

# SINGLE PARENTING: CAUSATIVE EFFECTS ON RAISING CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examined single parenting and causative effects on raising children in Nigeria. It is pertinent that single parenting/parenthood has affected the proper raising of children in Nigeria. There cannot be peace at home and the society at large if the children of single parents were not properly catered for. Thus, the paper examines the cause of single parenting, its effects on the children, and child development. The paper recommended that partners should exhibit true love among themselves to maintain good and harmonious relationships to avoid separation or divorce. Government should create more jobs to enable citizens to secure a job to enable them to provide for their families.*

**Keywords:** Single, Parenting, Causative, Effects, Children and Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Sigh and Conklin (2007) opined that single parenting was a new family form created by modernization and industrialization, which altered changes in gender roles. Therefore, single parenthood is the act of training a child or children single-handedly, carrying out the duty of child upbringing alone. Nwachukwu (2002) and Ogbo (2007) stress that reports have shown that, in Nigeria alone 35% of the population constitutes single parents. This shows the rapidly growing trend of single parenting in Nigeria. Since abortion is not legalized and there is no law against a child outside marriage, divorce, separation or the death of a partner may pave way for the single parenthood. In Nigeria, parental roles are culturally determined or inclined. The maternal role is that of inclined. The maternal role is that of child care and homemaking while the parental role is that of economic responsibilities and discipline of children.

Generally, it is the responsibility of the family to train and bring up the child in the norms and values of society. They are to be responsible for the psychological and emotional welfare of the children. Stephens (2006) stresses that children from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour. In such a situation, the child becomes a must in society. Moreover, such children are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of some rights and opportunities.

Benokraitis (2012) concluded research on marriage and family and gender roles defines mothers as the expressive role players, who provided the emotional support and nurturing that sustains the family unit. Because of this, she argues, mothers outshine fathers who tend to be stricter and more distant. She goes on to express that one of a woman's expressive roles is that of kind keeper an important communication link among family members. Children tend to drift towards the preference of parent depending on how involved a particular parent is, and a common problem in society to say is absentee fathers. Therefore, children are more likely to show a preference for their mothers, as they are more involved with them than their fathers. Single parent children commonly experience difficulties in identifying the role strain and stigmatization regardless of how it was obtained. As such, the children faced development and socialization problem which leads to social vices such as drugs, armed robbery cultism, swindling (419), prostitution, abortion etc. for these reasons, attention has been drawn towards the examining single parenting: a degradation effects on raising children in Nigeria.

Calhoun (2004), single parenthood is defined as a multifocal family composed of a mother, her dependent children one or more of her grown daughters and her children or sometimes other relatives such as a grandmother or aunt.

## **Parent**

Browne (2012) stressed that a parent is a caretaker of the offspring in their species, in humans, a parent is a child. A biological parent consists of a person whose gamete resulted in a child a male through sperm, and a woman through her ovum. Parents are first-degree relatives and have a 50% genetic overlap. A woman can also become a parent through surrogacy; however, some parents may not be biologically related to their children.

An adoptive parent nurtures and raises the offspring of the biological parent but is not biologically related to the child. Children without adoptive parents can be raised by their grandparents or other family members.

## **Child development**

Kail (2011), Child development refers to the biological and psychological changes that occur in human beings between conception and the end of adolescence as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy. Related terms include “developmental

psychology” referring to development through the lifespan and “pediatrics” the branch of medicine relating to the cure of a child. Inter- American development is a multifaceted, integral, and continual process of change in which children become able to handle the ever more complex level of moving thinking, feeling, and relation to others.

### **Causes of Single parenthood**

Various reasons have been highlighted as to why people get into single parenthood. Single and Samaria (1996) revealed that several factors contributed to the growing numbers of single parents.

#### **Divorce**

Nwachuckwu (2006) opined that divorce on its own makes the couples develop a negative attitude towards marriage and therefore lay the foundation for single parenthood. The reason commonly given by woman for leaving their husbands includes adultery, cruelty, and desertion, addiction to alcohol or drug husband or wife also causes single parenthood. Firstenberg (2004) posited that the raising rate of single parenthood was basically due to the rising rates of divorce, he said that about half of the marriages undertaken man end up divorced.

