

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING SINGLE MOTHERS IN  
SUPPORTING THEIR CHILDREN SECONDARY EDUCATION: A CASE  
STUDY OF TEMEKE MUNICIPALITY**

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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

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**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that he has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by The Open University of Tanzania, a dissertation entitled, *“Socio-Economic Challenges Facing Single Mothers in Supporting Their Children Secondary Education: A Case Study of Temeke Municipality”*, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Works of The Open University of Tanzania.

.....

**Dr. Johnas A. Buhori**

**(Supervisor)**

.....

Date

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I, **Mariam Hussein Mkumbwa**, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been presented to any other University or Institution. Where other people's works have been used, references have been provided. It is in this regard that I declare this work as original mine. It is hereby presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Social Work (MSW) of the Open University of Tanzania

.....

Signature

.....

Date

**DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my children, Khalid Shabani Mkwazu and Walid Shabani Mkwazu; for enduring my absence during the time of my study. I remain grateful for the commitment and support that you provided to me.

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**ABSTRACT**

The study has as main title “Socio-Economic Challenges Facing Single Mothers in Supporting Their Children Secondary Education: a Case of Temeke Municipality”, the general objective of which was to examine the socio-economic challenges facing single mothers in supporting their children secondary education. This was mixed research design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches during data collection. Therefore, the study involved 54 participants whereby 40 of them responded to interview questions while 14 respondents had their information collected using questionnaires. The findings showed that majority of single mothers rely on informal and low-paid economic activities hence facing economic challenges that brings hardship to meet the school requirements of their children. While on the issue of social challenges, the findings showed that most of single mothers in study area (75%) were not in good relationship with their ex-partners, and children on their side approximately 85% neither communicated nor got any assistance from their said fathers. On the other hand, 14.3% and 4.8% reported being socially stigmatized and accused of immorality respectively, due to most of them having children without being married. The study proposes to community at large to be tasked to bear the burden of meeting the cost of children from single mothers’ families. Also, the government should establish family-friendly policies enforcing both parents to invest their time and resources in their child development. Finally, more direct supports to single mothers are needed to enable students from single mothers’ families in their academic development.

**Keywords:** *Single mother, Socio-economic challenges, Children, Secondary School Education.*

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BEST	National Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania
LGOs	Local Government Officers
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
SWOs	Social Welfare Officers
TPFNet	Tanzanian Police Female Network
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
VCU	Virginia Commonwealth University

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The single mothers to raise children on their own has now become the issue of global concern, and more importantly in Tanzania. As matter of fact, most children from single parenting families, especially those from single mothers are most likely facing different challenges varying from social to economic, which remain the focus of this study. These challenges are likely to affect the academic development of the children from the single mothers raised families, particularly their secondary education attainment.

Malima (2016) has shown that at the global level the number of women raising children on their own due has been witnessed, due to multiple reasons including divorce and death of the spouse. When any of two happens, the remaining parents, who in most cases are women, have to shoulder the burden to raise the children alone while providing all the basic necessities to the children, such as secondary school education, (Malima, 2016).

Nidhi, (2009) related the challenges of single mothers with upbringing of children, their future and demarcation in life resulting to the emotional life of the single mother therefore influenced by their single standing. In this regard, many single mothers are further described as lonesome, abandoned, depressed, lack of identity and lack of self-assurance, (Nidhi, 2009).

Comparatively to single parenting families, those parented by both parents have a

tendency of being involved more in their children's educational goals. This is because when there is a collective, monitoring and educational support, it therefore accounts for the increase in the well-being of a child parented in a two-parent' home compared to a child raised in a single-parent family, (Didier, 2017). Consequently, majority of children raised in poor families of separated parents, divorced or deceased do not do well or succeed educationally, due to the child lack of support that would have derived from those parents. But, if both parents are together, it denotes that the child would acquire most care (Malima, 2016; Didier, 2017).

On the other hand, single mothers are facing economic repercussions, as most of them are illiterate and involved in low paying economic activities, and hence unable to support their children scholastic necessities including transport fare, scholastically material, cost of remedial lessons, meals at school to list a few. It is these challenges that impose difficult to single mothers when trying to support their children attain the secondary school education (Malima, 2016).

In its efforts to deal with the challenges facing single mothers in raising and providing education support to their children, the government of Tanzania has in 2009, through the Tanzania Police Force and Tanzanian Police Female Network (TPFNet), initiated gender desks in police stations all over the country to ensure that gender equity principles are incorporated into all policies and activities (Grant, 2018). Since the inception of this initiative, different cases of neglect and abandonment of children are being addressed through the enforcement and



establishment of child protection teams at local level, community fostering and parenting (Grant, 2018).

On top of that, the government of Tanzania further declared free primary education and secondary school education systems, although some school silent costs that parents have to cover in order to sustain their children in school, and which in one way or the other remain a burden to majority of single mothers in the community (World Bank, 2018).

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

According to Pew Research Center (2010-2018), the issue of single parenting is not a new phenomenon globally, but a problem in all countries all over the world, (Talib, et al., 2019). It is more interesting to note that 88% of the households globally, were headed by women. This is to say; 101.3 million single mothers are living with their children without their fathers. Showing the magnitude of single mothers, Pew Research Center (2010-2018) noted that USA remain the leading country among other developed countries as the problem accounts for 23% of all the population of USA; where 28% of children are living with their mothers alone. While Talib, et al., (2019) on same issue indicated that among 10 million low income working families are living with children; whereas 39% of children live in single mother headed families.

Drawing attention from Europe, United Kingdom in particular, and the estimates shows that one in four children is living in a female headed families. It is further recorded that in 2016, there were 2.9 million single parents in the UK. The recorded

number shows an increase 17% since 1996. Additionally, among all single mothers, 86% of them lives with dependent children; with an average of 38 years old among them, with an estimate of 60% of them providing for a dependent child. In the context of UK, the increasing of the problem was linked with rate of separation and divorce, death and unintended pregnancy (Stack & Meredith, 2018).

Still showing the magnitude of the problem in Europe, Germany in particular, Reimann *et al.*, (2019) not that the challenge has no exceptional, it equally affecting all countries regardless of the level of development or socio-economical status of the country. The problem of single mothers was recorded as a problem in the country since 1990; it was from then where it was revealed that one in five families with juvenile children is a single parent family. However, the context of Germany is different from other countries, as the government normally encourages its population to raise their children as single parent instead of both parents staying at home caring for the child. The good side of the government is that it provides subsidies by giving financial security, allowance, and tax relief to single parent families. Moreover, Reimann *et al.*, (2019) noted of considering of subsidization program while comparing European countries and USA, these program generally have failed to help single parents overcome the risks related to poverty.

Highlight the problem of single mothers from Asia, Japan in particular, Shiba & Kondo (2019) pointed that children from single parents, mothers in particular are on increase. The increase of children in single mothers' family is exposed to diverse challenges. It is commonly to find children from these family facing behavioral

change problem but also their parents failing to provide enough for them. Additionally, it has been recorded that from 2010, the number of single parents has increased from 3.9% to 9.5%. Additionally, there is an admirable situation in Malaysia, where number of single mothers tend to decrease. For instance, Talib, et al., (2019) pointed that their number has decreased from 50,356 in 2018 to 50,314 in 2017 cases respectively. This is to say, though the decrease is marginal, it is worth to be recognized as compared to the magnitude of the problem globally.

The challenges imposed to single mothers in Africa countries are not exceptional to America, Europe and Asia as indicated (Talib, et al., 2019). In the context of Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, single mothers were identified to be mostly affected psychological, physical, and emotional. As the results of these challenges, it has led to economic hardships, loneliness and lack of family affection. Proposing the solution to the increasing and overwhelming problem, support groups are perceived as the solution though it can be seen as quick fix solution (Mupfumira, 2017).

Moreover, in East Africa, single mothers' accounts for 16% while in Uganda were represented by 10 %. However, their challenges are related and alike. In Tanzania, their number has increased from 149,239 cases in 2009 to 177,465 in 2012 (BEST, 2012). It is the presentation above and literature reviewed that this study intends to examine the socio-economic challenges faced by single mothers in attaining secondary education for their children.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The issue of single parenting families has been increasingly reported elsewhere in the

world, and more importantly in Tanzania where majority of these families are headed by females. Most single mothers headed families are mostly facing different challenges including socio-economic ones, and which show direct repercussions to attainment of their children's secondary education. Therefore, this has been the focus of this study to examine the socio-economic challenges facing single mothers to support their children secondary education.

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to examine the socio-economic challenges facing single mothers in supporting their children's secondary education in Tanzania.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

The study had the following Specific Objectives:

- i) To analyse sources and amount of income generated by single mothers from their economic activities
- ii) To identify economic challenges facing single mothers in supporting their children's secondary education
- iii) To identify social challenges facing single mothers in supporting their children's secondary education.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- i) What are the sources and amount of income generated by single mothers from their economic activities?

