BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION  
FACULTY OF SCIENCE  
GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT  

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN LIVING WITH SINGLE PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN CHIEDZA-KAROI URBAN A CASE OF TAFARA PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHIEDZA KAROI SECONDARY SCHOOL.  

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A DISERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FUFLIMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE EDUCATION HONOURS DEGREE IN GEOGRAPHY.  

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read this project and have approved it’s submission for marking and that it conforms to the department requirements.

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SUPERVISOR                     DATE

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CO-SUPERVISOR                  DATE
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my wife Eunice and my children Nicole and Davis for the moral and emotional support.
DECLARATION FORM

I, Rex Janga declare that this project herein my own has not been copied or lifted from any source without acknowledgement.

Signed………………………………… Date …………………………………
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges faced by children living with single parents or guardians in Chiedza-Karoi Urban, Hurungwe District in Mashonaland West Province. The researcher was prompted to carry out the research after observing that children from single parent or guardian homes face social, economic and educational challenges. Problems which children from single parent or guardian homes encounter include social, economic and educational challenges. The study sought to assess the effects of single or guardian homes on primary and secondary school children on social, economic and educational challenges they face and how they can be reduced. The target population comprises 74 persons. For data collection questionnaires and interviews were used. The study reveals that children from single parent homes lacked parental love, support and security. The major findings of the study were poor educational performance, financial instability, poverty, behavioral problems, truancy and bullying. Major recommendations were that the ministry of primary and sec education should introduce the cost of school counselors at schools to help disadvantaged children and help them to develop a positive self-image. Teachers and schools should seriously take the aspect of social life and give support systems like psychological services at school to help the school children. Finally one can conclude that children living with single parents or guardians, are at risk and need everyone’s help so as to live to their full potential. The study recommends that the government through its responsible ministries and organizations should introduce locally based support groups to help provide important source of support for the single parents or guardians and introduce projects which help them with life skills for self-reliance.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Background to the study

Due to high death rates and economic challenges being faced by people in Southern Africa particularly Zimbabweans, a lot of children have lost their parents and they are being cared for by single parents or guardians. Some are being left in the care of a single parent or guardian while the other parent leaves for employment purposes in the diaspora. In the event that one parent crosses border to look for work (greener pastures) or a parent dies the children are left in the care of one parent or guardian. Sometimes the guardian may encounter some challenges in raising the children and the siblings also face a lot of difficulties as they grow.

The challenges faced by the remaining parent or guardian are providing for the children’s daily needs, economic, educational and social needs. The children may lack enough attention of the parent or guardian since he/she may be pre-occupied with other duties that are somehow important for the day to day needs of the children. The children might also fail to respect the guardian leading to problem within the family system. The needs for education of the children may be compromised since they may be financial constraints faced by the parent or guardian.

The children who are behind by the parent or guardian are the most affected by the issue of single parenting. The community may also be affected since the children’s full potential may not be realized and these children would not plough back their best to the society. More people still move outside the country in search of greener pastures in order to support their families leaving more children under the care of one parent or guardian. These children left under the care of single parents/guardians face challenges ranging from teen pregnancy, immorality, school drop outs and antisocial behaviour such as smoking dagga, thieving and drinking alcohol whilst under age and prostitution.

To solve the problems encountered by children living with single parent can be challenge since everyone must be involved. The government other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and the traditional leaders need to be involved. The government has a challenge of improving the economic situation in the country.
employment creation adequate social services and stabilizing the political situation in the country. In the previous years some of the people who left the country, some were political activities and as long as they fear for their lives they may not come back home to be with their families. Some left because they were not employed hence job creation will attract some people who are not gainfully and formally employed to return home and such for employment and live with their families. Other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations may also help by providing livelihood services to guardians and young adults to sustain their families.

It is of paramount importance to solve this problem because besides deaths of parents, the movement by either parents or guardian disturbs the family unity and bonding. Both parents have good chances of raising their children. The children will learn how good to live together as a family they enjoy the love of both parents and learn to respect both parents. Anti-social behaviors may be solved when both parents are there because children learn to respect and fear both parents compared to single parents, the children may not fear the mother and can go wild. Both parents will together to provide for the family and avoid risk of child abuse if the child is left in the care of a relative.

Although it is quite difficult for an individual to handle this problem and provide a solution with this information from the research one can sensitize the community or society on challenges being faced by children raised by lone parents or guardians. Some may need the call and consider the improved family unity. This can also concertize the young adults to consider living as a family and avoid all things that lead to single parenting.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Many children in Hurungwe / Karoi District are being raised by single parents or guardians and they face a lot of social, economic, emotional and educational challenges that affect them so that the government and other organizations will assist them to overcome these challenges.
1.2 **Significance of the study**

The study will help the researcher to understand the social, emotional and educational challenges encountered by children living under the care of a single parent or guardian. The study also helped or assisted the children in the care of single parents or guardians to see the problem they face and work hard to avoid inappropriate behaviors. Single mothers, fathers, parents and guardians having seen the challenges their children face, may work hard to get the best out of their children and give them the best also.

The researcher will also challenge some stakeholders in the society and educators to pay attention to the plight of children living with single parents. Educators can provide support services such as guidance and counseling to the children living with love parents and shape their future. The school administrators can also work with non-governmental organizations to assist and ease problems faced by the children can benefit from organizations in various ways which include school levies and fees, bursaries, scholarship, stationery and uniforms. Some schools with viable projects on helping the orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) may get grants from donors’ organizations which will be helping these children.

1.3 **Aim**  
To investigate the challenges faced by the children living with single parents or guardians in Chiedza Karoi

1.4 **Objectives**
- To find out the causes of single parenting or guardianship.
- To find out attitudes and feelings of single parents and guardians towards the issue of raising children alone.
- To find out the challenges single parents or guardians face as they raise their children.
- To examine and assess the challenges faced by children living with single parents or guardians in their life.
- To examine the feeling and attitudes of children living with single parents or guardian.
- To assess problems teachers encounter from children living with single parents or guardians.
To examine and assess disciplinary problems exhibited by children living with one parent
or guardian.

To examine and assess the educational challenges faced by children living with one parent
or guardian as the children go through the schooling process.

To find out the projects heads of schools can undertake or engage in order to help orphans
and vulnerable children.

1.5 Research Questions
1. What are the causes of single parents homes?
2. What are the challenges you face raising your children and dependable alone?
3. Which problems are being faced by children living with single parents which affected
their daily life?
4. Which educational challenges do the children living with one parent encounter? What
elements affect their learning?

1.6 Assumptions
People are not well versed with effects of single parenting and believe anyone can raise
children. Children raised by one parent or guardian go through traumatic experience.
Children living in single parent or guardian homes may fail to perform in school as
compared to children from two parent homes.

Single parents or guardians have little time with their children compared to two parent
homes. Teachers have more problems with children from single homes as compared to
children with both parents. Socially and morally children from single parent homes are
likely to have less moral values than do children from two parent homes.

1.7 Limitations of the study
The nature of the study requires working with a number of children, teachers and parents
in the area in order to come up with the challenges faced by children living with single
parents or guardians. The cost for typing research instruments, typing and production of
the whole project at the same time with college fees, may also strain the researcher. Since
the researcher is full time employee there is need to balance work and research through
proper time scheduling. Interaction with parents and pupils is needed to a greater extent
and some participants may not be willing to give right and relevant information because of fear of stigmatization or because they are shy. The findings of this study applies to Chiedza in Hurungwe District, Karoi urban, however the findings of this study may assist parents, teachers, government and non-governmental organizations to work together to assist the affected children realize their full potential.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study will focus on the social, emotional and educational challenges faced by the children living with single parents or guardians. In Hurungwe District participants are taken from Tafara Primary School and Chiedza Karoi Secondary School. Parents and teachers from these schools will also be involved to participate in this study.

1.9 Definitions of terms

**Single parent** – is a parent living alone with the children in the absence of his/her spouse

**Single guardian** – is a person who in his or her own capacity taking care of his or her own children or relatives children alone in the absence of his/her spouse for example a grandmother, grandfather, uncle and or sibling

**Educational challenges** - are strains that affected the child’s learning in school for example school levies, fees, stationery, these challenges may affect the child pass rate or may affected the child from completing the school.

**Lone parent** – a parent raising his/her children alone, can also be used interchangeable with single parent.

**Social challenges** – challenges that cause the child’s social or moral behaviors considered bad by the society for example lacking of grooming.
Counselling - guiding an individual to make good decisions in life through discussions, teaching and awareness campaigns.

Orphan – a child who has lost his/her parents due to death however some may be considered orphans because their parents deserted them

Vulnerable children – children who are living at risk of failing to live their lives to their full potential some may also be at risk of being abused.