#### **Death of a partner**

The death of a spouse or partner as husband and wife could lead to each one of the partners becoming a single parent most especially on the part of the mother there is an adverse effect.

#### **Economic Pressure**

Financing in a single-parenting world is a challenge since caring for the children will centre more on either of the partners. So, economic stress, imbalance and problems affect in raising children in single parenting.

#### **Lack of social care**

It is widely believed that children in single-parent families are likely to be psychologically unhealthy. The public media such as radio, newspapers, magazines, films and TV also repeatedly play up the psychological health of the children in single-parent families

## **Rudimentary Problems attached to the single parenthood**

Certain problems have been identified to be associated or attached to single parenting. It has been observed that having fewer resources, single parents may not monitor or care for their children properly. Amato (2007), unveiled that unmarried fathers are also not without problems and generally receive a more healthy economic status than their female counterparts. Single fathers are often confronted with serious career-related problems as they find their sole children-rearing role conflicting with work expectations.

Myles (2004) emphasized that stress is inherent in the situation of the woman trying to bring up her children alone. A husband may do little, but that little helps and it is a comfort to have someone with whom to discuss problems that may arise concerning the health, school performance and other matters concerning the offspring, insecurity, financial pressure, lack of companion at home and the burden of bringing up children alone all constitute stressful conditions which take their toll on the health of women who find themselves in the situation being parent.

Amato (2007), single parenthood has to do with loneliness hence many single parents find themselves feeling isolated at one point or another. It was reported that single parents who got pregnant are not allowed the benefits of maternity leave simply because they are not married. Single parents commonly experience difficulty with role identity. Some form of social stigma is still attached to single parent state regardless of how it was acquired

### **Challenges faced by Single Parents.**

Sandefur, Melanaham and Wojhkiewes (2009) posted that challenges faced by a single parent are far greater in number than those faced by both parents e.g

- Single parents play the role of the father and mother
- Overwhelmed by lots of responsibilities
- Inadequacy in child raising
- Loneliness
- Financial challenges
- Coping with stress and frustration
- Poverty

- Emotional stress
- Healthy problem
- Inferiority complex
- Depression

### **Effect of single parenting on children**

Roger and Pryor, (2007) opine that single parent level of education influences their children's socialization. Educated parents are more likely to have a conducive home than their uneducated counterparts. While Jackson, (2005) emphasizes that parents are expected to fulfil the need of their children, the parent tends to serve as kinds of buffer or neutralizer in their influences in the home. Marton (2005) ascertain that children from single parents families on several measures of well-being. Children from single parents' families are six times as likely to be poor; they are also likely to stay poor longer. Haralembos, (2008) posited that many children do not bounce back after divorce or marriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or steps parental families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life, love and work that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from destructed families have a harder time achieving intimacy in all relationships forming a stable marriage, or even building a steady job (David, 2009).

### **Negative Effect of Single Parenting**

The following are perceived Negative Effect of Single Parenting

- Poor financial status is commonly experienced by families.
- Parents experience psychological instability.
- Single parents tend to discard taking care of themselves.
- Children perform, poorly at school.
- Children exhibit risky behaviours.

## **Conclusion**

Single parenting /parenthood as ascertained in the study reveals that causes of single parenting are attached to the fact that divorce lacks social care and the death of a partner. Thus this could lead to an effect on the children which can result in poverty, lack of proper care, financial stress, and emotional stress. In this context, children are adversely affected by the single parenthood system of raising children in Nigeria. Therefore; single parenting is a scourge in the mood of raising children in the family.

## **Recommendations**

1. Parents or couples should exhibit true love and sincerity before going into a full relationship or marriage.
2. Government should create more jobs to ease the lack of jobs among the citizenry in the country so as not to affect children's upbringing in the family.
3. Religions leaders should admonish the couples with words of God to inculcate morals and proper behaviour to inculcate peace and harmony in society.
4. Government should extend scholarship opportunities to the children of single parenthood to have a sound and good education .this will in turn not make them constitute a nuisance in society.
5. The family of the single parents should render full financial support to provide succor for the children.

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