- ii) What are the social challenges that single mothers face in supporting their children to get secondary school education?
- iii) What are the economic challenges that single mothers face in supporting their children to get secondary school education?

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The research work is significant as it intends to uncover the plight of single mothers and the challenges they face when supporting the education of their children in secondary school. Hence, the findings are very useful to help improve the following aspects:

The government of Tanzania should consider that despite the free provision of education to all children in Tanzania, for a child to carry on with education successful, they are some indirect costs that have to encounter. Some of these costs includes; transport fares, buying school uniform, washing clothes and meals at school to list but few. Therefore, the findings of this study came up with important suggestions that would enable the government to create a conducive and inclusive learning environment supportive to easy access of children from single mothers' families to their secondary education.

Moreover, the policy maker should formulate policies which consider of the situation of all citizen not just few people while others are left behind. The decision to provide education from free deserve to be cherished, however the government was supposed to promulgate policies that considers of feeding program in school,

transport issues and stationaries. As the government cannot do everything for every citizen. The findings of this study promote the community members and other stakeholders to take properly their roles and responsibilities to extend the work of government. For instance, to identify these families and suggest community support initiatives essential to confront the socio-economic challenges through social inclusion and economic assistance.

Finally, secondary school teachers cannot be denied holding or conduct remedial lessons after hours. However, they have to be sensitive with children from single mothers' families so that can benefit from the same. This would be a motivation for these children to carry on with their studies unlike when they are forced to contribute for the cost while they are struggling for fare and afternoon lunch.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

The research finalised the data collection tools after getting the data clearing letter. However, due to COVID 19, where all schools were closed and movement restricted the research could not continue with the process of data collection. Further, due to COVID 19 it became very difficult to get access to expected research subjects as other left the city to their villages. The research had to wait for some time so that can situation can normalize, this was the time-consuming process.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter concerns the review of empirical literature in terms of their global, regional and local perspectives. It therefore contains the definition the key concepts, empirical evidences, theoretical view, conceptual framework and lastly, the research gap is presented.

#### **2.1 Conceptualization of Key Terms**

This research work has identified the following concepts, namely, single mother; single mothers parenting; family; single mothers' family; and single parented children. More details for each concept are provided below:

##### **2.1.1 Single Mother**

Cech & Blair-Loy (2019) defined a single mother as any female above the age of eighteen, who lives with children without a husband or spouse to support her with parenting responsibilities. In the context of this research work, a single mother is any female regardless of age who carries all the responsibilities of caring for the child on her own without any support from a spouse, family, and community.

##### **2.1.2 Single Mother Parenting**

Ferrel (2009) defined single mother parenting as an acting of a mother raising children alone. In the context of this work, it is situation where a mother is left alone to assume all the responsibilities of raising and providing for the child without the father of the child.

### **2.1.3 Family**

Mrinde (2014) defines a family as a group of people who are united by birth, marriage, and adoption or residing together in a household. In the context of this work, a family comprises of a mother and her children, however in some circumstances, it may include the parents of the single mother.

### **2.1.4 Single Mother Family**

Krapp & Wilson (2005) defined a single mother family as a family where due to divorce or separation, death or any other reasons, the family is headed by a female who assumes all responsibilities. In the context of this work, single mother family refers to parents who are never married but opted to have children. In some situation, some single mothers have acquired children from rape or forced marriage which did not work. After its resolution, they have remained alone as single mother family.

### **2.1.5 Single Parented Child**

Cech, & Blair-Loy (2019) refers to a child who is brought up with only one parent. In the context of this research work, single parented child refers to the secondary school children who depend on their mothers to attain their education.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

The focus of this study is mainly on the education support of children from single mothers' families, hence guided by an empowerment theoretical framework as hereunder presented.



### **2.2.1 Empowerment Theory**

Empowerment is the word initiated from American community psychology and is associated with the social scientist Julian Rappaport (1981). But, the origins of empowerment theory extended more into history and is related to Marxist sociological theory. Altogether, empowerment is an essential target in attaining acceptable improvement (Huis et al., 2017). Empowerment theory recognizes human difficulties in the context of a social, political, and economic environment that is unfriendly to those marginalized groups in the society. Therefore, the theory generally states the link of strengths, individual ability and proactive behaviors on social basis and social change (Rappaport, 1981, 1984) that further attaches the welfare of persons with a larger social, economic, and political situation (Morrison, 2019). Adding on, empowerment theory connects social and political environment that defines people by increasing their control or power through resources, education, and awareness by which one can achieve goals and participate in society (Perkins, 1995).

According to Feminist views, the understanding of empowerment theory is that an individual and sociopolitical stages of intervention that incorporating feminist and empowerment approaches in practice which as well provides knowledge, values, and skills to promote human rights and social justice (Turner, 2015).

Consistently, the theory of empowerment refers social empowerment to the ability of women and girls to on their own so that to change social interactions that ignore women and girls and keep them in poverty (Smith, 2020). It further empowers

women and girls with the ability to decide whether to use contraceptives. This means that women and girls can form positive interactions, involve in social events and decision making without being limited by gender norms.

Moreover, as a measure to end the challenges faced by single mothers, empowerment theory refers economic empowerment as means that women have the skills and resources to increase their economic position and change out the rate of poverty (Smith, 2020) that further result into women and girls to be responsible and involved in deciding on how to utilize their income and other possessions and /or jointly make those decisions.

### **2.2.2 Relevance of Theory to the Study**

Economic and social empowerment puts single mothers in a position and gives them the support to make decisions that promote their wellbeing together with that of their families (Morrison, 2019). The Empowerment theory extends choice and strengthens the voice of women and girls to gain more control over their lives and future through the transformation of power relations. Moreover, the theory uses intervention means to lead people in the direction of attaining a sense of control (VCU, 2021). Also, it focuses on helping marginalized people at individual, group and community levels gain the personal, interpersonal, and political power to improve their lives and challenge systems that avert people from having their needs met.

Basing on the focus of this study, the researcher has seen the relevance of using the empowerment theory principles to analyze the socio-economic challenges that would impose inability of single mother to support their children education.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

This subsection of empirical literature review presents the factors causing single parents in general, challenges facing single mothers. It further presents the theoretical position of this work; the conceptual framework and research gap is lastly presented.

### **2.3.1 The Contributing Factors to Single Parenting**

According to McGadney-Douglass et al., (2005) the factors which can be identified to be causing single parenthood varies from one context to another. In some context, it can be a result of marital conflicts or disputes where parents decide to divorce in this situation, a child has no choice apart from living with one of the parents who proven doom to provide care and support to the child. In other context, it is the death of one of the parents, where the remaining becomes a widow. Ain the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, men are involved in different economic activities in a working environment which is not safe for them. For instance, working in the mining, fishing and farming where the environment is hostile. The environment therefore exposes a man than a women to death. However, women also are likely to face challenges related to death during maternal process, hence of the parent is exposed to death though there is an increasing number of men dying early than women.

Moreover, Materu (2009) indicated of increasing number of parents dying from communicable diseases living women alone with the children. Further, HIV and AIDS is also blamed to be taking lives of many people while living children with only one parents. In this context, the remaining parents must assume to roles and responsibilities of two parents though is alone. From the factors presented above, it

can be deduced that the identified factors with Materu (2009) and McGadney-Douglass et al., (2005) have provided the light on the increasing number of single mothers globally, which at the end come along with socio-economic challenges to single mothers. The challenges interfere with their good intention of providing secondary school education for their children.

Further, Sear et al., (2002) was of opinion that the aspect of single parenthood has become a normal practice as some parents due to donor insemination have decided to remain single while with a family of their choices. The insemination process as a mean to have family, is an increasing phenomenon especially among wealth and educated women.

Moreover, Eamon (2005) proposed that teenage pregnancy is one of the leading factors causing single parenting. Many of teenagers, when they fall pregnant are still in school with little knowledge on reproductive health, hence falling pregnant, the boy cannot support the girls. The boy in most cases can still carry on with his studies while the girls has to leave school during all the time of pregnancy. During this period both teenagers are exposed to emotional and psychological challenges.

Drawing attention in the context of Tanzania, TDHS (2016) teenage pregnancy remain a a challenge and contributing factor to single parenting. There is an increase of the rate of fertility among adolescent in Tanzania. It has increased from 116% in 2010 to 132% in 2015/16. In the same period, the child bearing has increased from 23% in 2010 to 27% in 2015/16. The rate of fertility and child bearing were recorded

prominently from the flowing regions, Katavi 45%, Tabora 43%, Morogoro and Dodoma 39%, and Mara region 37% (TDHS, 2016).