1.10 Summary
In this introductory chapter, the background of the problem was highlighted. The statement of the problem, significance of the study, research objectives and questions, the limitations and delimitations of the study are spelt out. The definitions of terms, abbreviations and acronyms are also highlighted in this chapter.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction
The family institution considered to be the cornerstone of social and economic success has been undergoing significant changes in recent times. The nuclear family, extended family and single parent homes are the type of families in the society today as well as child headed families. This chapter seeks to give a review of related literature to the social, economic, emotional and educational challenges faced by children living with single parents or guardians.

2.1 Single parents/guardians households
Michael and Graham (1999) states that single parents are adults living with their children under the age of eighteen in a family unity that does not define the term lone parent as a male or female person parenting alone, parents separated or divorced from their partners, widows or widowers. Crompton (1999) also said that lone parents may also be temporarily parenting alone due to the incarceration, hospitalization or other short term absence of spouse or partner. Tarsoni et al (2000) highlighted the following categories of single parents, separated, divorced, single man or woman who have chosen motherhood or fatherhood, unwed teenage mothers of fathers. Crompton (1999) also said that single parenting can also occur because of spouse being away from home for a long time because of illness, hospitalization, imprisonment and employment.

2.2 Prevalence of single parenting world wide
Rampell (2010) states that single parenthood has been common historically due to parental mortality rate. Historically estimates indicates that in French, English or Spanish villages in the 17th and 18th centuries our third of children lost one of their parents during childhood, in 19th century Milan about half of all children lost at least one parent by age 20. In the 19th century china almost one third of boys had lost one parent or both by age of 15. Divorce was generally rare historically although this depends on culture and era. Since then medical advance and improvement in sanitation and maternal care have
significantly reduced mortality of people in reproductive age. Death of a parent is a much less common cause of single parenting. Divorce, accidental pregnancies and single parent by choice are now the leading reasons for the rising number of single parents. According to organization for economic co-operation and development (O.E.C.D) in 2011 posits that 15 % of children live in single parent households worldwide and woman headed approximately 85 % of these households. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of single parents are employed. Bayden (1993) said that throughout the world HIV and AIDS has imaged family life. For example when an income earner becomes ill and eventually dies, a heavy economic burden is placed on the family. This means the financial resources are completely eroded so the surviving spouse is affected. UNICEF (2003) revealed that due to HIV and AIDS life expectancy is expected to decrease to thirty – four years or lower. This statistics goes a long way in explaining the prevalence of single parenthood in most countries in the world including Zimbabwe. HIV and AIDS has negatively affected or impacted on the economy of the families, worse off still surviving single parents. English speaking countries have the highest proportion of single parent households (above 20 %) in the world. The countries with the highest percentages of single parent are United States of America 25, 8 %; Ireland 24, 3 %; New Zealand 23, 7 %; Canada 22, 1% and United Kingdom 21, 5 %.

According to the 2012 census single parenting has more than tripled as a share of American households. Twenty – six percent of children under 18 live in single parent / guardian households in the U.S, and women has approximately 84 % of these families.22 % of American single parent households are white, 57 % are African American and 33 % are Hispanic. Debell 92008) states that 19, 3 % of all children in Canada live with single mothers. UNICEF (2000) states that poverty in single parent households is prevalent in 72 % of households headed by women compared to 58, 2 % households headed by men. This situation may seriously undermine the country’s ability to ensure across to adequate basic services that include education and health which are vital to a child’s development. Manning (2015) highlighted that countries in Asia and the Middle East are the least likely to have children raised in single parent household. On the other hand the areas of the world that are most likely to have non marital child bearing are Latin America, South Africa and Sweden. The following areas have an extremely high number of children living
in single parent / guardian homes which includes Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America and Ocena. It has also been shown that children living in south Africa are the very most likely to live with a single parent by 2020.

2.2.1 Common problems faced by children from single parents households

Annie (2001) postulates that among many challenges facing the millions of single parents are poverty, limited access to health insurance, difficulty affording child care and lack of financial support from the absent parent. Despite the fact that 75% of single mothers are employed, the PRB 2011 reports 70% of children living with single mothers are considered poor or low income. The parent’s age, educational level and ability to secure higher paying jobs all impact the bottom line. In the US, more than half of low income mothers are aged 34 and 61% lack a college education. Cherlin and Fursterberg (1983) ascertain that 57 percent of divorced women receive no support from the estranged husbands. This simply means that children from such families are likely to experience financial problems needed in their day to day life such as food, educational needs, clothing and medication. Cherlin and Fusterberg (1983) stressed that children from split families react to splitting with shock, depression, anger, denial and low self-esteem and sometimes blame themselves for the parents breaking up. The child lacks motivation to learn and his/her socialization with peers is affected.

Maris, (1998) ascertain that divorce results in household maintenance and economic problems, decreased social participation and decreased well-being. He goes on to say that due to divorce, the children’s entire world is shaken. He further pointed that children from divorced families display depressive behavior.

Karst (2000) revealed that single parent families face special challenges and one of these is economic. Dawes (2003) posits that in 2002 twice as many single parents families earned less than $30 000 per year compared to two parent present in the US. Balcome (1988) found out that children living with single fathers in the world were the least likely of all children to have health insurance cover and children growing up in single parent families are disadvantaged in other ways when compared to a two biological parent families, not just parenting style. The children are at risk of the following lower level of education achievements; drop out of school, become teen parents, conflict with parents and less supervised by adults.
Bampass and Rundfuss, (1992) postulated that by age sixteen, half of white children and two thirds of black children would have experienced disrupted families. Disrupted families hardly bring peace to their children. Better and Homes (1985) states that divorce is more appropriate if there is no child in the marriage. This implies that if children are raised by a single parent they tend to suffer and face a lot of problems which may affect their performance at school. Single parents experience more household problems this impeding on social and educational performance of the children.

2.2.2 Single mothers worldwide

O’Neil (2000) asserts that a child living with and his or her father will receive less attention than a child living with both parents. Fathers influence their children’s short and long term development through several routes such as financial human capital as well as social capital. Amato and Keith (1991) found out that children who appear to be most vulnerable socially are those who experience multiple transitions in parenting arrangements throughout their childhood. For instance children who live continuously with both biological parents have higher levels of adjustments than those who do not.

Burns and Groves, (1997) highlighted that the co-parental relationship of and father provide working together, communicating, negotiating and compromising. Studies to O’Neil, (2000) indicates that a father can contribute independently to the mothers’ contributions in areas such as emotional, intelligence, self-esteem, competence and confidence. Better and Holmes (1985) asserts that concurring social development father absence, primarily because of divorce results in development of sex roles attitudes, promiscuity and interpersonal problems with romantic relationships. According to Sarah, (2003) found evidence suggesting poor ego development, low motivation and external locus of control among ten year olds from father absence homes. Boys raised in father absent homes have more difficulties forming peer relationships and long lasting heterosexual relationships as compared to boys raised by fathers. Rose, (2009) in support to this Daniels, (1986) posits that boys raised in father absent homes were much more likely to use drugs than boys from with both parents.
Hetherington et al (1999) said that girls raised in father absent homes have more promiscuous attitudes and they face difficulties in trying to form or maintain romantic relationships later on in life. Jareg and Jareg (1994) posit that the absence of a father figure has serious implications for a child of either sex; they say that for girls, their relationships with their father are of significance to their relationships as adults with men. For boys the father is the reinforcement of male identity and a teacher of skills which will be expected of them later on in life.

Balcome, (1998) postulated that many adults sons abandoned by their fathers have difficulty in developing and sustaining self-esteem, forming lasting emotional attachments, recognizing their feelings or being expressive with their adult partners and children. Balcome (1998) went on to say that younger children particularly boys in father absent homes have been described as more vulnerable with more aggressive behaviors since fathers act as role models to their children.

Children who are involved with caring fathers have better educational outcomes, Kruk. (2012) noted that a number of studies suggest that families which are involved in nurturing and playful with their infants have higher IQs as well as a better linguistic and cognitive capacities. The influence of a father’s involvement on academic achievement extends into adolescence and young adulthood. Children constantly report feeling abandoned with their fathers are not involved in their lives, struggling with their emotions and episodic bouts of self-loathing. Fatherless children has more difficulties with social adjustment and are more likely to report problems with friendship and manifest behavior problems, many develop a swaggering intimidating persona in an attempt to disguise their underlying fears, resentment, anxieties and unhappiness. US Census Bureau, about twenty four million children in America, one out of three live in biological father absent homes. Kruk, (2012) also says on truancy and poor academic are fatherless. Children from father absent homes are more likely to play truant from school, more likely to be excluded from school, more likely to leave school at the age of sixteen and less likely to attain academic and professional qualifications in adulthood. Daniels (1986) in her study of young American men discovered that the length of father absence from home was strongest prediction of future employment of young man.
According to Kruk (2012) children from fatherless homes are 85% likely to be involved in delinquency and youth crime, promiscuity as well as teen pregnancy. Fatherless children also are more likely to experience problems with sexual health including a great likelihood of having intercourse before the age of sixteen for going contraception during first intercourse becoming teenage parents and contracting sexually transmitted infections. Girls are said to manifest a hunger for males and in experiencing the emotional loss of their fathers egocentrically as a rejection of them become susceptible to exploitation by adult men fatherless children are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and abuse drugs in childhood and adulthood and 90% of runaway children on the street are from a fatherless home.

