineer								
Other (specify):								
I don't know								

CHILD GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

51. Do you normally have any discussions with your children?
Yes ----- No -----
52. If yes, what is the nature of such discussions?
Educational affairs -----
Sexual and reproductive health issues -----
Family issues -----
None of the above -----
Other (specify) -----
53. Have you ever discussed sexual and reproductive health issues with your children?
Yes ----- No -----
54. If yes, what particular issues have you discussed?
Boy-girl relationships-----
Pregnancy prevention-----
HIV/AIDS-----
Menstruation-----
Personal hygiene-----
Physical and emotional changes in adolescence-----
Other (specify) -----
55. Do you discuss the above issues with daughters only, sons only, or both?
Daughters only -----
Sons only-----
Both-----
56. If you discuss with daughters only or sons only, please explain why? -----

57. Whenever you discuss sexual and reproductive health matters, who initiates the discussion?
Mother -----
Father -----
Girl -----
Boy -----
Other (specify) -----

APPENDIX 1B: CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Serial Number: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Start time: _____ End time: _____

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHI VARIABLES

1. Age:

Less than 10 years -----

Between 11 and 15 years -----

Between 16 and 20 years -----

Above 20 years -----

2. Class:

Std.5 -----

Std.6 -----

Std.7 -----

Std.8 -----

3. Sex: Male ----- Female -----

4. Religion:

Protestant -----

Catholic -----

Islam -----

Other (specify) -----

5. Birth position in the family:

First ----- Second -----

Third ----- Fourth -----

Fifth ----- Sixth -----

6. Is your father alive? Yes ----- No -----

7. Is your mother alive? Yes ----- No -----

8. Whom do you live with?
 Mother -----
 Father -----
 Mother and Father -----
 Relative (specify) -----

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

9. Has any of your elder or younger sisters or brothers dropped out of school before completion of:

Primary school? Yes ----- No -----
 Secondary school? Yes ----- No -----

10. If yes, how many?

Brothers ----- (Primary ----- Secondary -----)
 Sisters ----- (Primary ----- Secondary -----)

11. What was the reason for drop out in the above case/s?

School fees -----
 Pregnancy-----
 She abandoned -----
 Illness-----
 Don't know-----
 Was married -----
 Other (specify)-----

12. Do you have a friend who has ever dropped out of school pre- maturely?
 Yes ----- No -----

13. If yes, what was the reason for dropping out?

Pregnancy -----
 Illness -----
 Marriage -----
 Abandoned -----
 Other (specify) -----

14. Have you yourself ever considered dropping out of school:

Yes ----- No -----

15. If yes, why?

- Teachers were unfriendly -----
- Lack of school fees -----
- Didn't like going to school -----
- Couldn't cope with school work -----
- Other (specify) -----

16. Have you ever dropped out of school at any time during your education?

Yes ----- No -----

17. If yes, why?

- Teachers were unfriendly -----
- Lack of school fees -----
- Didn't like going to school -----
- Couldn't cope with school work -----
- Other (specify) -----

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION

18. What were your class positions during the following terms?

YEAR	CLASS POSITIONS			REMARK
	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	
1997				
1998				
1999				
2000				

19. Do you think you could have performed better? Yes----- No -----

20. What are the problems that affect your performance in school? (If possible number in order of importance)?

- Lack of textbooks -----
- Lack of Fees -----
- Lack of Tuition -----
- Irregular attendance -----
- Limited study time at home -----
- None of the above -----
- Other (specify) -----

SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

21. Are you ever absent from school? Yes----- No-----
22. How often are you absent?
Every week -----
Once a month -----
Twice a month -----
Once or twice a term -----
23. If you have been absent from school, what is the most frequent reason for being absent?
Illness -----
When sent away for fees -----
When mother is away -----
When I don't want to go to school -----
Other (specify) -----
24. When you are/were absent, did your parent (s) know about it in advance?
Yes ----- No -----
25. If yes, what was their (her) reaction? (Please explain -----

26. When you are/were absent do/did your parents get to know about it later?
Yes ----- No -----
27. If yes, what was their (her) reaction? (Please explain) -----