Identifying another causing factor of single parenthood, Kendall (2003) noted that due to hardship in life, there is an increasing tendency among men of walking away from marriage or relationship without going through the legal process of divorce. Actually, this factor can be directly linked with the increasing of urbanization, where men leave the rural areas to urban areas and many of them, they establish a new family and ignore the first family. It became the responsibility of the women to take care and provide for the family.

### **2.3.2 Challenges Facing Single Mothers**

The challenges facing single mothers as per the context of this research work includes social and economic challenges. More details are provided on how each of them is a challenge to single mothers:

#### **2.3.2.1 Social Challenges**

In the context of Africa and other developing countries, according to Druta & Ronald (2017) women are still blamed of many aspects related to sexuality. For instance, even in the event of rape which may result to pregnant, a woman is still exposed to unnecessary social exclusion as if it was her will for such evil practice to happen to her. In most of the African context, a single mother is perceived negatively, as somebody who is not married and undisciplined. Others, perceive single mothers as arrogant and willing to live alone as they do not like to be controlled by men. Many

community members discriminated them as the results of such perception and attitude towards them. With such knowledge, it is an obvious situation that they can be supported or helped in an event when they need anything.

Pointing of the outcome of lack of support for single parents Damaske *et al.*, (2017) noted that when single mothers are discriminated within their own community, it has a very bad impact to the welfare as well as their children. They children when they grow up a community where their mothers are not accepted, they develop antisocial behavior towards the community members. The end of the day, not only the single mothers lose the support of the community but also the child become very aggressive with anti-social behavior, which in most cases, it is demonstrated through violence.

In addition, Nelson *et al.*, (2014) argued that any community's attitude and perception towards single mothers leads to discrimination and lack of support, which in turns being with it multiple effects to both the single mothers and children. As a result, Rahman *et al.*, (2017) observed that children from single families are at risk of antisocial and criminal behaviors. To support these children, every community member has a role and responsibility to fulfill that is to drop the wrong held perception and attitude towards single mothers and strive to have an inclusive community build on love and tenderness spirit.

#### **2.3.2.2 Economic Challenges**

According to Talib *et al.*, single mothers are highly affected with poverty, many of them are not employable in a formal labor market as they lack necessary credential to

complete for the limited available opportunities. Further, due to lack of necessary qualification, they have little confidence to join various initiative at the community level. For this reason, many of them continue to live in a stricken poverty without knowing the means to break away.

Moreover, due to limited knowledge and skills on negotiation, Yu (2019) noted that when they are given an opportunity cannot present the argument accordingly. Hence, they end up into part time job where they only get substance for their daily survival. Since, the little they earn from informal cannot provide or meet the family demands, many of them end up into sex working where they cannot bargain for safe sex. Many of them encounters unbearable experiences while trying to get little money to support their children especially, the education demands.

Further, achievement in education need commitment from children and parents. Children need to be supervised on their schoolwork and requires guidance when doing home assignment. A parent who is struggling to get a meal for the family, who end up in form two, cannot think of the child demands of support and love from a mother who is hustling for meals and other basic needs for the family. Hence, children from single mothers, cannot progress well with their study due to lack of education support and supervision from the parents. Many of them end up into the circle of poverty due to lack of proper support (Cech & Blair-Loy 2019).

Additionally, Ferrell (2009) observed that children from single mothers' family are likely not to attend school accordingly; as the results the performance is school are

very poor, which it ends up to poor academic achievement. In most cases, these children, have high rate of school dropout due to lack of support and motivation from the family level. Due to all these factors, these children are more likely to accept cohabiting or get married early due to poverty and other constraining factors.

### **2.3.2.3 Measures to end the Challenges Faced by Single Mothers**

Parenting carries various challenges varying from one family to another depending on their status and the underlying context (Gorshe, 2014). As well, challenges facing single mothering on child's wellbeing are not similar, they are influenced by the family circumstances (McLanahan, 2001). However single mothers' growth challenges the welfare of the children, fortunately, the need to combat the challenges facing single mothers to provide secondary education to their children.

Single mothers are associated with higher risks of poverty, reproduction of poverty and other adverse consequences that affect the wellbeing of their children (Ntoimo & Chadoka-Mutanda, 2020). For that reason, Women empowerment is the centre to all aspect of development (Zimmerman, 2000). From this perspective, economic and social empowerment that gives women and girls ability to make decisions that further support welfare of their families. So, social, and economic empowerment is therefore a key aspect to cultivating rights of women and girls. Therefore, social, and economic empowerment enhances the women and girls' ability to have a voice in decision making practices like marriage and pregnancy.

Bearing economic responsibilities is the main and powerful challenge facing single parents in providing welfare to their children (Smith, 2020). It is from this context



where many single parenting families fail to provide necessities for secondary education to their children. As a result, many children fall from their studies and hence school dropout cases increase day to day. This is in line with Ntoimo & Odimegwu (2014) who noticed that most of families controlled by single parents' particularly single mother are living in severe poverty. Since the financial role in meeting monetary obligations is a difficult task, therefore Single parents on their own must spend most of their time at work so that to meet all financial needs to their dependents (Smith, 2020). Furthermore, single parents must spend most of their time with children and agree on how to cut back on some of the luxuries so that maintain their requirements including those of secondary education. This is because becoming a single parent comes with its trials and triumphs but they can certainly turn single parenting into a positive life practice.

Apart from economic tasks, Smith (2020) noted that single parents must interchange bad beliefs with positive thinking by relaying efforts to more productive activities so that to find the benefit of the children. For that reason, guardians of the children have further required to invest more time with children so that their children to have a room for expressing their emotional needs. In the same way, single parents must go the extra mile to socialize and engage in community activities searching for the wellbeing of their children.

Also, single parents have to establish restrictions and agree on the best way to handle discipline and co-parenting (Smith, 2020). Teach discipline to the children before you fail to impart the right morals. Normally, the absence of one parent that result to

single parent due to death may arise with additional parenting tasks. But then again single parents are not supposed to let their challenges to exhaust them. For that reason, single parent must act together by collaborating their extended family to perform so that to stand on the absence of the deceased parent.

Adding on, due to the difficulties in imparting discipline which can result to emotional stress, some of the children may therefore involve in absentee activities as a sign to get the attention of parents (Kathleen, 2018). Therefore, being a single parent particularly single mothers it becomes uneasy task to navigate the unknown avenues of single parenting (Smith, 2020). This is because the major difficulties encountered by single mothers is a lack of discipline. Henceforth, children give a solo parent an emotionally hard time, particularly when they recognize that they are under single parenting. For that reason, they decide to give false information that further harms their own welfares. Moreover, financial burden also limit time with children whereby they left on their own with no accurate guidance that further grow defiant behavior, which prevents disciplinary measures from a single parent (Ntoimo & Odimegwu, 2014).

#### **2.4 Research Gap**

The presented and reviewed literature on challenges facing single parents in providing education has showed facts that are known. However, its focus was on socio-economic challenges. Moreover, the reviewed literature was written in developed countries where their context due to level of development is different. Hence the need to have owned brewed literature which consider our own situation.

Further, the studies on challenges facing single mothers were very, where some of key issues are easily omitted. For instance, the work of Masilamba (2017) and Madinda (2021) looked at the issues of single mothers generally. This is a gap that the current work has addressed by only focusing on social and economic challenges faced by single mothers when providing secondary education to their children. Furthermore, this study would fill in the knowledge gap by considering of the context of Tanzania and the aspiration of Tanzanians to understanding the socio-economic challenges.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This Chapter is all about the methods used in this study and which are presented in subsections as follows: research design, research methodology, study area, population of the study, sample and sample size and sampling procedures. Other sections include data collection methods, validity and reliability data, data analysis plan and methods and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