Debell (2008) contends that fatherless children report significantly more somatic health symptoms and illness such as acute and non-chronic pain, asthma, headaches and stomach aches. These fatherless children are constantly over presented on a wide range of mental health problems, particularly anxiety, depression and suicide. According to Ross (2009) in support to this statement she writes, 2.2% of girls and 1% of boys living with a lone parent killed himself or herself or ended up in hospital after an attempted suicide by the age of twenty-six compared to 0.8% of girls and 0.3% of boys living with both parents. Kruk, (2012) also alludes to this when he says, fatherless children are more likely to experience unemployment have low incomes, and remain on social assistance and experience homelessness. Children raised in a father absent home tend to enter partnership earlier, are likely to divorce or dissolve their cohabitation unions or are likely to have children outside marriage or outside any partnership. Girls are more at greater risk of becoming a single parent as a result of non-marital child bearing or divorce. This means that because these girls grew up in without a father figure in life may become sexually active early, get pregnant, rejected and become a single parent.

2.2.3 Single fathers worldwide
Single fathers do just as good a job of child rearing as single mothers and they experience some stress too. Debell (2008) contended that single father homes represent only, seven percent of the total single parent homes in the country. A child can suffer from mother absence due to maternal abandonment; this maternal abandonment leaves the child to deal with significant emotional, mental and psychological affects. Karst, (2000) says maternal abandonment occurs when a mother physically, emotionally or psychologically removes herself from the children. This is done by ending, ignoring her responsibilities to parent her children.

Bella online the child is fearful of developing bonds with other adults like teachers and guardians. The child believes that if he begins to love the new adult, that person will also leave. The child grieves for the lost relationship. Gerlach (2009) identifies the most common form of maternal abandonment as physical. This kind of abandonment is sudden and unexpected causing the children to feel shocks. The child experiences guilt over the loss of mother-child bond and believing that he or she did something wrong that the mother did want to be associated with him or her anymore.

Gerlach (2009) says the child who lost his or her mother experiences sadness and confusion when his/her friends talk about their mothers. As the child grows older he or she earns to explain to friends that his/her mother is not part of his or her life. Many girls who grow up in a single father home grow up quickly. Bella online posits that since mothers are typically the parents who take on the primary role of care giving and housework, it is usual for daughters to take on this role in single fathers household which often causes them to focus on school work and fun, friends and socializing. It sometimes leads to resentment and stress.

According to Crompton (2010) said that a child who lacks a mother feels anger. The anger of abandonment can lead to physical aggression leading to difficulty in school. Maris, (1999) alludes that children who are separated from their mother at a tender age are prone to hyperactivity. When a child does not have mother’s support he or she a likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Kim, (2004) says children from single parent or guardian homes because of the absence of another parent may be forced to
supplement food and finance in the home by looking for part time work. It is in this part time employment where they are likely to be abused and ill-treated.

Gerlach, (2009) on http://www.fotolia.com says if a child loses a mother the loss can damage his or her self-esteem, ability to relate with other people, overall failing of insecurity an inability to trust others. Motherless children have reported sexual abuse by fathers or step fathers or step brothers, after mothers have died, difficulties in maintaining relationships as well as debilitating post-partum depression http://www.nytimes.com (accesses/onviour). According to http://www.modernmothers.com (particle/child-behavior) when a mother is gone the child may pay the price. Basically children are raised by two living parents to care for and support them.

2.3 Single parenting in sub Saharan Africa

According to UNAIDS (2001) found out that seventeen percent of children in southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, south Africa) would have lost one parent by 2010.NAC (2006) highlighted that about three thousand people die per week as a result of HIV and AIDS and an estimated death for adults (15 – 49 years) about three hundred and forty six thousand three hundred and twenty two in 2005 in southern Africa thus leaving the case of one parent or guardian.

2.3.1 Prevalence of single parents or guardians in sub Saharan Africa

Child Trends Databank (2015) points out that in 1960 the proportion of children living in mother only families was eight percent, but by 1996 that proportion has tripled to 24 %. Since then, it has fluctuated between 22 and 24 percent and was at 23 percent in 2015. The share of children living in father only families has fluctuated between three and five percent in 2015 in sub Saharan Africa, child trends databank (2015) Blum et al (1985) asserts that children raised by single parents are likely to live below the poverty datum line than children living with both parents. They add that rural girls and older boys still have slight but significant effects of single parenting on their school work. According to Cherline and Fustenberg (1983) reveals that single parenting may
cause deficits in children’s cognitive, emotional and behavioral developments with these deficits, adjustments and academic achievements is likely to be affected. March, (1990) found out that researchers have hypothesized single parenting, might provide social deficits in children’s adjustments and achievements due to lack of additional parent.

According to Schreiner (2010) points out that children who lack a mother feel anger. This anger and feeling of abandonment can lead to physical aggression or mood swings leading to difficult in school or when interacting with peers. When a mother is out of the picture the child doesn’t have two sets of monitoring his/her behavior making it easy for him or her to get away with negative behaviors. Additionally the child may allow his or her feelings of anger to overcome the absence of a mother to lead him or her to act out and rebel against the remaining parent causing him/her to engage in delinquent behavior.

According to Blackwell, (2010) most children in sub Saharan Africa who live with just one parent regardless of race or Hispanic origin live with their mothers. This is the case for nearly half of all black children and more than one quarter of Hispanic children, among white and Asian children smaller proportions live with their mothers only. According to UNISA (2012), highlighted that over a third of single parent families with children are poor and are likely to suffer from emotional and behavioral problems and can be physically abused and they may be forced to supplement food and finances in the homes.

Clark and Hamplova (2013) argues that sub Saharan Africa is experiencing steady growth in and out of wedlock motherhood, marital instability and widowhood exacerbated by wars and HIV and AIDS pandemic, which has resulted in a large number of single parent families in the region. For instance in Cameroon the population of married women who were separated or divorced and had absent spouses increased from 78 060 in 1976 to 129 000 in 2005 that is 65 % and widows increased from 299 690 to 475 930 (58%) within the same period. In Nigeria close to 1 million women aged 15 – 85 years old were either divorced or separated women in 2006 and widowed 1,7 million. In DRC, divorce and separation increased by more than 50 % in all age groups of women aged 15 – 49 years between 1984 and 2007. The proliferation of single
parent families indicates that a number of children in sub Saharan Africa are born and raised in single parent families, UNESA (2012).

The 2013 World Health Organization (WHO) states that the most impacts of HIV epidemic is the loss of all generations of people in communities hit by the epidemic. In this regard a number of single parents are left with the loss of other parents and relatives. It is estimated that 17, 8 million children under the age of 18 years have been orphaned by HIV and AIDS in the world and this will rise to 25 million by 2015. Around 15, 1 million or 85% of these children live in sub Saharan Africa. In countries which are badly affected by the epidemic a large percentage of all orphaned children for example Zimbabwe 74 % and South Africa 63% are orphaned due to HIV and AIDS.

Manning (2015) outlined that children from single parent homes at times found it difficult to get into sacraments of initiation in catholic churches, not until they are of mature age and can participate on their own. Societies in sub Saharan Africa also sees single mothers as “failures who would not have their marriages work or who did not manage to get married at all,” yet we have success stories of eminent men around the world who have been raised by single mothers such as the President of the United States, Barrack Obama and the former president of the United States of America, Bill Clinton.

2.3.2 Common problems faced by children living with single parents in the region.

In the 21st century, single parents faced or encountered enormous challenges of different forms in raising the children in sub Saharan Africa. In catholic churches, single parents lack support from the church structures through providing counseling and other forms of support, their children being isolated by other children. According to international business time US August 19, 2016, quotes about 14 million mothers and fathers without partners on National Single Parent day 2016 and alludes that one of the many consequences of being a child of a single parent is that the child is more likely to be born into poverty and remain there. Today 1 in 4 Children under the age of 18, a total of about 17.4 million are being raised without a father and nearly half (45%) live below poverty datum line.
Haralambus and Holborn (1995) contended that cognitive needs have to do with the enrichment of our own brains. At this level a human being is driven by the need to explore the world around and discover new facts and knowledge adding on to what is already known. Sometimes children from single parent / guardian homes lack peace of mind and soundness, they lack parental support. When children from single parent or guardian homes suffer from depression, at times they do not perceive things well as they begin to have cognitive questions.