PARTICIPATION IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES

28. Do you help your mother with the household work? Yes ----- No -----
29. How much of the household work do you do?
Most of the Work -----
More than Half the work -----
Less than half of the work -----
Very little -----

30. In your view, who does most of the household work?

Myself-----

Mother-----

Elder sister-----

Elder brother-----

House servant-----

Other (specify) -----

31. In the absence of the person above (if not you) who does most of the work?

Myself-----

Mother-----

Elder Sister-----

Elder brother-----

House Servant-----

Other (specify) -----

32. Do you have enough time to study after doing your household work?

Yes ----- No -----

33. Do your brothers assist in the household work? Yes ----- No-----

PARENTAL GUIDANCE AND SUPERVISION

34. Does your parent assist you with your homework (assignments) or studies in general? Yes ----- No -----

35. Do you ever have any discussions with your parent/s?

Yes----- No -----

36. If yes, what is the nature of such discussions?

Educational affairs -----

Sexual and reproductive health issues -----

Family issues -----

None of the above -----

Other (specify) -----

AWARENESS/INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL MATTERS

37. Which of the following issues are you familiar with?
Issue _____ Source (learnt from who?) _____
1. Teenage pregnancy -----
 2. Sexual intercourse -----
 3. Kissing -----
 4. Fondling -----
 5. Sleeping out -----
 6. Dating -----
 7. Falling in love -----
 8. Boy/Girl friend -----
38. Indicate in order of frequency which of the above you have been involved in (use numbers 1, 2, 3...? etc, with 1 being the most frequent)
1. Teenage pregnancy -----
 2. Sexual intercourse -----
 3. Kissing -----
 4. Fondling -----
 5. Sleeping out -----
 6. Dating -----
 7. Falling in love -----
 8. Boy/Girl friend -----
39. Have you ever been involved in sexual intercourse? (Note: if the respondent has indicated this above, don't ask again.)
- Yes----- No-----
40. How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse?
- Below 9 years-----
10 - 14 years-----
15 and above -----
41. What was the age of your partner?
- Younger than me -----
Same age as myself -----
Slightly older than me -----
Much older than me-----
Can't tell -----

42. Have you heard about HIV and AIDS? Yes ----- No -----
43. Do you know anybody who has ever suffered or currently suffering from HIV/AIDS?
Yes ----- No -----
44. Do you know anybody who dropped out of school because they had HIV/AIDS?
Yes ----- No -----
45. If yes, how many do you know? Boys ----- Girls -----

ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

46. What level of education would you want to reach?
University -----
Post high school college -----
High school -----
Primary school -----
47. Why do you want to reach the educational level you have stated above?
To become prosperous -----
To be like my parent/s -----
To be like my brother/sister -----
Don't want to continue with school -----
Other (specify) -----
48. What would you like to be when you complete your education?
Pilot -----
Politician -----
Teacher -----
Doctor -----
Nurse -----
Engineer -----
Businessman/woman -----
Social worker -----
Accountant -----
Other (specify) -----

49. Why would you like to be (-----) when you complete school?

- Want to be like my father/mother -----
- It is prestigious -----
- I want to be like my brother/sister -----
- I like doing the work they do -----
- No reason -----
- Other (specify) -----

50. What will you do to become who you want to be when you grow up? (Please tick any that apply)

- Attain the highest education level -----
- Study professional courses -----
- Begin practicing what I want to become -----
- Learn from role models -----
- Venture into business -----
- Other (specify) -----

51. What would your parents want you to become when you grow up (in future)?

- Pilot -----
- Politician -----
- Teacher -----
- Doctor -----
- Nurse -----
- Engineer -----
- Businessman/woman -----
- Social worker -----
- Accountant -----
- Don't Know -----
- Other (specify) -----

52. What are your parents doing to ensure that you become what they want you to be?

- Paying school fees -----
- Insist on excellent performance -----
- Provides encouragement and motivation -----
- Interested in my school work -----
- Other (specify) -----

APPENDIX 1C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOLS' ADMINISTRATORS

Name of the School: -----
Name or designation of Administrator -----
Name of Interviewer -----
Duration of interview: Start ----- End -----

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

1. When was this school founded? -----
2. Who is the sponsor of the school?
Government -----
Church -----
Private individual -----
Community members -----
3. Is this a primary or secondary school? Primary ----- Secondary -----
4. Is this a mixed school? Yes ----- No -----

ENROLMENT AND PERFORMANCE

5. How many pupils/students are in this school? Girls: ----- Boys -----
6. Please provide the number of students per class by sex in the table below?