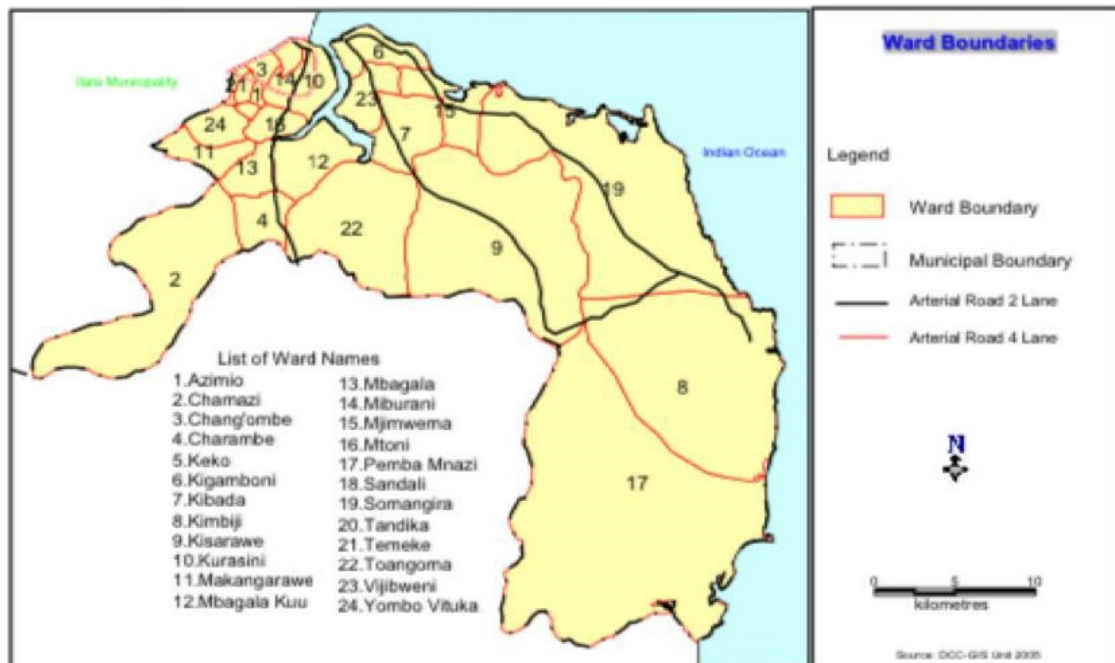
This study used a mixed research design. A qualitative approach was supported by a quantitative approach. Creswell (2009) as copied by Kanduru (2017) confirms the existence of six methods of mixed design and one of them is the sequential transformative design where a researcher starts with collection and analysis of either qualitative or quantitative data which was the one employed in this study. The reason behind using this approach was first to overcome the limitations of using a single design, and second, the researcher was interested in exploring the feelings, perceptions, and opinions of respondents backed up by quantitative data.

#### **3.2 Study Area**

This research was conducted in Temeke district in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. Temeke district is located in southern Dar-es-Salaam Tanzania, with Kinondoni to the far north of the city and Ilala to the downtown of Dar-es-Salaam. The district is administratively divided into 24 wards, with a total population of 1,368,881 of which

669,056 are males and 699,825 females (Population and House Survey, 2012). According to Temeke Social Welfare Office, five financial years report (2011/2012-2015/2016) Temeke had about 2100 marriage conflicts that were reconciled and that means every year 420 marriages conflicted per year, hence ended up with single parent families' that led 1863 children with single parenting care.

According to Masilamba (2017), there were 900 single parents in Temeke, of whom 150 were male and 750 females with an estimated growth rate of 40% per year. This number is higher compared to other districts. Moreover, Temeke district is characterized by people of low and middle income, low level of education, and high level of crime including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) which are supportive indicators resulting in single parenting and hence the researcher decided to choose this district as the area of research than other districts.



**Figure 3.1: Temeke Municipality Map**

**Source:** Temeke Municipal Council Social Economic Profile (2010/2011)

### **3.3 Study Population**

Study population refers to the group of representative individuals selected from a population for a purpose of statistical analysis (Kumar, 2008). Kothari, (2014) defines population as the aggregate of all individuals, events, and objects having observable characteristics needed by the researcher. The population of this study comprised of single mothers from Temeke district, Children from single mothers' families, and Social welfare officers who receive matrimonial, affiliation, and child maintenance cases in Temeke district. This population is more likely to give information that the researcher is interested to get for accomplishing this study.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

Sample refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample (Kothari, 2014). Due to limitation in resources and time, only 54 respondents participated in this study, with the assumption that this number would likely be representative to the general and intended population. Among them were 20 single mothers, 20 secondary students from single mothers' families, and 14 government officials including secondary school teachers and social welfare Officers as presented in Table 3.1 below. The selection of this group of respondents was done purposively as the researcher was considered this group to be the reliable and accurate source of intended study information.

**Table 3.1: Population size and their categories**

S/N	Type of Respondent	Male	Female	Total
01	Social Workers	6	8	14
04	Single mothers	-	20	20
03	Students from mothers	-	20	20
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>54</b>

**Source:** Study Data, 2020

### 3.5 Sampling Procedure

The sampling technique is the way by which the sample of units is selected from the population (Thompson, 2012). Non-probability sampling techniques including snowball techniques were used to select single mothers in the Temeke Municipality, because not every parent is a single parent, as a researcher was not familiar with the area, the researcher used the help of Local Government Ambassadors and Social Welfare Officers to identified single mothers in their locality. Purposive sampling techniques were used to social welfare officers. All of these categories have access to information, knowledge, and experience on issues regarding challenges facing single mothers in attaining secondary education of their children in Tanzania.

### 3.6 Data Collection Methods

Data collection is the process of attaining proof in an efficient and logical manner in order to get answers to the research problem (Kothari, 2004).

#### 3.6.1 In-Depth Interview

The interview was used to collect data from single mothers, of the Temeke district. The reason for using the in-depth interview to this category was the fact that the researcher interested to capture the feelings of parents in their struggle of meeting

educational needs of their children, and other challenges they are facing to cater for the secondary education of their children, this method was helpful to compare to any other method of data collection.

### **3.6.2 Structured Questionnaire**

This method of data collection was used to collect data from teachers, social welfare officers, and Local Government Officers. This method was the best fit than others because this category of the respondent is running a busy schedule every day and it is hard to sit down with them and conduct an interview, so structured questionnaire was the best method for them to respond to the questions on their convenient time, and the researcher made a follow up on the tools. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and close-ended questions which were distributed to the respondents who had free and enough time to digest the questions and finally offered the answer. Therefore, this method had assisted the study to meet specific information related to the research problem.

### **3.6.3 Documents Review**

Similarly, the data was collected through the review of available literatures as the main source of the background knowledge of the study and the pre-existing data experience in order to remain focused on the overlooked or missed information with regards to the challenges facing single mother to support their children's secondary education. The review of empirical documents enabled the research to identify the gaps from the previous studies and review of available national, regional and international instruments related to the study topic.



### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics can be defined as perspectives in deciding how to act in analyzing complex problems and issues. In order to successfully collect the data, the research acquired a letter from the Open University, which was presented to regional and local government authorities for their consent and approval to recruit and recruit respondents in the community. The respondents were given all freedom to choose whether to participate or not without any bribe or enforcement of any kind. In this regard, the research assured them the confidentiality and asked them to sign a consent form to sign prior to the discussion as evidence to their freewill and willingness to participate in the study. Moreover, respondents were free to withdraw at any stage of data collection whenever they felt doing so.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.8.1 Data Validity**

Validity is the credibility and believability of research data to ensure the data obtained are genuine and trustworthy. In ensuring data validity the researcher used content validity that ensured broad coverage of issues in the tools for data collection so that tools generate enough answers to the questions asked by the study, by going through the content and make sure that the issues were adequately covered in the tools for data collection. Also, these tools tested on post-graduate students who understood the issue of single mothers parenting, to ensure the questions were understandable to yield expected results.

### **3.8.2 Data Reliability**

Data reliability as explained by (Kothari, 2008), explains reliability as demonstrating the operation of a study, such as the data collection procedures can be repeated with the same outcome. To stress on the same, data reliability can be explained as the degree to which the researcher's tools used for data collection can produce stable, reliable, and consistent results to the extent that if the study was to be conducted for a second time with a different researcher, still the findings could have been the same. In assuring data reliability, a researcher with a help of others knowledgeable in research went through the data collection tools several times, to ensure the findings produced by the tools were reliable findings and if the study were to be repeated by any other researcher using the same methodology the findings would still be the same.

### **3.9 Data Processing and Analysis**

Research data processed first to make them amenable for analysis and analysis conducted by using content analysis for qualitative data, the content analysis helped to find themes and patens of data from various respondents, and the researcher made sense of the patens in the best way possible, to understand the connection and establish relationships among gathered data to understand the research problem. Furthermore, quantitative data from questionnaires processed and analyzed by using the statistic package of social science version 16.0 (SPSS). One simple test (T-Test) was used to analyze the significance of the variables to understand the research problem.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings. The chapter is composed of a number of subsections including respondents' demographic profile; economic challenges faced by single mothers in providing secondary education to their children; psychological challenges faced by single mothers in attaining secondary education to their children; social challenges faced by single mothers in providing secondary education to their children and lastly, way forward that single mothers can halt economic, social and psychological challenges for their children to attain secondary education.

#### **4.2 Respondents' Demographic Profile**

Hendrik and Ken (2012) explained that demographic profile involves the study of population-based on race, age, sex, income, economic status, and employment and education level. In this study, the demographic profile of respondents will include age, and occupation, and education level. Table 4.1 presents the gender, education and age of the selected students from single mothers' families. These included 13 girls and 7 boys of age ranging between 12 to 19 years old; and education ranging from Form One to form six.