Collin (1991) cited by Chant (1997) alludes to this when he says children may want to preserve distorted and idealized memories of the deceased parent. Counseling intervention will seek to normalize the situation and help the children to move forward in life. If these children failed to get help, some problems will be carried on into adulthood and the chain will continue.

Haralambus and Holborn (1995) posit that priority socialization by both parents forms the basis of higher achievement in education systems. They went on to point out that unless parent pays attention to the needs of the children they can be affected in school work, children’s performance is retarded. Socialization takes place during the early years of adulthood which takes place within home, hence this suggest that single parenting has a diverse effect on the academic performance of the child.

2.4 Single parenting in Zimbabwe

They are many routes which lead to single parenting. Zimbabwe as a country is not left out in single parenting and it is also faced with challenges of single parenting. Since poverty and economic impact take their toll on people, the number of divorce or desertions increases. According to the children Consortium Report (2000) postulated that a number of children are living with one parent because of divorce and desertion. The aids pandemic creates a lot of suffering in Zimbabwe.

2.4.1 Common problems faced by children living with single parents or guardians in Zimbabwe
Poverty trends as indicated by UNICEF (2002) had dramatic implications for a child’s survival and development as the country’s ability to provide health and education. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in Matarutse and Mwatengahama (2001) food and shelter are the basic needs. When those basics are not met, then it will be difficult to self-actualize or realize one’s potential. When a child fails to get money, uniforms and stationery needed at school for learning progress, the school authorities may send the child home to get them hence this alone is a great embarrassment to the child and leads to low self-esteem in children.

Okin (2009) posits that a family is an important school of moral learning, but when the family is unstable then that is when children suffer from depression then that is when children stand to encounter challenges. When parents divorce, the children suffer from depression and confusion. Children will be having too much on their minds; they will not be able to balance the two that is the instability of the family and academic achievement. Children living with single parents have limited or no contact at all with all relatives and even family members who are staying in the same town. Ross (2009) points out that when children lose their father they may also lose support that comes from his side of the family and his friends’ financial support. This might be brought up by conflicts that occur when inheritance or divorce settlements are done. At times when divorce or death occurs there is a lot of fighting that occurs which leaves children bitter with no desire to have any contact with the relatives, (Freshman, 2001).

The changes in the family like divorce, separation, and death and diaspora issue disturb the normal family and cause the children to have academic challenges. Blum et al (1988) postulates that neglect represents significant risk factors for long term intellectual and academic outcomes. These negative effects on childhood into adulthood, across social classes. According to a study by the US National Association of Elementary School Principals, 30% of two parent primary school pupils were considered high achievers as compared to 17% of single parent pupils (Ross, 2009). The study also says children from single parent homes were 3.3 times more likely to report problems with academic work, scores poorly on test of reading, mathematics, and thinking skills and a 50% more likely to report difficulties with teachers.

Social problems affect children living with single parents or guardians academically; Rukuni (2000) points out that children from such background tend to display
behavioral problems on the form of hyperactivity, poor concentration and short attention span. That is if a normal family setting is disturbed, it would result in children performing poorly at school. This can be seen through poor participation in class.

Pong et al (2003) as cited by Barajas (2011) concluded that the intellectual and social development of males may be seen as a move adversely affected by living in a single parent home than that of girls from similar circumstances. According to Van Laarand Sidamine (2001) used social dominance to theory explains poor academic performance of single performance of single parent children. They suggest that single parent homes have low social status and therefore pose fewer economic resources and face greater personal institutional discrimination compared to those from two parent homes. He went on to say that the tendency of members of low status group to confirm negative stereotypes. Similar ideas were presented by pong et al (2003) regarding teacher evaluation and tendency of educators to reward students for conforming to expectations. They suggest that when students who are expected to perform poorly and actually perform well, they receive negative attention from their teachers and are presented to lower their academic performance.

Hetherington et al (1983) had a study on achievement gaps between children in single parent homes versus children in two parent homes across chosen countries. They found out that the United States of America had the largest group between the academic performances of children from single parent homes versus two parent homes. This shows that academic performance of children is affected by the type of home one is coming from.

Burnes and Groves (1997) concluded that children who grow up in a household with only one parent are worse off an average than children who grow up in households with both biological parents, regardless of the parents’ race or educational background. Maclanahan and Sandefur (1994) examined differences of effects of achievement by length of parent absence. They found out that negative effects of living in a single parent family increase with the total time spent in a single parent home and the effects are greater for boys than girls.
Maclanahan and Sandefur (1994) say larger differences found between single parented children and children with both parents households is for drop out behavior. They say this might be a result of lack of discipline as the child is looked after by one parent who might not have enough time with the children. This simply suggest that some factors in relation to single parenting cause the drop out discipline and parent control, possibly leading to lower academic achievement. Children leaving with single parents are not affected emotionally and psychologically but their intellectual capacity is so challenged.

Kim (2004) reported that while family income is important, other factors have a greater influence on academic performance. They suggested that parental expectations, family size and the stronger predictions of future academic success than income. This means that in single parent homes the quality of parent child relationship is reduced since input from the other parent is absent.

Not only do children from single parent homes perform badly in school than their counterparts in two parent homes but may drop out of the school system altogether. According to UNICEF (2002) some 58% of students participating in a survey of the circumstances of the orphans in Zimbabwe knew a fellow who have dropped out of the school because of family death. Absenteeism also affects children in single parent homes. The many household chores or responsibilities these children had to take up in order to realize their parents affected their school attendances.

2.5 Some solutions to challenges faced by single parent or guardian families

Lehman (2009) reveals that 85 % of single parents bear more financial burdens than do two parents’ households with dual incomes. Child support often helps relieve some of the stress of additional costs but is oftentimes not enough to cover the extra cost of raising the child alone or is simply unavailable. In situations where child support if unavailable single parents may benefit are relieved of a burden on raising children.
Schreiner (2010) highlighted that success in welfare to work strategies depend on the capacity and the willingness of local institutions and agencies to work towards a common agenda. Personal development courses provided locally by locally based support groups and institutions would be a valuable networking and social outlet for single parental and would boost general self-esteem.

Saalam, (2004) points out that there is need for the development of affordable locally based and diverse activities for young children that will act as mechanism to support children and increase their confidence. Locally based support groups would provide an important source of informal support for those parenting alone. Local service providers need to be more focused in addressing the educational training needs for those living in the rural areas and examine more creative ways to provide locally based courses in these areas. These locally based initiatives should offer courses and certification for participants.

Single parents should surround themselves with family and friends who will be able to help every step of the way though many local agencies can offer assistance financially or in kind (UNICEF, 2013). In Zimbabwe single parent face a lot of challenges since the social welfare is not assisting much when compared to other countries such as south Africa there are provisions of child care and housing facilities for single parents. In Zimbabwe the government funds which are meant to assist orphans and vulnerable children to get basic education no longer support the greater number of deserving children because of the harsh economic environment, the government cannot afford the increased number of children in need of support due to HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Families and friends, the immediate community and wider community and the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should work together to assist these children at risk through various initiatives from moral support as well as financial support. The school can be involved in counselling of children from single parent or guardian families and communities can start projects for single parents as well as the children, UNICEF, (2002)
2.6 **Theoretical framework or Conceptualization**

2.6.1 **Attachment theory**

Children find love and security from attachment with people who protect and care for them (Ainsworth et al, 1978). Children who have had strong attachment to a nurturing figure and see themselves separate from this nurturing figure and are ready for a group situation. Children who have not fully developed strong attachments to another person have a more difficult time adjusting to the complexity of the social system of the school children who experience the security of the loving parents and have strong attachments to their parents are better able to reach out to relate with others.

2.6.2 **Object relations theory**

According to Crompton (1999) says that Mahler’s object relations theory suggest that infants life merged psychologically with their mothers and that they separate and individuals during the first three years of life. How this takes place influence later adjustments. Raley (2005) argues that psychological theories emphasize the idea that personality is intrinsically social and that the important issues of personality concern how people relate to others. Many psychological theories focus on early life. According to object relations theory, humans have narcissistic needs that are satisfied by other people, represented as self-objects. If the child receives enough mirroring (positive attention) the sense of self develops appropriately. If there is too much mirroring the child will not be able to deal with frustrations if there is too little mirroring the development of self is stunted. Enough mirroring therefore can only be attained in the presence of both parents.

2.7 **Knowledge gap**

Most previous researches mainly focused on the effects of single parenting on children but did not include solutions to reducing the problems faced by single parents or guardians in raising the children and the research has not been carried out in Karoi. Many single parents or guardians bear more financial constraints than do two parent’s households with dual incomes. Child support often helps relieve some of the stress of
additional costs but often times is not enough to cover the extra costs of raising the children alone, (Lehman, 2009).