CLASS/FORM	BOYS	GIRLS
Class 1		
Class 2		
Class 3		
Class 4		
Class 5		
Class 6		
Class 7		
Class 8		
Form 1		
Form 2		
Form 3		
Form 4		

7. How would you describe the performance of your school?
 Very good -----
 Fair -----
 Poor -----
8. Are you satisfied with this performance? Yes ----- No -----
9. Please explain your answer: -----

10. Between the boys and girls, who perform better in class?
 Boys ----- Girls -----
11. Between the girls from the single mother families and those from two-parents families, who perform better in class?
 Girls from Single mother families -----
 Girls from two-parent families -----
 No differences -----
12. If there are any differences, please explain why? -----

13. As an administrator in this school, have you noticed any preferences in education of boys and girls? Yes ----- No -----
14. If you have, what preferences have you observed? Girl ----- Boys -----
15. What are some of the obstacles to girls' class performance? -----

APPENDIX 1D: FGD GUIDE FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS

My name is Samson Radeny. I am a Ph.D student at the Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting my field research for my dissertation (thesis). The topic of my study is "Single motherhood and its implications for the education of the girl child. A study in Kisumu City." I would like to discuss with you some issues related to the education of girls and boys in this community. Since you are the people who live and interact with the girls and boys closely, I am relying on you to assist in generating the information that I require. The findings of my study will be useful to our policy makers and educationists in improving the education of the girl child.

First, let me introduce my colleague. His/her name is -----. He/she is assisting me to collect the data. I will now give you a chance to introduce yourselves. Please tell us your age, religion, where you come from, and what you do. The information you provide will be treated confidentially, and will not be used for any other purpose other than my studies. I therefore urge you to discuss freely and openly. If you have any questions please feel free to ask at the end of the group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers and so you are free to express your opinion.

We would like to tape record this discussion. Before we go ahead with that we would like to have your permission to tape record. Do you allow us to do so? At the end of the session we will give you a chance to listen to what you have been saying during the discussion.

Warm up questions

- **What are the changes taking place today in the teaching profession? Have things changed in the last decade?**
 - **What are your greatest challenges in your work as teachers? How do you address these challenges?**
1. What are your designations in the school?
 2. What would you say is the general class performance of female students in this school? How does this compare with the performance of boys? Why? Probe further.
 3. Since you started working as teachers have you notice any preference between the education of boys and girls? If so, what have you observed? Who is preferred, sons or daughters? Why is there a preference for one gender over

the other? How can the school reduce this preference?

3. What would you say is the general class performance of female students from the single-mother families? How does this compare with the girls from two-parent families? How would you explain this?
4. Generally, how does the performance of girls compare with that of boys in this school in the national examinations? Why do you think this is happening? How can the performance of girls be improved?
5. Is teenage pregnancy a problem within the City? If so, how common is it? It is a common problem in your school? If so, roughly how many girls are affected per year? Do they drop out of school to deliver? Do they return to the school after delivery? Are they allowed to return to the school after delivery? Please explain why?
6. How many girls actually return to school? What type of families do they come from? Single mother? Two parent family? Can you remember how many came from each of the two types of families?
7. How would you describe the attitudes of the local community/people towards education of girls? What do you think is the reason for the attitudes?
8. How would you describe the community attitudes towards education of children from single-mother families? Is this the same or different for girls and boys from this type of family? If different, how? Why? **Probe further.**

Many thanks for your co-operation

APPENDIX 1E: FGD GUIDE SINGLE MOTHERS

My name is Samson Radeny. I am a Ph.D student at the Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting my field research for my dissertation (thesis). The topic of my study is "Single motherhood and its implications for the education of the girl child. A study in Kisumu City." I would like to discuss with you some issues related to the education of girls and boys in this community. Since you are the people who live and interact with the girls and boys closely, I am relying on you to assist in generating the information that I require. The findings of my study will be useful to our policy makers and educationists in improving the education of the girl child.