**Table 4.1: Respondents' demographic profile**

<b>Students information</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education	Form 1 – 2	13	65.0
	Form 3 – 4	3	15.0
	Form 5 – 6	4	20.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Gender	Male	9	45.0
	Female	11	55.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	12 – 15	13	65.0
	16 -19	7	35.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

The other category of respondents included single mothers as the main respondents of the study, where the researcher managed to reach 20 of them due to the issue of their hard accessibility and the time constraints. This category was classified in terms of their ages, and level education. In terms of their ages, majority representing 75% of them were of ages ranging from 30 to 45 years old, while 20% were of ages ranging from 46 to 55 years old, and the remaining 5% were of 56 years old and above. In terms of their education, majority of them single mothers contacted were of primary education comprising 65% followed by 25% who showed attaining secondary school level, and 10% who reached tertiary education level. The data is as presented in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2: Single mothers' information**

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education	Primary education	13	65.0
	Secondary education	5	25.0
	Tertiary education	2	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	30 – 45	15	75.0
	46 – 55	4	20.0
	56+	1	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

The findings in Table 4.1.2 provide evidence that majority of single mothers in the study area are of low level of education, the fact which may likely have repercussions over their economic status, which in turn may undermine the capacity of single mothers to support their children's secondary education.

The study also involved a total number of 14 Social Welfare Officers who were selected purposively, representing 25.9% of all respondents as the group of professionals responsible and dealing directly with various problems in the society including that of single mothers. These helped in the identification of single mothers and stood as the key informants in providing the information related to single mothers' social and economic challenges.

### **4.3 Economic Activities Conducted by Single Mothers**

The first specific objective of the study intended to analyse economic activities conducted by single mothers for the purpose to identify how these activities could enable single mother to cater for their children's secondary education. Under this section, the study looked the business conducted by single mother, and their income capacity.

#### **4.3.1 Single Mothers Source of Income to Support their Children Education**

With regard to single mothers' sources of income, a total number of 40 respondents (single mothers and their secondary school children) responded to the question, and the findings unveiled a series of activities from which single mothers raise their daily income. These included food vending (20 out of 40), selling fruit and vegetable

selling (28 out of 40), frying fish (2 out of 40), saloon or hair dressing (13 out of 40) and bar tendering. Other activities cited as the source of income of single mothers included women’s group micro rotating income scheme, termed as “*mchezo*” (40 out of 40), literally translated as “*Game*”. None of them reported being employed in any formal sector, since all of respondents involved in the study showed being self-employed and in very informal and low paid economic activities. Participants were given a chance to select or point out more than item. The findings is as presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Single mothers’ source of income**

Type of Economic Activity	No. of Respondents	Frequency
Hair dressing	13	13
Food vending	20	20
Selling fruits and vegetables	28	28
Fish monger	2	2
Mchezo (Rotating income generating scheme)	40	40
Grossary	1	1
Shop	6	6

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

In relation to the findings above, it is quite evident that most of single mothers involve into informal low-paying income generating activities which in one way or the other might be challenging to support their children’s secondary education. The finding showed that some are also involved in irrational activities including commercial sex activities to the extent that even their children are not quite aware of the type of business conducted by their mothers. This was revealed after some children who participated in the study who showed inability to know how their

mothers since they could not even know their mothers' economic activities, although they could see them going out every day.

In their opinion supporting the findings of this study, Harkonen et al, (2016) stated that the integral lack of resources is hard to counterweight by the means, because unemployment rates are high among single mothers.

#### **4.3.2 The Income Capacity of Single Mothers in Temeke Municipality**

Under this sub-section, the study entailed to determine the income capacity of single mothers in the study area in the aim of deciphering how this would be sufficient to meet the demand of their children's school requirements. In rapport to this, the study was mainly keen determining their monthly income, and consequently the data revealed that majority single mothers had monthly income ranging from TShs 10,000 – 150,000 (60%), followed by those with monthly income between TShs 160,000 – 300,000 (25%), and 10% and 5% reporting monthly income ranging TShs. 310, 000 – 450,000 and 460,000 and above respectively as presented in Table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4: Single mothers' monthly income**

<b>Monthly income</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
10,000 – 150,000	12	60.0
160, 000 – 300,000	5	25.0
310,000 – 450,000	2	10.0
460,000 & above	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

In relation to the data in Table 4.4, the inference is that majority of single mothers in Tanzania get a very limited income from their income generating activities. From the

above data, it is evident that majority of single mothers (60%) have an annual income ranging from TShs 120,000 – 1,800,000. This amount seems to be less to sustain the family daily needs, including schooling costs for the children and other domestic cost. This may be due to most of them being involved in low-paying and informal jobs the fact which may have effects on their children’s education. This was supported by statement by one of single mothers saying:

*“The financial resources among most of women, especially we, single mothers, has become very challenging due to lack of secured jobs and the hardship in conducting business. Due to this hardship, I failed to get enough money to cater for the education needs for my children that make obliged one of them to quit school to engage into Motorcycle riding activity.”*

#### **4.4 Economic Challenges Faced by Single Mothers to Support their Children Education**

The study also intended to determine the economic challenges facing single mothers in supporting the secondary school education for their children. In this regard, the analysis was looking at different economic aspects including single mothers’ economic capacity to nurture and fund their children education, and economic support they acquire from their co-partners and community at large.

##### **4.4.1 Secondary School Students Financial Requirements**

As the government has been providing free education in both primary and secondary school education, the study wanted to know whether there are other school related requirements apart from school fees that would have implications to single mothers’ children access to secondary education. As a matter of fact, the findings of the study unveiled a number of issues standing as school requirements that each student should



have complied regardless of his or her family status. These include school uniforms, scholastic materials (books, copy books and pens, etc.), remedial classes fee, monthly contributions (extra teachers); transport allowances, reams, buckets, brooms, mattress and trankers for those admitted in special or boarding schools, and camping costs for those in classes waiting for National Examinations (Form II, IV and VI); all of these needing thousands of monies.

In accordance to the findings on the costs appart from school fees, it can be said that the burden carried by single to support their children is still huge for their children to access secondary education comapared to Single Mothers' monthly income. As evidence to this inference, the respondents were of the following statements:

*“We thank the government on their free education program, but the cost to send children to school is still a very problem to us, and I in particular. For instance, on my side I have a child who is supposed to complete his Form II this year, I can tell you for that very single child I spend about Tshs 100,000 per month on his transport, food at school (considering that they spend the whole day at school), and other school related expenses, such remedial classes fee, Saturdays' tests, without counting on uniforms, and other school contributions. They are supposed to go for camps to prepare their exams, it is a must for each student to contribute for food, accommodation to name only a few. You can imagine, how a single mother like me would be able to cover all those school expenses, and that is only one child, what if I had two children in secondary school?”*

The findings of the study imply that majority of single mothers in the area of this study had an income inadequate to support their children needs including school requirements. These findings align with that of Franz, Lensche and Schmitz (2003) who contended that the income and education of single mothers are relatively low.

The research went further to single out the costs spent daily by single mothers to meet their children's secondary education needs, and the findings from both Mothers

and children revealed that 70% of children in secondary from single mothers' family are likely to spend an amount ranging from TShs. 1,000 – 1,500 a day, and 30% of other respondents showed spending TShs. 1,600 – 2,000 and 2,100 – 2,500 respectively. This includes the costs for their transport and meal substances. The data is as indicated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Daily student school expenditure**

	<b>Student's Daily cost</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Valid	1000 – 1500	28	70.0	70.0
	1600 – 2000	6	15.0	15.0
	2100 – 2500	6	15.0	15.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

In accordance with the data in Table 4.2.3, one is likely to take inference that the minimum daily cost for secondary students is Tshs 1,000 and the maximum cost is Tshs 2,500. In the other words, the monthly students' substance cost varies from TShs. 22,000 – 55,000 (22 class days), the amount which does not includes monthly school contributions, such as remedial fee, etc. And this only for those children public day school, since for those private school and public boarding school the rate could be even higher.

#### **4.4.2 Single Mothers Capability to Meet Secondary School Expenses for Their Children**

In order to determine the economic challenges facing single mothers to support their children's education, the study also looked at single mothers' ability to meet the school requirements including monthly contributions. Therefore, respondents were to respond to a question on the identification of school related contributions both

compulsory and optional, and the results showed that apart from the school fees which have been covered by the government through the policy of free education, the schools in their internal arrangements have put in place different regulations imposing to all students either paid at the opening of the schools or on monthly basis. These include each student to bring a ream of paper, a broom, a bucket, and a plow to be handed to the office of academic before the joining of class. Other contributions identified were monthly remedial fee for extra classes amounting to not less TShs 100,000; study camps for those in all classes preparing their National Exams, the contributions which involve meal allowance, accommodation, mattress; and trancker to name only a few.