2.8 Summary
In this chapter review of related literature in the light of single parenting in the world, regionally and nationally are highlighted. Common problems faced by children from single parent households are also noted. The effects of father or mother absence are also looked into. The social, economic and educational challenges being faced by children from single parent families were brought and some probable solutions to the challenges faced by single parents families were also reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
The research is going to be carried out in order to find out the challenges faced by children living with single parents or guardians. In this chapter the research methodology will focus on the description of the methodology that is going to be used in the research study, instrument, data collection procedure and analysis procedure.
3.1 Research Design

According to Chiromo (2006) says a research design is the strategy, the plan and the structure of conducting a research. C. Willis (2010) postulates that a research design includes the aims of the research, the final selection of the appropriate methodology, the data collection techniques one intends to use the chosen methods of data analysis, interpretation and how this fit in literature review. Giddens (2001) says methodology in social science focuses on detailed research methods in data collection. The research design is concerned with the detailed research methods through which data is collected and general philosophies academic practices and conventions upon which the collection and analysis of data are based. The researcher is going to use the descriptive survey. Chiromo (2006) defined descriptive survey as seeing over and beyond the horizon. According to Borg and Gall (1989) a descriptive survey displays the manner in which individual units are compared and analyzed. A survey entails a limited number of cases with a view of drawing up conclusions about a population of the whole group under review. In this study the researcher seeks to find out the social and educational challenges faced by children living with single parents in Chikangwe Hurungwe District using the descriptive survey. The methods of collecting data in this survey will be the questionnaire, interviews and observations.
3.2 **Research Paradigm**

In this study the researcher is going to use both qualitative research paradigm and quantitative research paradigm. Quantitative research presents statistical results represented by numbers (Chiromo, 2006). It lends itself more to scientific enquiring and scientific methods. Burns and Groves (1997) state that quantitative research is a systematic process that describes relationships and examines cause and effects among variables.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) says qualitative research is that research which produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification for example research about people’s lives, stories, behavior, social movement or interactional relationships. Therefore qualitative research is a systematic, interactive and subjective approach used to describe life experience and give them meaning.

3.3 **Population**

According to Chiromo (2006) reveals that the target population is the aggregate of all elements defines prior to selecting a sample. Target population is very important in any research as it determines how sampling is going to be done. The target population in this study is 74 participants which includes children living under the care of single parent or guardian, single parents and teachers.

3.4 **Sample and sampling techniques**

According to William (2011) says a sample is a selected number of cases in a population. It is selected to be a representative of that population. Those included in the sample are chosen as cross section of the larger group. In this study it is not possible to use the whole population. Pupils are going to be selected from Chikangwe High School and Tafara Primary School and teachers as well and parents. Besides information from parents and teachers the researcher is also going to have desired observation of pupils as they come to
school daily, do their work, play with other pupils as well as any other behavior that might be necessary in this study.

The pupils are going to be grouped into three groups, infants (ECD-Grade 3); juniors (Grade 4 – 7) and the high school pupils. These groups will help the researcher with information on challenge children face as they grow.

In this research simple random sampling is going to be used. According to Chiromo (2006) says simple random sampling is one which each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected. It is independent because the selection of one individual does not affect in any way the selection of the other individual. Every sample which is chosen in a random manner is unbiased and representative of the population.

3.5 Research Instruments
Different sources and methods can be sued by researchers to gather information about a group or an individual. In this research, questionnaires for teachers, interviews schedule for parents and pupils and observation schedule for pupils are going to be used.

3.5.1 Questionnaire guide
Questionnaires contain a systematically compiled and organized series of questions that are sent to population samples. According to Haralambos and Holborn (1995) highlighted that a questionnaire is a document of pre-set questions sent to the responses about a given phenomenon. Questions were well prepared and constructed. Poorly constructed questionnaires suffer from errors with the result that the reaction to questionnaire is often unfavorable and response is slow, scarcity and frequently disappointing, providing a very flimsy basis for generalization.

3.5.2 Interviews
The researcher used face to face interview because this type of interview is in a good position to be able to judge the quality of responses. The interviewer could notice that the question was not understood and reassured the respondent to give full answers.
3.6 Pilot study

The researcher is going to have a pilot study. The instrument to be used in this research are questionnaires and interviews schedules for parents and pupils as well as teachers. The researcher interviewed four parents and five school pupils, and distributed three questionnaires to teachers of the pilot study. There was a parent’s meeting which made it easy for the researcher. Parents and pupils were called by the school deputy head ad they interviewed in the Deputy Head’s office. Four pupils interviewed were from grade 3 to 7, because the infants had already been dismissed when the researcher got to the school. One pupil from high school was interviewed. All single parents or guardians interviewed were females. The questionnaires were distributed to the head of secondary school, one to the TIC and to the HOD, they completed and repeated them after 30 minutes, the pilot study revealed that the questions were well prepared and constructed.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are very important when carrying out a research. Before we can begin any research method it is vital that we stick to an ethical code of practice. Chiromo (2006) stated that ethics refer to the correct rules of conduct necessary when carrying out a research. The researcher will outline to the participants what the research is all about and then ask their constant to take part. Their part in the research is going to be explained. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and guaranteed throughout. The information given by the respondents will be kept confidential thereby maintaining social relations in the community.

3.8 Data collection procedure

The researcher sought for permission to carry out the research from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education through the District Education Officer (DEO). The researcher also sought permission from heads of schools in which he intends to carry out the research. The class teachers were going to be asked first to produce the list of children from single parent or guardian homes. The researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data from pupils, teachers and parents. The researcher made appointments with parents for interviews.
From the total number from the class teachers the sample for the study was selected. Questionnaires to the teachers were sent and teachers were given two days to work on them. The two days were to avoid loss of questionnaires as a result of negligence or pressure of work teachers have a tendency of delaying acting on some information especially if it is not in line with their co-business. The researcher dispatched and collected the questionnaire in person to ensure that they get to where they were supposed to get to and to know who would have returned and not. All the teachers returned the questionnaires completed, hence the response rate was 100%.

Parents were visited in their homes for interviews; this helped the researcher to see also how pupils live and the different environments some of the pupils come from. The researcher explained in detail the purpose of visiting and interviewing the parents and encouraged the parents to be free and contribute and ask their questions related to the interviews. The response rate was good because the researcher made appointments with the parents or guardians through the school heads so that he found them at home and most interviews were done during the weekends when the parents were free. The response was 100% because the parents were expecting that they would get something from the interview. The interview was carried in Chiedza A and B density, Chikangwe High Density and Claudia High Density. The researcher took 3 – 5 minutes for each interview and the data was recorded on the interview which the researcher used on the appendix.

3.9 Data presentation and analysis procedure

Data was systematically presented for easy interpretation. Beklin (1992) data analysis can be defined as a process of systematically searching and arranging, interview transcripts. The researcher accumulated these so as to increase his or her enables the researcher to present what his/her would have acquired from the interviews. Data from the interviews was presented in tables, bar graphs, pie charts and histogram. Data was also analyzed in the discussions.
3.10 Summary

This chapter dealt with the research design which included population and sampling techniques. It also focused on research instruments which were the questionnaires, interviews and observations. Research paradigm, data presentation and analysis procedure we also looked at. The next chapter presents, interprets and analysis findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION.

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents data collected from teachers, parents and school pupils. Questionnaires to teachers, interviews were held with parents and school children as well. The
interpretation which follows is given in the light of research findings. Graphs, tables and pie charts were used to present the data.

4.1 Children living with single parents/guardians response.

The researcher aimed at interviewing a total of fifty-three children living with single parents/guardians out of a total population area and managed to interview all of them. This implies that the response rate was very positive as it was 100%. Therefore the research findings could be acceptable as it exceeded by far 67% that is recommended by (Saunders et al 2011)

The figure 4.1 below shows numbers of children living with single parents/guardians by gender that were interviewed. The analysis of table 4.1 shows that from a sample target of 53 participating children all of them responded. The reason for a 100% response rate was that, the data gathering involved interviews of school children, who have a natural tendency of respecting their teachers.

Fig 4.1: The statistics of children living with single parents/guardians interviewed.
From the above information 25 boys were interviewed 14 from the primary school and 11 from the secondary school. A total of 28 girls were interviewed: 19 girls from the primary school and 9 girls from the secondary school were interviewed bringing a total to 53 pupils. More girls than boys were interviewed, for boys; more boys from the primary school than the secondary school were interviewed because there are more boys from single parents/guardians homes at primary school than secondary school. More respondents were from the primary school than secondary school because there are more primary school pupils than secondary school pupils. 53% of the pupils interviewed were girls and 47% were boys from both primary and secondary schools. The researcher found out that 62% of the pupils interviewed were from primary school whereas 38% were from secondary school.

4.2 Single parents/guardians by gender
All the children living with single parent/guardian were asked to indicate who they stay with and the following data was obtained.

Fig 4.2 Statistics of single parents/guardians by gender

From the above data 44 out of 53 respondents which is equal to 83% have female guardians and 9 out of 53 respondents which is 17% have male guardians. From this information both sexes have a responsibility of looking after their dependents as well as women do although there are more women single parent/guardians than are single parent/guardian males. From these statistics the researcher found out that a huge number of single parents are females in the communities in Chiedza as compared to single fathers. The researcher also noted that every parent either male or female have the same responsibilities of caring for the people. Another contributing factor to the number of female guardians is that children from single parent homes are likely to be involved in delinquency and youth crime, promiscuity as well as teen pregnancy. The researcher also found out that these children are more to experience problems with sexual health including a great likelihood of having sexual intercourse before the age of 16, foregoing contraception during the first intercourse, becoming teen parents and contracting sexual transmitted diseases.

4.3 Single Parents/Guardians by Relationship

Table 4.1 statistics on single parents by relationship to the child.
Table 4.1 shows that 28% of the pupils living with single parents/guardians live with their biological mothers, 30% live with their grandmother, 9% live with their grandfathers, 6% live with their aunt and 4% live with their sisters. It also shows that 6% of the children live with their brothers, 4% live with their uncles, 2% live with their maids and 6% live with their step mother. Grandmothers generally look after children from both their sons and daughters may be this is why the greatest percentage is on grandmothers while grandfathers may not be comfortable raising children alone and the very few who are living with grandfathers. It is because the grandmother and both parents are deceased. Some children are also living with their siblings and among them some are living in child headed families or households. From the statistics given the researcher noted that there is a highest percentage of pupils staying with their mother as compared to other guardians because when the parents’ divorce the children are left with their mother and the law in our country supports them. About 28% of the children in the study stay with their grandmothers hence this was due to the fact that most grandparents keep their children’s daughters and sons in order for them to go and work in the diaspora. A smaller number of children that is 2% live with their maids due to employment of their parents who work in other towns and the nature of their work doesn’t allow to move with their children all the times.
4.4 Ages of children living with single parent/guardians interviewed.

Fig 4.3 Initial children living with single parent/guardians by their age group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5 yrs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 yrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 yrs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-16 yrs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 16 yrs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 53 
Source: Primary data

From the above, 4 children below 5 years living with one parent or guardian were interviewed; three were girls and 1 boy. From the 6-9 years age group 7 was interviewed, 3 were boys and 4 were girls, 10 children from the 10-12 years old age group were interviewed. Also 12 children from 13-16 years old age group 20 were interviewed. The sexes balance from 13-16 years old age group. From the above diagram 7.5% of the children interviewed were below the age of five years, 38% of the pupils were over 16% and they were from high school. Few pupils below the age of 5 years were available during the day the researcher interviewed the pupils and some of the pupils feared to be interviewed. The researcher also found out that they were more girls than boys in each age group interviewed.

4.5 Other Parent/Guardians whereabouts

Fig 4.4 Statistics of other parent/guardian whereabouts from the respondent mentioned
n = 53  
Source : Primary Data

From the above graph 19% of the respondents said one parent or guardian is dead while 32% their parents/ guardians are either separated or divorced, 38% of the respondents’ other parent are away on employment, 5% of those children interviewed do not know where the other parent/ guardian is away because of illness had to leave in order to attend to. One of the causes of single parent homes is imprisonment which has 2% of the respondents. The researcher found out that a lower number of the parents were in prison, that’s about 2%, leaving the children under the custody of the wife. Who later deserted the child leaving him in the custody of the grandmother. He also noted that most parents are leaving children under the care of one parent, maid, grandparent due to employment since the 2008 economic era when most parents left to then neighboring countries which include South Africa, Botswana, Zambia in search of greener pastures. From the statistics, the researcher also noted that some parents died due to HIV pandemic, car accidents and some from other diseases. Some of the parents just disappeared during the 2008 economic hardships and their whereabouts are unknown.

4.6 Other Parent/ Guardian Whereabouts (Employment)

Figure 4.5 Employment whereabouts of other parent/ guardian from the respondent initial.
Information from the above fig 4.5 shows that 48% of the respondents’ other parent/guardian are employed in South Africa, 10% of the respondents are in Harare, 7% are in Botswana, 10% is Zambia, 11% is Chinhoyi, and 2% is in Bulawayo. The greatest of the respondents are in South Africa may be this is due to lack of employment in the country and the availability of illegal transporters who smuggle people into South Africa even without proper documents. From the statistics shown above the researcher noted that most of the parents went to South Africa due to economic hardships as compared to other countries surrounding us. The researcher also found out that there was also a huge number of illegal transporters smuggling people into south Africa. He also noted that there was human trafficking into these neighboring countries especially south Africa. From the date it showed that very few people were working in Bulawayo as compared to the rest of other places. 11% of people were in Chirundu because it is closer to Karoi and those people who work there have easy access to Zambia when they want to do so. The study also found out that there are few pull factors in countries such as Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique as compared to South Africa.

4.7 Single Parent / guardian responsible for the payment of fees / levies
Table 4.2: Title statistics of the people/organization responsible for the paying of fees/levies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person/organization paying the fees/levies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.E.A.M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMFED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 53  
source: Primary data

The above table shows that 40% of the interviewed children said their mothers pay their fees/levies, 30% are fathers, 11% are grandmothers, 17% are from B.E.A.M while 2% are from CAMFED. It has been noted that single parent/guardians struggle to pay the fees/levy whilst the organizations provide little or no assistance at all. From the above statistics 10 pupils out of 53 which is about 19% of the pupils get assistance by either BEAM or CAMFED to pay their levies and other school necessities. This showed that the government failed to assist all those who are in need. From these statistics the researcher found out that more children in single parent families are not being assisted to pay their levies. The researcher also found out that counseling is also needed to help children living with single parents or guardians identify themselves and build a self-positive image. In schools guidance and counseling should not be traditionally one on helping students to choose A level subjects and careers but to help mould student overcome personal challenges of life. Guidance and counseling should not be a simple club like the GEM-BEM (Girl Child Empowerment Movement – Boy Child Empowerment Movement) in the primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe but should focus on psychological motivation of affected students.

4.8 Students who get assistance with Homework.

Fig 4.6: Respondents assisted in their homework from single parent/guardian homes
Fifty seven percent said their single parent/guardian do not help them with their homework. One of the reasons was that their parents spent most of their time looking for money to make ends meet hence lack of supervision. The study revealed that 47% of the single parent / guardian homes get assistance with their homework. Woodkowski and Jaynes (1990) suggested that homework helped children to learn and that parents could sometimes help. They went on to say that the teacher could ask the parent / guardian to support, get involved and cooperate with the child. The study found out that if the children living with single parent or guardian are not assisted, they would perform poorly at school.

The impacts of academic challenges faced by school children from single parent / guardian homes are quite negative. Lack of assistance with homework will lead to educational challenges. The study found out that 57% lack parental assistance with homework and 43% get parental assistance. In this research it was noted that homework did a lot of reinforcing what the children have learnt, when homework is not done properly will not be motivated to learn. Proper assistance is needed from parents in order to motivate and encourage the children. The divorce of separation may leave one with economically disadvantaged parent or guardian staying with the children. This will lead to the child being transferred to a school where the parent can afford. That change alone can contribute to poor performance of the child in school related work. Emotional disturbances cause other academic problems like the child not being able to grasp concepts and cannot follow instructions.

4.9 school attendance
The fig 4.7 shows that 54% of children from single parent/guardian are often absent from school and 46%, came to school regularly. It shows that some of these children miss some lessons due to absenteeism. Some are absent because of illness. One respondent who stays with his stepmother is sometimes asked to look after the siblings while the stepmother is away and this usually happens on school days. When children do not attend school regularly they will lag behind and it will be difficult for them to catch up. They will lose parental guidance and socialization attendance and appropriate value system. From the research the researcher found out that reaching mathematics and critical thinking are more likely to be poor in children from single parents or guardian families. Problems with teachers tend to increase as do difficulties with academic work, children from single parents or guardian are also most likely to be truant from school and stop attending completely at the age of 16 than the children with 2 parents. The researcher also noted that single parents or guardians do not have enough time with their children; they do not have time to monitor their children’s work, monitor who they play with and his or her influences or visit school teachers to check on their children’s performance at school.

4.10 Problems faced by children living with single parents or guardians

Table 4.3 statistics showing problems faced by respondents living with single parent/guardian interviewed.
Table 4.2 statistics showing problems faced by respondents living with single parent/guardians interviewed.

The table above shows statistics of problems faced by children living in a single parent/guardian homes. From the children interviewed 38% lack financial stability, 32% face lack of love, 17% are maltreated and 13% face child abuse. Forms of abuse cited include emotional and physical abuse by relatives especially step parents. Some single parents/guardians interviewed also confirmed that some children are being maltreated. One guardian however mentioned that she sometimes does not give her late sister’s daughter food as a way of punishment. Children lack parental love as most of the time, the parent/guardian is busy looking for ways to bring income into the household.

The assumption that children living with single parents go through traumatic and emotional experiences was confirmed. The researcher’s findings noted that 90% of the children in single parent or guardian homes suffer from traumatic and emotional problems than children raised in two parent homes. The absence of the parent means, emotional as well as traumatic damage. This also causes children to experience grief and sorrow, the response that can cause long lasting effects of their development (UNICEF, 2003). One of the contributing factors might be that single parents spend less time with their children due to stress of work and rearing children single handedly. Children may therefore feel neglected and turn to illegal activities in the absence of both parents because of the fact that children from single parents or guardians live below poverty datum line, their health is affected in that they spend most time stressing on how to improve their life. These children suffer from stigma from other children who came from two parent families.

Financial instability was sighted as another problem affecting children living with one parent or guardian. Children living with single parents may have more difficulties than those in intact
families due to less income coming into the household. The custodial parents are generally mothers that generate less income than two parent households do even in families where the other parent has left for employment search in Botswana, South Africa or elsewhere, life has not been easy there, some are struggling to support their children back home. It is advisable that people must come back home and settle with their families and look for opportunities and look for survival.

The study revealed that single parent or guardian face financial challenges, about 70% of the interviewed parents could not meet demands of their children, the government should have a sound social system like in other countries where single parents get government assistance on housing, food and child welfare, the government should introduce unemployment benefits.

4.11 How children feel living with one parent / guardian.

The researcher found out that 99% showed that they are emotionally hurt by the absence of the other parent or guardian because they do not often see them. One child said she is comfortable staying with one parent because the separation of her parents ended with incidents of violence and she hates her father for beating up her mother during the altercation. Although they feel the absence of their fathers, 70% of the pupils said they appreciate staying with the mother because the fathers tend to be aggressive as compared to mothers. The researcher noted that girls prefer staying with their mother since they relate in many ways such as explaining and guiding them in female issues.

4.12 Single parent / guardian by age

From the interviewed parents / guardians the following age groups were cited.

Fig 4.8 single parent/ guardians interviewed by age
From the above pie chart 3 parents aged below 22 years were interviewed, 3 parents/guardians aged 23–30 years age group, 3 from the 31-40 years age group and 4 parents from over forty years age group were also interviewed. From the interviews the researcher discovered some ladies become single parents at a very young age. Two of them indicated that they become mothers at seventeen whilst they were still at school. They both grew up in the care of their grandmothers while both parents had gone to South Africa in search of employment. They got pregnancies while at school, unfortunately the men responsible disowned the pregnancies. From the above information 31% of the single parents were over 40 years and they have more than three dependants, this was caused by having more than one husband which she stayed with after the first relationships failed before she became a single parent or guardian.
4.13 single parent / guardians by gender

Fig 4.9 Single parent/ guardian interviewed by gender

![Pie chart showing single parent by gender](image)

n = 13  
Source: Primary Data

From the interviewed single parents / guardians 2 out of 13 were males and 11 out of 13 were females. There were more females than male respondents because of the statistics and ratio of males to females. The researcher found out that there are many female single parent or guardians out there as compared to male single parent or guardians as revealed by the study, that is, 15% interviewed were males whilst 85% of the single parents or guardians interviewed were females. The researcher also found out that most women live alone with their children because they were hurt by the first marriage and preferred to stay alone with their children fearing that they might have another heart broken as it had happened before.

4.14 single parents / guardians by educational background

Below is a graph showing statistics on educational background of single parents / guardians who were interviewed by the researcher.
From the graph 17% of the respondents went up to grade 7, 43% went up to form two, 23% went up to ordinary level, 4% went up to advanced level, 11% are diploma holders and 2% were degree holders. This can mean to say sixty percent of single parents/guardians in Chiedza Kari urban did not go past ordinary level while 17% went past ordinary level up to Advanced level, diploma and graduates. The researcher found out that most single parent or guardian ended up to ZJC and they got married. About 2% of the single parents interviewed were graduates hence many female single parent or guardians were affected as revealed by the research. 17% end up in grade 7 and they got married at an early age and have children at an early age from the teacher’s response on the questionnaire, highlighted that children raised in single parent or guardian homes tend to marry early, have children early and divorce early. Girls are at a greater risk of becoming single parent or guardian as a result of non-marital child bearing or divorce.
4.15 causes of single parent /guardian homes

Fig 4.11 Causes of single parent/ guardian home according to single parents interviewed

![Bar Chart showing causes of single parent homes]

n = 13  
Source: Primary Data

Figure 4.11 causes of single parent /guardian homes according to parent interviewed.

The graph above shows the causes of single parents /guardians homes according to parents interviewed. Death of spouse was cited as one of the causes of single parent/guardian homes by 15% of the respondents, divorce or separation was indicated by 25% of the parent/guardians interviewed. Early pregnancy was cited by 3% of the respondents. Employment was indicated by 38% and abandonment was 19% of the parent/guardians interviewed. It can be noted from the graph that employment and divorce separation are the major causes of single parent homes. It also has to be noted that families were just abandoned by either parent leading to one parent remaining behind with the children and revising them alone. From the above information the researcher found out that employment has the highest frequency as compared to other factors causing single parent or guardians, this was due to the economic hardships in 2008 which made these families to become single parent. 3% was cited as one of the causes of single parents or guardians, the researcher noted that early pregnancy has the lowest due to a number of methods used or preventing pregnancy in the country.
4.16 single parent/guardian dependents loads.

Fig 4.12 The dependant load for single parents/guardians interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependents load</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 children</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 children</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 5 children</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 13  
Source: Primary data

Above fig 4.12 showing the dependant loads for single parents/guardians interviewed. From the pie chart 56% of the respondents have three to five children, and 12% have over five children. This implies that 56% of single parent/guardian homes have a family load of 3–5 children although generally most respondents had 2–3 children, the load increases with other dependents from homes afflicted by death, movements and divorce or separation. The researcher discovered that parents or guardians with 3–5 children had the highest percentage from the parents interviewed. The study found out that children living with single parent families exhibit strong responsibility skills as they are often called upon to help out more with family calls and tasks, this is seen in the number of siblings looking after each other in the absence of parents. Despite the challenges they face these children from single parent or guardian homes they try by all means to stay and endure together. Children in single parent often form close bonds with their parents as they are closely dependant on each other throughout in life. Children in single parent families may also form closer bonds with extended family members, family friends as these people often help raise them.
4.17 children living with single parents / guardians.

The teachers were requested by the researcher to give statistics on children living in single parent/guardians homes. This information was requested in order to ascertain the numbers of children in single parent/guardian homes. The table below shows the number of students from single parent/guardian homes teachers have in their classes.

Table 4.4 Statistics of single parent/guardian families at Tofara primary school and Chiedza secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary school</th>
<th>Secondary school</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 523  
Source: Primary data

From the statistics given by the teachers on the number of single parent/guardian homes they have in their classes, they were 163 boys and 159 girls giving a total of 322 students from primary school. From the high school 99 boys and 102 girls giving a total of 201 students living in single parent/guardian homes. A total of 523 students from both primary and secondary school out of 1893 students live with single parents/guardians. From these figures 28% of the children at Tofara primary and Chiedza Kari secondary live under the care of a single parent/guardian. The study found out that there are many children living with single parent or guardians as revealed by the statistics given by the teachers from the 2 schools in the study. These figures reflect the number of single parents or guardians in Chiedza Karoi. From these statistics it showed that the number is too large for the government to assist them all.

4.18 academic performance.

Below is a graph showing the academic performance of children living with single parents/guardians.

Fig 4.13 Statistics on academic performance of pupil from the teachers interviewed
The teachers indicate that 75% of the children showed poor performance in school related work. This was mainly because of inadequate resources due to low economic factors, it also shows that pupils lack parental support and encouragement hence they produce poor results. Parents spent most of their time looking for ways to bring income into households. It was also noted that 25% of the children living with single parents/guardians excel because of tremendous support from zealous parents.

School preparedness: when the schools open all the teachers from both primary and secondary schools indicated that most of these pupils from single parent/guardian homes would not be ready for school. Some pupils delay while seated at home waiting for materials from parents in neighbouring countries. Teachers indicated that some pupils take 2–3 weeks to have all the material ready and this will contribute to poor academic performance.

Children from single parent or guardian home face educational challenges, the study noted that 75% of the children showed poor performance in school related work and only 25% excel. This is so because children from single parent or guardian lack parental guidance and socialisation to reinforce learning and school attendance and appropriate value systems cited by UNICEF (2003). Single parents or guardians do not have time with their children and do not have time to check on children's performance at school.
4.19 The behaviour of children from single parent / guardian homes

Table 4.5 Statistics showing behavior of children from single parent homes from teachers interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 8          Source : Primary Data

Six teachers which is 75% cited that the pupils are aggressive to others especially during play. They could not play with their friends in a friendly manner but always showed signs of being bullies. Two teachers, 25% noted that some pupils were friendly. Hence this shows that most of the students are hyperactive, they fail to be stable for a long time. The researcher also found out that the social problems children from single parent or guardian homes have led to behavioral problems and these problems lead to academic challenges. The children lack focus and motivation from parents. In this study all teachers. That is, 100% cited discipline problems from pupils living with single parents or guardians. One of the major problems was bullying of other school children. The research found out that most of the pupils from single parent or guardian homes are over independent because of the environment they live in.

4.20 Discipline problems noted from pupils living with single parents/ guardians

All the teachers indicated discipline problems from pupils living with single parent/guardian. Most of the children were stubborn and did not follow instructions. They always bullied others and beat them. They had a defensive approach and sometimes they speak vulgar language. On the other hand some children were also reserved. The researcher revealed that most of the pupils were over independent because of the involvement they lived in. however, a few pupils were well disciplined.

The researcher also found out that if the educational and social challenges which children from single parent or guardian homes face are not resolved, children will continue to suffer and this would affect the development of the child as a whole.
It should be everyone’s duty help children reach their full potential. Families including the extended families should work together to groom their children especially the children being raised by single parents or guardians. Friends and relatives should come in to instill good morals, confidence and good role models. The community must also embrace the concept of family and consider every member of society, meaning that when one is wrong he or she must be corrected. Children from single parent homes should be respected. If such a concept is embraced by everyone children will have everyone as family and have a lot of good role models. The ministry of primary and secondary education should play a major role in trying to minimize the challenges these children face. Other organizations that deal with children, communities and school can also contribute in finding ways of preventing some factors that lead to educational and social challenges.

4.22 Summary

In this chapter data has been presented, analyzed and discussed. Graphs, tables and pie charts were used to present the data. A brief summary was given on each of the data presented. The next chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the whole research study. Conclusion drawn from the research findings and appropriate recommendations are also presented.

5.1 Summary

The study was carried out to explore the social and educational challenges faced by children living with single parents or guardians. The study centered on children at Tafara Primary School in Chiedza, Karoi urban and Chiedza Karoi Secondary. The assumptions of this study were that people are not well versed with the effects of single parenting and they believe anyone can raise a child alone. More so, problems which children encounter lead to social and educational challenges. The research sort to assess how these challenges can be reduced.

A sample of 74 participants was used. In his study, questionnaires for teachers, interviews for parents and pupils were used. Information from questionnaires and interviews was analyzed and some discussions were also presented. The research revealed that children from single parent or guardian homes did have social, economic and educational challenges mainly as a result of divorce / separation. The research also concluded that children from single parent or guardian homes go through traumatic and emotional experiences.

5.2 Conclusion

Causes of single parent / guardian were seen to be divorced / separation, employment and death. The study revealed that children from single parent or guardian homes face various socio educational challenges and these challenges are a result of lack of support from their parents / guardians. The challenges faced by children living in single parent homes include poor educational performance, poverty, hunger, truancy, unsupervised homework, hyperactivity and poor concentration. The study also found out that behavioral and social problems children face also contribute to poor academic achievement. The absence of guidance, support and encouragement makes them vulnerable. The urgent solutions to these problems include sound
counseling programs for children and the parents, community mobilization for effective family unity and embracing of good moral behavior.

5.3 **Recommendations**

As a result of the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

5.3.1 The post of school counselors must be introduced to help build disadvantaged children psychologically and help them develop a positive self-image.

5.3.2 The ministry of primary and secondary education should work hand in hand with the treasury so that there are enough funds to cater for vulnerable children through BEAM.

5.3.3 A family needs to be stable in order for children to be confident and be able to feel safe and loved. This will help to raise their self-esteem and help them perform well at school.

5.3.4 Encourage schools to venture into local programs or projects that benefit disadvantaged children from single parent / guardian homes.

5.3.5 Teachers should take seriously the aspect of the social life of their pupils in order to help them whenever these children face academic challenges.

5.3.6 Introduce projects which help single parent / guardian homes with life skills for self-reliance.

5.3.7 To have a sound social assistance system like in other countries where single parents get government assistance on housing, food, shelter and child welfare,

5.3.8 Introduce locally based support groups to help provide important source of support for those parenting alone.

5.3.9 The government through its various responsible ministries should work hard to resuscitate the economy of the country so as to create jobs to enable all those who left their families to get employment, consider the possibility of coming back home to their families.

5.3.10 The next research must be carried out in rural areas since this one was carried out in urban areas.
5.4 Summary

In this chapter the researcher looked at the summary of the whole project, causes of single parent / guardian homes. The social and educational challenges were highlighted; Recommendations from findings were also made.
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### APPENDIX 1

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR PUPILS FOR PUPILS LIVING WITH SINGLE PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

1. **Gender**
   - Male
   - Female

2. **Age**
   - Below 5 years
   - 6-9 years
   - 10-12 years
   - 13-16 years
   - Above 16 years

3. **Parent/Guardian**
   - Mother
   - Father
   - Grandfather
   - Grandmother
   - Other: Specify………………………………………………………………..

4. **Position in Family**………………………………………………………………

5. **Parent/Guardian whereabouts:**
   - Divorced/separated
   - Deceased
   - Away on employment

---

57
Omen Specify.

6. Length of Parent Absence: □
   - Below 2 years □
   - 2-5 years □
   - 6-10 years □
   - Over 10 years □

7. Who pays your fees/levies? □

8. Do you have any owing fees?
   - YES □ NO □

9. Are there any organisations helping you with fees/levies?
   - YES □ NO □

10. Do you get assistance with homework?
    - YES □ NO □

11. Are you often absent from school?
    - YES □ NO □
    b. If yes give reasons
       ……………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Which problems are being faced by children living with single parents/guardians?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

13. How do you feel living with one parent?
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Which parent do you prefer staying with?
    b. Why? ……………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………………………………………………………………………………
### APPENDIX 2

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENT/GUARDIANS**

1. **Age**
   - Below 22 years
   - 22-30 years 31-40 years
   - Over 40 years

2. **Gender**
   - Male
   - Female

3. **Level of Education**
   - Grade 7
   - ZJC
   - O'Level
   - Diploma
   - A' Level
   - Degree

4. **Spouse Whereabouts**
   - Divorced/separated
   - Deceased
   - Away on employment
   - Others: State…………………………………………………………………………….

5. **Number of biological children**………………………………………………………..

6. **Number of dependents**……………………………………………………………..

59
7. Who pays fees for your children or dependents? ..............................................................
8. Do you get assistance from anyone? 
   YES ☐   NO ☐
9. Do your children have enough school material? 
   YES ☐   NO ☐
10. Do you have time to assist your children with their homework? 
    YES ☐   NO ☐
11. Do you have time to sit and share life experiences with your children? 
    YES ☐   NO ☐
12. How do you feel being a single parent? 
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
13. Which problems do you face as a parent/guardian raising the children? 
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………………
APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

My name is Rex Janga. I am a student at Bindura University of Science Education doing a Bachelor of Science Education Honours Degree. I am carrying out a research on challenges faced by children living with single parents/guardians at Chiedza Karoi Secondary, Tafara Primary School in Chiedza -Karoi Urban. May you kindly respond to all questions below by ticking in the appropriate box or writing your response in the spaces provided.

1. How many students from single parent/guardian homes do you have in your class?
   Males ☐ Females ☐ Total ☐

2. From your records or experiences what are the causes of single parent/guardian homes in your area?
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................

3. Are there any organizations helping orphans/vulnerable children at your school?
   If yes, state the names and type of assistance.
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................

4. What can you say about academic performance of children living with single parents or guardians?
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................................................

5. When schools open, are these children ready for school?
   YES ☐ NO ☐

6. Do they have material at opening?
   YES ☐ NO ☐

7. How long does it take for these children to be ready for school?
   ........................................................................................................................................
8. Which discipline problems have you noted from pupils living with single parent/guardian?

……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

9. What challenges do this children face as they grow up?

……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

NB: A single parent/guardian is any parent living alone with children. The partner or spouse may be away because of death, employment or any other reasons.