First, let me introduce my colleague. His/her name is -----. He/she is assisting me to collect the data. I will now give you a chance to introduce yourselves. Please tell us your age, religion, where you come from, and what you do. The information you provide will be treated confidentially, and will not be used for any other purpose other than my studies. I therefore urge you to discuss freely and openly. If you have any questions please feel free to ask at the end of the group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers and so you are free to express your opinion.

We would like to tape record this discussion. Before we go ahead with that we would like to have your permission to tape record. Do you allow us to do so? At the end of the session we will give you a chance to listen to what you have been saying during the discussion.

Rapport building (Warm up questions)

- What kind of economic activities are you currently engaged in?
- What are your major household activities? Who does most of the work in the household? Why this person?
- What difficulties do you experience in bringing up your children? Has this changed over time or has it remained the same?

THE QUESTION GUIDE

CHILD EDUCATION

1. How many of you have children going to school? Do you have children of school going age who are not attending school? If so, why? What is the sex of this child(ren)?
2. How much school fees do you pay for your children in primary and secondary schools? Do you always afford to pay school fees to your children? If no, why?
3. Does you community have any preferences in educating girls and boys? If so, who is preferred and why? Does this affect the community in any way? Do

the whole community or just some families practice this preference? What kinds of families or people have practice son preference? Probe for education, religion etc.

4. Has any of your daughters dropped out of school before completing primary or secondary education? If so, what was the reason for dropping out?
5. Do you assist your daughters with their academic homework or studies? If you do, in what ways do you assist? If you don't what are the reasons?
6. How often do you assist your daughter(s) with their homework?
7. About how much time do you spend each time assisting your daughters with their schoolwork?
8. What is the general performance of your daughter(s) in school? Are you satisfied with this performance? If yes, why? If no, why not? How does this performance compare with that of your sons? How do you explain the variation?
9. Do you think her/their performance can be improved? How can this be done?
10. What do you think has prevented your daughters from performing excellently (you may number in order of significance if more than one reason)? How can you overcome these constraints in your daughters' education? What support do you need to do this?
11. If you had too little money to take all your children to school, which one would you take, the boy or the girl?
12. Do you ever prevent your daughter (s) from attending school for any reason? If yes, for what reason do you do this?
13. Do your children participate in household work? If so, what kind of work do they do? Do the girls do the same work as the boys or do you have some sort of division of labor? Between your children who does most of the work, the boys or the girls? Why?
14. Up to what level of would you like to educate your daughter? Why?
15. Up to what level of education would you want to educate your sons? Why?
16. What are some of the obstacles to girls' education in this community? Why do you think these are obstacles to girls' education? **Probe:** Do these only affect the girls or even boys? How can these obstacles be removed?

17. Do single mothers in bringing up and educating their children (especially daughters) face any difficulties? If so, which ones? What can be done to alleviate these problems? In your opinion, who should be responsible for this? Why this person (s)?
18. What, in your opinion, is the community's attitudes towards women? What is the community attitude towards women who are single mothers? Why does community have this attitude?
19. How about their attitude towards daughters or sons of single mothers? Are their attitudes the same or different for boys and for girls? If yes, why? Why, in your opinion, do they hold such attitudes? **Probe:** Is the community's attitude towards boys the same as for girls? Why?
20. If you were to start life all over again, what are the two most important things you would do? Why these thing?

Thanks a lot for your cooperation

APPENDIX 1F: A GUIDE FOR CASE STUDIES

My name is Samson Radeny. I am a Ph.D student in the Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting my field research for my dissertation (thesis). The topic of my study is "Single motherhood and its implications for the education of the girl child. A study in Kisumu City." I would like to discuss with you some issues related to the education of girls and boys in this community. Since you are the people who live and interact with the girls and boys closely, I am relying on you to assist in generating the information that I require. The findings of my study will be useful to our policy makers and educationists in improving the education of the girl child.

First, let me introduce my colleague. His/her name is -----. He/she is assisting me to collect the data and will be taking notes. I will now give you a chance to introduce yourself to us. Please tell us your age, religion, where you come from, and what you do. The information you provide will be treated confidentially, and will not be used for any other purpose other than my studies. I therefore urge you to discuss with us freely and openly. If you have any questions please feel free to ask. There are no right or wrong answers and so you are free to express your opinion.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- What is your age?
- What is your ethnic group?
- What is your marital status?
- What is your occupation?
- What is your average monthly income?
- What is the highest level of education you attained?
- Tell me about your life history, where you were born, where you went to school, and the career that you chose?
- How many children do you have? How many are boys? How many are girls?
- Do you own a farm here? How big is it? How did you acquire it? Did you buy it?
- Do you have relatives who live around here? How would you describe your relationship with them?

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND WELFARE

1. Do you have children of school going age who are not attending school? If so, why? What is the sex of this child?
2. As a mother, can you tell me how you manage to feed, clothe and educate your children?

3. How much school fees do you pay for your children in primary and secondary schools? Do you always afford to pay school fees for your children? If no, why?
4. In the event of financial difficulties, which of your children would you be willing to take to school? Why?
5. Has any of your daughters ever dropped out of school pre-maturely? What were the reasons? What was your reaction? Did she return to school thereafter?
7. Do you assist your daughters with their academic homework or studies? If you do, in what way do you assist? If you don't what is the reason?
8. How often do you assist your daughter(s) with their homework? Why?
9. About how much time do you spend each time assisting your daughters with their schoolwork? Do you think this is enough time to help your daughter with her schoolwork? If yes, why? If no, why not?
10. What is the general performance of your daughter(s) in school? Are you satisfied with this performance? If yes, why? If no, why not?
11. Do you think her/their performance can be improved? How can this be done?
12. What do you think has prevented your daughter from performing excellently (you may number in order of significance if more than one reason)?
13. Do you have sons? If yes, how do you compare the performance of your daughter(s) with that of your son (s)?
14. Do you ever prevent your daughter (s) from attending school for any reason? If yes, for what reason do you do this? What other reasons have ever caused your daughter not to attend school? Why?
15. Up to what level would you like to educate your daughter? Why?
16. Up to what level would you want to educate your sons? Why?
17. What are some of the obstacles to girls' education in this community? Why do you think these are obstacles to girls' education? **Probe:** Do these only affect the girls or even boys? How can these obstacles be removed?
18. Can you tell me about the process that led to your becoming a single mother?. How did you become a single mother? **Probe** for divorce, unmarried, and

widowhood? Would you consider marrying if you had a chance? Why? Why not?

19. How do you feel about being a single mother? Why?
20. Are there any difficulties single mothers like you experience in terms of bringing up and educating your children (especially daughters)? If so, which ones? How can the society help single mothers to overcome these difficulties?
21. What, in your opinion, are the community's attitudes towards single mothers? How about attitudes towards daughters or sons of single mothers? Why, in your opinion, do they hold such attitudes? **Probe:** Are the community attitudes towards boys the same as for girls? Why?
22. Do you ever have discussions with your children? What, usually is the nature of these discussions? What in particular do you discuss? Do you discuss with son alone or daughters alone? When you discuss, are they usually together or do you do it separately? Why?
23. If you were to start life all over again, what are the two most important things you would do? Why these thing?

Thanks a lot for your cooperation

APPENDIX #2:








- **THE MAP OF WINAM
DIVISION/KISUMU CITY**
- **KISUMU DISTRICT MAP**

Kisumu District

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
EAST AFRICANA COLLECTION



KEY

Division	
	L. Victoria
	Lower Nyakach
	Maseno
	Muhoroni
	Nyando
	Upper Nyakach
	Winam