Following the data above, it is quite evident that the school contributions stand as one of the important economic challenges facing single mothers in catering for their children's' secondary education. This is due to most single mothers not having reliable source of income as majority of them is involved in informal and low paying economic activities. Some of the school's contributions that single mothers failed to pay were such as contributions for examinations, laboratories, buying desks, building classrooms and toilets, and other school running costs, as the most of the schools see the subsidies from the government to be insufficient to meet the school requires. The evidence on school contributions and joining requirements can be seen in appendix 3.

All these contributions are said to be noncompulsory apparently, but with compulsory emphasis in their implementation, since a student who does not comply

with these school requirements is denied access some school services, such as remedial classes, join the study camp, and sometimes undergo different punishments. And it arrives a time where the student at the end of school is refused to acquire his or her certificate, unless all the unpaid contributions have been paid. On support to the findings, the citations from respondents' statements are as seen hereunder:

*“This is a really big problem to me, I fail to meet school needs on time because of the unstable economy; I struggle to get money with a lot of difficulties. Children are sent back home because they have not paid their school contributions on time and I do not even have money to pay. If I tell them to go to school, they end up on the way and they don't go to school claiming that they are beaten if they go without money”,* said a Single Mother X.

The findings infer that single mothers face hard time due to financial miseries. This is due to the fact that the income generating activities they engage in are not able of raising sufficient resources for their daily needs including that of supporting their children. In the same angle of idea, one Social Welfare Officer had attested the following to back up the findings:

*“Most single mothers are economically unstable that render their life and that of their children to be very tough. They have a substantial load to nurture, teach, educate and cloth their children and hence most of them having difficulties in financing the education their children.”*

In the process of getting an education, parents were supposed to contribute several school contributions. Most single mothers' ability to meet school contributions remain a problem, because of the economic hardship single mothers are facing, some of them could not provide contributions needed at the required time and hence affected their children's education. As commented by one of the participants during the interview that,

*“There is a time when a child is required to contribute money for examination fees, laboratories fees, money for buying desks, and money to build classrooms and toilets. This gave me a hard time to full fill those contributions”.*

Another participant explained that,

*“If you look at the money you have, it is not enough to pay for two children. If I pay for them I run out my business capital. This makes me look for another capital for my business”.*

She further explained:

*“I have to go to school several times to make sure if they have arrived at school or not. This situation gives me hardship because I have to leave my business which is the only means to get daily income.”*

In addition, the study would uncover whether single mother had noticed any incapacity to copy with the school contributions for their children, and the results showed that, majority of respondents from single mothers' groups (80%) complained and revealed their financial inability to meet the school requirements for their children. Both qualitative and quantitative data point out that, single mothers face a challenge to pay for school contributions as suggested above, considering that most of these contributions act as a condition for child acceptance to schools and most students who fail to pay for these contributions may be returned home until they pay. So this hinders directly their performance at school and even influence drops out to some students from single mother families.

These findings give inference that paying school contributions make single mothers worse off as these are yet to struggle financially due to lack of unstable income and lack of economic support from siblings, as a result, they continue suffering to the

extent that even the capital from the small business they run is used on school contributions.

#### 4.4.3 Support from Partners and Community Members

On the same vail, the study continued to uncover whether single mothers get any support from their partners or their community members to support their children's education, and it was revealed that majority of them (90%) got no support from neither their partners nor their community members, while only 10 % said to have received any kind of support from their partners. The data is as presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Support from partner and community members**

<b>Daily Student school expenditure</b>				
	<b>Support from partner/community member</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Valid	Yes	4	10.0	10.0
	No	36	90.0	90.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

The inference from the findings indicates that lack of support from close family members including co-parents, relatives, and close friends is a big challenge facing the single mother. As a single mother explained,

*“I suffer alone; his father is around but he is living with another family. Although he can help his child he doesn't do it until I force him. I get tired reminding his responsibilities frequently.”*

Another single mother added:

*“I do not get help from anywhere. The father of my children does not give anything. There is a time when he comes to look after the children empty-handed without any money. He says he has no money. Since the*

*children do not live with them, he does not see the need to take care of them. I am struggling with small income-earning activities to take care of my children and I don't believe if he has no money" (Single mother Q)*

This means lack of support from partners; family members and relatives increase the burden of single mothers to take care of the children alone without any help. This situation makes single mothers overwork themselves and spend most of their time at work trying to get money to support their family.

These results were supported by Pitkänen and coworkers (2021) and Shah and coworkers (2020) on their studies about parental socioeconomic resources and classification systems. In their findings insisted that economic factors have more strong effect on single mothers. However, this study exposed more economic factors such as school contributions, expenses for the meal, and the like which are not exposed before. In addition to that, the result showed a gap in Tanzania education and training policy of 2014 which introduced free education policy and abolished all fees in secondary schools to help poor families including children raised by single mothers to get free education, but there are still personal costs that parents still incur to make sure their children go to school.

These costs are high and pose a challenge to single mothers' families to afford and hence impair parent's ability to support their children's education. Furthermore, these challenges at the core factors that determine a child's continuity to schooling or even a child's performance at school and them far along achievement in life.

#### 4.5 Social Challenges in Provision of Secondary Education to Children

In analyzing the social challenges facing single mothers in the provision of secondary education to their children, the study looked into different aspects including social relations, community perception towards both mothers and their children, and the motives for single motherhood status in the community, as well as children's vulnerability as a matter of single parenting. The findings of the same are

##### 4.5.1 Things Influencing Single Motherhood in the Community

The study at this point intended to determine the aspects that influence single motherhood or single parenting, by asking what have been the source of separation among couples, which influenced the single mother-related families in the community. A total number of 54 participants responded actively in providing their insights on social aspects influencing single motherhood in their community as at home impregnation, poverty, lack of trust among couples, family influence, infidelity among couples, moral decay and lack of fear of God. The data is shown in Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7: Social aspects influencing single motherhood in the community**

<b>Social Aspect</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Out of marriage impregnation (at home pregnancies)	20
Poverty	30
Lack of trust among couples	12
Family influence	15
Infidelity among couples	35
Moral decay	12
Lack of fear of God	24
Death of partner	4
Legal affairs	15

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020



In reference to the findings in Table 4.7, it can be said single motherhood in the Tanzanian community is associated to different factors with the infidelity among couples being the most prominent factor. This infidelity on both partners, meaning that partners to cheat against each has been key of majority of marriage break up and hence leading to the single motherhood and parenting. On infidelity, one respondent stated the following:

*“I got two children with my husband, but it came a time when I started hearing the murmurs that my husband is in relationship with one of our neighbors’ daughter. I tried to ask my husband who always denied, but to our surprise that girl got pregnant of which my husband was said to be its responsible. When I gently asked my husband about the issue, this one has changed and became a lion. In this situation, I felt short of patience and judged to leave him alone with his new partner. And from there one, I started taking care of my children alone as you can see.”*

Additionally, it can be deduced from the data in Table 4.4.1 that the hardship of life (poverty) associated with moral decay and lack of fear of God can influence the single motherhood condition in the community. For instance, 6 out of 20 (30%) single mothers who participated in this study showed having been impregnated while at home and hence became mothers out of marriage.

Similarly, basing on the same data above, one has to consider the issue of single motherhood to be both intentional and unintentional due to the fact that there are those who intentionally decide raise their children out of marriage through separation and divorce, and those who enter into the single motherhood through death of their partners. As no one has the power over the unintentional single motherhood as none has the power to prevent death of a partner, unless one has committed suicide against her partner. The other factor or cause for single motherhood has been associated

with legal matters, where one of the parents has been into conflict with the law that may lead to the imprisonment of a partner. For instance, when a parent has been sent to prison, he leaves his family behind where the woman automatically starts raising their children alone. Or through deportation of one of the parents, the remaining parent is left to care of the children most probably alone.

#### **4.5.2 Social Relations among Single Mothers**

The other aspect taken care in this study was the social relations with the intention to determine how social relationships can enable children from single mothers' families to access their secondary education. First, the study wanted to determine whether there is any communication between single mothers and their partners, and between father and their children, and the data obtained showed that the majority (15 out 20) single mother reached had not been in good communication with their partners compared to only 5 out 20 single mother who said to be in good relationship with their partners. While on students or children on their side, 17 out 20 (85% of children) showed never having communicated with their fathers compared to only 3 out 20 (15%) who indicated having good relations and communication with their fathers. The data is as indicated in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Single mothers communication with their ex-partners**

<b>Communication with ex-partner (Single mother)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	15	75.0
<b>No</b>	5	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Communication with the father (children)</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	17	85.0
<b>No</b>	3	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

The following question was to whether the communication or cooperation between single mothers and their exporters would have any impact to their children access to their secondary education and good performance.

### 4.5.3 Community Perceptions towards Single Mothers

On the same angle to respond to the third objective of this study, a question was put forward with the aim to discover the community perceptions towards single mother and how those perceptions would have impact to the education performance of their children. The data revealed that the community has both positive and negative perceptions toward single mothers. In the positive aspects, single mothers are considered as courageous, strong, hardworking, fighters and heroic. While the negative aspects associated with single mothers were reported as economic dependent, cheating, violator of sexual norms, promiscuity, busy and tired. Also, single mothers are taken as depressed, stressful, deserted, and problematic and threat to the community. The data are presented in Table 4.9 below.

**Table 4.9: Community perception towards single mothers**

<b>Positive perceptions</b>	<b>Negative perceptions</b>
Strong	Economic dependent
Courageous	Cheating (unfaithful)
Hardworking	Violator of sexual norms
Fighter	Promiscuous
Heroe	Busy
	Depressed & stressful
	Abandoned or deserted
	Problematic
	Threat

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

In relation to the data in Table 4.9, it is important to note that the community have different perception regarding single mothers. In one hand, single is considered as strong, courageous, hardworking, fighter and heroes due to their struggling attitudes to ensure the survival of their families. This has been noted from the findings that showed that majority of single mothers do not rely on any support from neither the fathers of their children nor from any community to support the children' secondary school education. Some of them feel shy to expose their problems, especially which of their children's school related affairs, the fact which made them working hard to hide their shame.

On the other hand, it can be said from the community negative perspectives on single mothers that, single mothers through hustling they are likely to involve into uncompromising behaviours that in one way or another may seem threatening to the community. Some might have been accused of promiscuity and cheating attitudes just because of the community stereotype toward single mothers. For instance, in our Tanzanian community each woman delivering or getting a baby without being into marriage is seen as a harlot or even dangerous to marriages of her fellow women, and sometimes considered as a bad role model in the society. To highlight on this, the following statements were captured from respondents:

*“As a single mother, I pass through a very difficult time in my community; I am given all kind of names, harlot, immoral, abandoned, and many other bad reputations. It is a very big problem to be seen walking with somebody's husband even in the street. And especially to my case, I who had all my two children out of marriage, my sisters-in-law (my brothers' wives) take me as a bad example to their daughter, as you'll hear them saying “don't be like your Aunt A, who is delivering like a Dog with each child with his own father.” Even if sometimes they say*

*as simple jokes, but to me I always feel bad”*; said one Single Mother in her statement during interview.

*“Society has been disappointing me because they believe that a single mother' is not enough to keep the child in good morals. Society sees us as a burden. They always point fingers at us for everything we do. This gives me too much frustration; the Society sees a single mother as a lawbreaker and deceiver, and they do not believe if you can raise a child yourself, you are also isolated from married women for fear you will have affair with their husbands”*, said another Single mother in an interaction. During the data collection.

Another respondent stated the following:

*“Sometimes, when I receive a male guest in my house, everyone will start murmuring. Some even dare to ask about a relationship with the guest. So, people following my private life and starting to judge, but I have the right to have any kind of guest regardless of gender. Being a single mother doesn't mean I should limit myself to freely live like others. Although a single mother, but still I deserve all respect as it is for other people in the community, regardless of my family status.”*

Despite the efforts, single mothers do ensure that their children got an education and basic needs but yet the community has been part of the problem because of less cooperation and has been abusive and make them feel weak and guilty this affect their life and has a direct impact on children life because experience and treatments single mother receives from the community has been witnessed by their children and has an impact on their education progress and future life in general.

Quantitate, data shows that, 19.0% of respondents accepted that single mothers have less time to spend with their children, 14.3% mentioned struggling with ex-partners and 14.3% of respondents say single mothers are socially isolated and 4.8% of respondents accepted those single mothers negatively judged by society. These are results from professionals who have experience in dealing with single mothers' issues in daily life they come up with the above result.

#### 4.5.4 Effects of Single Motherhood to Their Children's Social Well-being

The study also sought to analyse how single motherhood status would affect the social well-being of the children from single mothers' families. Consequently, the results from data collected underlined different aspects as repercussions of single motherhood to the social well-being and their academic performance. These were termed as lack parental care and love, ineffective management and monitoring children's school affairs, and poor socialization. This would be due to most of single mothers not getting enough time to spend with their children as a matter of struggle for earning their family breads. The data is as presented in Table 4.10 below.

**Table 4.10: Effects of single motherhood to the children's social well-being**

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Lack of parental care and love	42
Ineffective management and monitoring of children both at school and at home	32
Poor socialization and loneliness	17
Low academic performance	28
School drop out	22
Strong mother-child bond	5
Adjustment difficulties	10

**Source:** Survey Data, 2020

In accordance with the data in Table 4.10, one will be of the view that single motherhood has both positive and negative effects to the social well-being and academic performance of the child. For instance, it was evident that single mothers are more likely to build strong bond with their children as the main breadwinner and the person whom the children get all their needs. This has been emphasized by one single mother through her statement saying:

*“My children have become my only close friends and consolers, since when I see them I can forget the tragedy that met my spouse and led to his death. My children remain the important gift and everything in my life, I always pray God to accord them a long life”. While one Daughter from single mother’s family stated the following: “My mother is everything to me and I love her to much. You can imagine she is the only one who work hard for our survival, I have never seen my father or any father’s brother to support us in anything, even a single greeting.”*

On the side of negative effects of single motherhood, it can be said that children suffer lack good upbringing and love from their parents as it was mentioned by majority of respondents. Respondents showed that most of them are busy finding money and they have no time to show love to their children. One respondent narrated in her own terms as follows:

*“I can't give love to my son, I'm busy looking for the sustenance of my children when I go out for work in the morning, I leave them sleeping, and when I return, they are already sleeping, their father died so my children lack proper care from both parents. It hurts me but I don't have any other option, this is way I make them survive and get money for their school. It hurts me emotionally, but I have no way” (Single mother T in October 2020.*

*“I love my son and that's why I struggle to find money so that he can study even though it is difficult. I don't find time to spend with him and show him, love, as a parent but I always tell him, I know I don't spend time with you to show you love and affection, but it is because I am struggling to make sure I meet his needs, so that should not end up like me, I want him to have a better future, I am hoping he understands”, said a Single mother Q in October 2020.*

On the other hand, it can be said that single motherhood is also associated with low parenting quality, and this is due to many responsibilities added single mothers’ responsibilities to their everyday lives. As these take long hours of working and hence resulting to them missing their children’s important school functions and other parental responsibilities. On support of this, a number of statements were quoted from the respondents as termed here:

*“Being a single mother has been of many negative repercussions to the well-being of my child including poor performance at school. I don’t have enough time to spend with my child, and in this regard, I am always not sure whether they get food on time, and I don’t even know how their life is after school hours. Sometime they miss even water for taking bath and wash their school uniforms, and what I know is to ensure they have money for school, although I am not really sure whether they arrive at school or not, because I wake early and return late at home. I spend time in my business from morning to night. I don’t have time to check my daughter’s excises books or ask him anything about school. I fail even to attend school meetings due to delays in getting information. We don’t see each other every day and sometimes I don’t have anyone to look after my business. So that I can participate in school meetings”, said a Single mother R in October 2020.*

*“Most of the time my son is at boarding school, and when he comes I make sure he studies extra class sessions during the whole holidays. I don’t have even time to make sure if he attends extra class sessions every day or not. I am unable to monitor my son’s school affairs. Even though I make sure I give him all the school needs. This is very troubling because the child spends most of his time by himself and all I strive to do is to give him everything he needs for school”, added a Single mother F on October 2020.*

From the above evidences, it is also quite clear that single mother mothers don’t have enough time manage and monitor their children's school affairs, the fact which has a profound impact on their children's school performance. This indicates that the responsibility of raising a child alone can be overwhelming for single mother, and hence requiring them to not feel shy to reach out to their friends and family members to seek their support. The findings of this tstudy concur with work of Ferrell, (2009) which also saw the attendance of children from single mothers’ family at school as not promising, and hence resulting to poor performance and unimpressive academic achievements.



The other identified effects of single motherhood to the children of secondary school was poor socialization, loneliness as well as lack of children social adjustment. This may be both to single mothers and their children at a time, in the sense that they both have the feeling of being ashamed and resented. Sometimes, single mothers express the inability to share their difficulties with their partners, friends and other community members, the fact which may lead to children miss support, which would enable them access their education.

From that quantitative data, one sample test (T-Test) signified that social challenges are  $<.001$ . That means social challenges are a significant factor facing single mothers in providing education to their children. As table 4.10 illustrates.

The findings of this study are supportive to Druta & Ronald, (2017); Damaske and coworkers, (2017); Rahman and coworkers, (2017) and Nelson and coworkers, (2014), who also termed social challenges as serious issues among facing single mothers in the society. These always face social isolation from society, discrimination, and lacking support from close relatives and friends.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter provides a summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on findings and recommends areas for further research.

#### 5.1 Summary

The study assessed the socio-economic challenges faced by single mother in their Children secondary education. This was a mixed research design wich used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. In the context of this study, single mothers are regarded as single women involving women who got into motherhood without any partner, those separated from their partners after becoming parents, and those whom in one way or another have lost their partner through death. The findings of this study are summarized as follows:

##### 5.1.1 Single Mothers Sources of Income

The findings imply that most majority of single mothers rely on informal and low-paid economic activities, such as catering “*Mama Ntilie*”, bar tendering, selling fruits and vegetables as well as other forms of degrading businesses, such as sexual business. Due to the kind of business the engaged in and the low level of education, these are likely to earn less, and hence facing hardship to meet the school requirements of their children and other parenting responsibilities as ascertained by one single mother in her own terms;

*“Due to lack of enough financial resources linked to uncertainty encountered in my daily economic activities, therefore it has been difficult to satisfy the children’ needs, and thus find myself involved in risky activities, such bar tendering and roaming around the whole day long with bucket fruits, where we encounter a number of abuses from our customers (i.e. touched breasts and buttocks without own consent), but I try to endure all these just to make my children safe.”*

### **5.1.2 Economic Challenges Faced by Single Mothers to Support Their Children’**

#### **Education**

The findings denoted that single mothers in the study area faced multiple economic challenges in supporting and meeting their children’s secondary education needs. The challenges varied from hardship in financial resources, lack of support from their close relatives that made them fail to provide basic needs like food, shelter, clothes and other school requirements to their children. These findings had been in compatible with Adegboyega (2019) and Mugove (2017) whom in their opinion also revealed that most single mothers fail to manage to handle the responsibilities of financing the education of their children due to financial difficulties.

### **5.1.3 Social Challenges Faced by Single Mothers in Supporting Their Children**

#### **Education**

Regarding the social challenges, the findings showed that most of single mothers in study area were likely stigmatized and accused of immorality. This would just because most of them had children without being married, which is considered to be a violation of cultural norms and unacceptable by communities. In the same veil, the relationship with families was also not good to majority of some single mothers. Thus, the findings implied that single mothers in the study area experienced social

disaffection by communities, this means that their relationship with families and communities seemed relatively not compromising. Furthermore, some single mothers had no time to spend with their children because they were busy struggling for other needs for their children. This caused some of them to fail to socialize properly with their children and provide them social instructions which would develop them into decent persons. This ended in their failure to provide parental care and love, poor management and monitoring of their children's school progress, as well poor socialization within the community.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Generally, the study came with the conclusion that the struggle for most single mothers to support their children's secondary education is threatened by a lot of challenges varying from economic to social. These challenges impose a great barrier for them to support the education of their children. In this end, the challenges they face not only affect single mothers alone, but also their children in both their social and education development aspects.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

In conformity to the findings, the study came up with the following recommendations that were seen as essential to deal with the identified challenges:

### **5.3.1 Recommendations to the Government**

- The government and development partners need to offer economic assistance to single mothers. The support would facilitate them not only to sustain their

livelihood, but also to build their economic capacity to support their children academically.

- The government should put emphasis on the implementation of free education and training policy through provision of scholastics material support to vulnerable children, and including those from single mothers' families, and promote exemption of all contributions that promote unequal access to education.
- Policy makers should be aware of the diversity of existing family forms and relationships in Tanzania, and aim for better understanding of nature and mechanisms of family arrangement beyond couples with children
- The government should establish family-friendly policies that would consider the enforcement of both parents to invest their time and resources for their child development.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

- More direct supports to single mothers are needed among Tanzanian communities that would play an active role in enabling students from single mothers' families in their academic development. This can be done through promotion of self-reliance attitudes among single mothers and provision of social socioeconomic support encompassing education, shelter, job access, family benefits and social aid

### **5.3.3 Recommendations to Future Researchers**

- Investigate on diversity of family forms, patronships, and life course across Tanzania
- Assess the compatibility of existing policies with family changes with more focus to single parent families

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for Single Mothers

1. Where is your husband or father of the children?
2. Do you have contact with the father of your child /children?
3. What is your source of income?
4. Being a single mother, how does it affect you?
5. Do you have time to spend with your children?
6. How does a single mother affect the wellbeing of your children?
7. What economic challenges are you facing as a single mother in providing secondary education for your child/children?
8. What psychological challenges are you facing as a single mother on providing secondary education for your child/children
9. What social challenges are you facing as a single mother on providing secondary education for your child/children
10. Do you get any support from the parent whom you are not living with/ any family members/friends/or else?
11. How do you assess your life before and after being a single mother?
12. What should be done to overcome the challenges facing single mothers in attaining the secondary education of their children?

**Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire for Local Government and Social Welfare**

**Officers**

**Write a letter of appropriate answer or fill on a space provided**

**SECTION 1: Demographic Details**

- 1. Occupation.....
- 2. Gender:
  - (a) Male (b) Female
- 3. Age range
  - a) 18 - 36
  - b) 37 – 45
  - c) 46 – 55
  - d) 56+
- 4. Education level
  - a) Primary
  - b) Secondary
  - c) College

**SECTION II: Perception and General Questions**

- 5. What are the economic challenges single mothers facing in the process of providing secondary education for their children?  
.....  
.....
- 6. What are the psychological challenges single mothers facing in the process of providing secondary education for their children?  
.....
- 7. What are the social challenges single mothers facing in the process of providing secondary education for their children?  
.....  
What are challenges do you face in dealing with single mothers' issues in your office?  
.....

8. How many cases of single mothers do you receive and solve in a month?

- a) 0 - 10
- b) 11 – 20
- c) 21 – 30
- d) 31+

9. Do you receive any support or funds from the governments or non-government on dealing with single mothers in your area?

Yes

No

If yes mention

.....

10. What do you think are proper measures to be taken to solve the challenges single mothers facing in attaining secondary education for their children Temeke Municipality?

.....  
.....

**Thanks for your participation!**



**Appendix 3: Research Questionnaire for Students from Single Mothers**

**SECTION 1: Demographic Detail**

- 1. AGE .....
- 2. GENDER
  - (a) Male (b) Female
- 3. Secondary Education level
  - a) Form 1 - 2
  - b) Form 3 - 4
  - c) Form 5 - 6

**SECTION II: Perception and General Questions**

- 4. How many children are you in your family? .....
- 5. Do you have any contact with your father? Yes ..... No .....
- 6. Appart from school fees, is there any other contributions required by your school? Yes ..... No ..... If yes, what are they?
- 7. Are those contribution compulsories or optional? .....
- 8. How much do you spend daily at school? .....
- 9. Does your father support you in your education?
- 10. What economic activity does your mother do to raise income to support your secondary education? .....
- 11. Have ever miss school do to lack of money for school?  
Yes .....No .....
- 12. What are the economic challenges your mom face as single mother to meet secondary education expenses?  
.....  
.....
- 13. 14. Do you think your mom being a single mother has any negative impact in social and academic life? ..... If yes, how does it affect you?  
.....  
.....

14. What are the social challenges faced by your mom in supporting your secondary education?

15. What is the community perceptions towards your mother as single and your family in general?

.....

16. What should be done to help your mother overcome the challenges associated to her single motherhood?

.....

**Thanks for your participation!**

## Appendix 4: Research Clearance Letter

### THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

#### DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

P.O. Box 23409 Fax: 255-22-2668759 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania,  
<http://www.out.ac.tz>



Tel: 255-22-2666752/2668445 ext.2101  
 Fax: 255-22-2668759,  
 E-mail: [drpc@out.ac.tz](mailto:drpc@out.ac.tz)

09/04/2018,

Temeke Municipal Director,

P. O. Box 46343, Dar es Salaam.

#### RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The Open University of Tanzania was established by an act of Parliament no. 17 of 1992. The act became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1993 by public notes No. 55 in the official Gazette. Act number 7 of 1992 has now been replaced by the Open University of Tanzania charter which is in line the university act of 2005. The charter became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. One of the mission objectives of the university is to generate and apply knowledge through research. For this reason staff and students undertake research activities from time to time.

To facilitate the research function, the vice chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania was empowered to issue a research clearance to both staff and students of the university on behalf of the government of Tanzania and the Tanzania Commission of Science and Technology.

The purpose of this letter is to introduce to you **Ms. Mariam Mkubwa; PG201507442**, who is a Master student at the Open University of Tanzania. By this letter, **Ms. Mariam Nkumbwa** has been granted clearance to conduct research in the country. The title of her research is **"Assessing the Social Economic Challenges facing Single Mothers in Supporting their Children in Secondary School Education– The Case of Temeke - Tanzania"**. The research will be conducted in Temeke District.

In case you need any further information, please contact:

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic); The Open University of Tanzania; P.O. Box 23409; Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and facilitation of this research activity.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Hossea Rwegoshora

For: VICE CHANCELLOR

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA