

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

**AN EVALUATION OF THE CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF
SINGLE WOMEN IN FOUNTAIN GATE CHAPEL, OFANKOR,
ACCRA – GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, hereby declare that, I have personally undertaken this study herein submitted with the acknowledgement of all documents cited.

Candidate's Signature Date

Name: Harriet Asiedu

Supervisor's Declaration

I declare that the presentation and the presentation of this project were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the Central University.

Supervisor's Signature Date

Name: Mrs. Aku Hayfron

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the challenges and the prospects of single women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra. Survey method was used and data was collected from both primary and secondary source. The primary data was collected from the widowed, separated, never-married and the divorced women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, a suburb of Greater Accra region of Ghana. Whilst the secondary data was collected from articles, journal, books and the internet. The sample was made up of fifty (50) participants / respondents. Both questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data from the respondents. Qualitative and quantitative method of data analysis was used in the study. The findings of this research show that majority of the respondents were self-employed. The researcher made some recommendations. It is believed to help minimize the challenges the single women face not only in the church organisation, but in all aspect of lives.

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DEDICATION

This Long Essay is solely dedicated to my dear husband, Rev. Daniel Asiedu and my four children, as an appreciation for their generous love, guidance and support towards this project. I love you all.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This will be the first part of the research work that will provide an overview and platform for the study. This part will present the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study and organisation of the study. This will allow the reader to appreciate the thrust behind the study and what the researcher intends to accomplish by undertaking the study.

Background of the Study

The challenges of single, aged, widowed, and unmarried women in the church are social and spiritual. In the African context, marriage is highly upheld as a social practice and institution meant for the satisfaction of some social needs like sexual satisfaction and intimate relationship. In addition, “marriage and childbearing are the focus of life. They are at the very center of human existence, just as man is at the very center of the universe” (Mbiti, 1991, p.106).

Women play a very significant role in the religio-cultural and social-economic life of society. Thus, the place of women in contributing to the growth and development of a country can never be overemphasized. Traditionally, women’s roles are considered complementary and supportive to their male counterparts rather than been a substitution. This also suggests that women in most instances are restricted to certain domains of the society. More so, they are believed to be the most vulnerable in society and are denied of a number of responsibilities and rights that are for them (Schor & Diyanni, 2000).

Interestingly, the story line is different in contemporary times, where women are no longer confined to their “comfort zones” – home and kitchen. They are challenged to take the roles which were traditionally termed “men’s role or responsibility”. They never wanted to be left out and denied access to their rights and contribution to the church and the society. It is thus, not surprising that women are protesting/advocating for gender equality in all facets of economic and social life. However, these assertions leave the challenge to women to be awakened to the call to myriad responsibilities and roles in the home, church, work place, and school. This task of echoing and re-enforcing women roles and rights in recent times has never been easy. The challenges have not only been attributed to financial and time resource constraints, but also to the acquisition of skills and competences (Schor & Diyanni, 2000).

The challenges appear to be more daunting in the case of single women. In the time past, single women represent the state of a woman who has never been married. Today, the definition and meaning of single women has undergone change to include divorcees, unmarried women over 30years of age and widows.

The challenges of the single women are often spelt out in the following areas; in church, in home management, academic and work life (pursuing the desired career or profession), coping with the societal stigma or ridicule of singleness, fulfillment of family ties, psychological and emotional satisfaction. In spite of the several social reforms, legal enactments and contributions by relatives and friends to address some of the challenges of single women particularly young widows, continue to suffer the physical, mental, cultural and other social discriminations and many other social malaises. This makes the

state of singleness appear to be a huge challenge in women's growth and development. Therefore, it makes sense to posit that single womanhood can never be eliminated but reduced. More so, where these challenges of the single women are not properly handled and managed it could lead to dire consequences including: childlessness, psychological and emotional imbalances, child delinquency, and drug in children and other deviant behaviours or social vices (Rice, 1998).

Statement of the Problem

In the face of rapid globalization coupled with the growing pace of information and communication technology and pressure on the use of scarce resources, women can no longer afford to remain idle and unconcerned about their place and role in the society or a congregation. Today, women have a strong desire and interest in contributing their quota to support the input of their male counterparts in meeting the ever-increasing demands of sociological needs. However, in the quest to achieve this, many women place education and the pursuit of their career goals first before marriage, in order to live independently and control their own destiny without many commitments as they believe those goals are difficult to achieve when married. Besides, marriage comes with its own distinct responsibilities. Interestingly, many of the women who are divorced and are single prefer to stay-in-waiting and hoping to find the right partner at a later time. Nevertheless, others wish to remain unmarried due to previous marital experiences. Most widows particularly the elderly ones are often found in their menopause age and do not desire to remarry after the demise

of the spouse. Ultimately, the single women end up never marrying to take up marital responsibility.

Notwithstanding this, the choice and circumstances pertaining to the single womanhood are associated with some challenges. Very often the single women whilst enjoying their singleness experience difficulties in keeping and maintaining the home, difficulties in acquiring funds for education and the pursuit of the career aims unlike the married who use the pool of their husband's resources. Moreover, this problem is even more pervasive where the single woman (divorced or widowed) has children and needs money, time and other resources to manage the education and or career and also the home at the same time. However, these challenges do not only result in the psychological and emotional imbalances in the single women, but also, affect the children who may be involved. This may subsequently affect the health, welfare, education, upbringing and training of the children. Usually, children who live under single motherhood lack the needed attention and care. Moreover, time and resource constraints on the part of the single women force these children to engage in social vices or deviant behaviours (Olson, 2000).

It is in this light that the researcher seeks to investigate the challenges and prospects of some single women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra.

Objectives of the Study

The main goal of the research is to evaluate the challenges and prospect of single women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra, Ghana. However, the specific objectives to consider for achieving the purpose of the study include:

1. To find out the factors that contribute to the challenges of single women in the church
2. To determine the effects of the challenges on the single women in the church
3. To identify the ways to mitigate these challenges.
4. To assess public perception regarding single womanhood in the church.

Research Questions

In view of the proposed objectives and broad expectation of the study, it is worthwhile that the following research questions will be considered:

1. What are the factors that contributes to the challenges of single women in the church?
2. What are the effects of the challenges on the single women in the church?
3. In what ways can the challenges of single women be mitigated in the church?
4. What is the perception of the public towards the single women in the church?
5. What are the prospects of single women in Fountain Gate Chapel?

Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that the study will be of utmost relevance to single women, and academics works. Also, the results and recommendations of the study will bring to the fore and unearth the benefits of single womanhood and how the benefits can be harnessed and the challenges managed.

Again, the study will serve as a source of encouragement to single women particularly those who have the potential to acquire higher education and career goals before marriage but have been hampered by financial and related resource constraints.

The researcher anticipates that the study will add to existing Ghanaian literature in this field and serve as a source of reference material for organisations and professional bodies undertaking similar studies. Moreover, the study will present both theoretical and empirical data that will provide a good insight into how single women will be able to manage their challenges and take the advantages that come with being a single woman.

It will also imagine that the results or findings of this study will serve as a guide and an influential tool in the hands of social agencies, advocates for women's rights and gender equality to adopt the appropriate pragmatic steps to enhance the inherent capabilities of single women in the Ghanaian society.

Scope of the Study

As human beings, we are inadequate in our ability to do one thing or the other. Undertaking this study is not an exception. Conceptually, the study seeks to evaluate the challenges and prospects of single women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra and will not explore other aspects of single womanhood. Geographically, the study will be conducted using the single women Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra.

Organisation of the Study

The research study will be organised into five (5) main chapters. The study will consist of:

Chapter one

This chapter will present the background information of the research topic, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research question, significance of the study, scope of the study, and the organisation of the study.

Chapter two

In this section of the study, literature including; newsletters, textbooks, reports, articles and research papers of other authors that relate to this study will be identified and reviewed.

Chapter three

This chapter will discuss the research methodology adopted for the study and the relevant justifications thereof. It will also indicate the sources and method of collecting secondary and primary data and how the results will be analyzed. It will also include; research design, research population, sample and sampling procedure, data gathering instrument, rigour and ethics.

Chapter four

This chapter will present the analysis data, results, discussion and interpretation of the data collected.

Chapter five

This will be the final chapter of the study; which will focus on the summary, recommendation and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section of the study focuses on the assessment of relevant literature from renowned writers, various schools of thought, research papers and articles on womanhood and single women. This helps to provide the necessary background for understanding the general concepts, theories, assumptions or perception of single women in the church and the society. Consequently, the review of literature emphasizes the prospects of single women and the challenges associated with their roles in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor and Ghanaian society as a whole. Thus, this section presents theoretical review of literature that underpins the research questions identified in the preceding chapter.

In order to understand the challenges and prospects of single women in the church and the society at large, this study defines little on the theory of feminism. The existing structures within both the church and society are patriarchal in the sense that the structures turn to uplift the image of men while marginalizing women in the various sector of life. Russell defines feminism as ‘those who advocate changes in various aspect of political, economic and social spheres in order to reach equal rights of men and women (Russell, 1993, p. 57).

In effect, feminism is about challenging the paradigm, calling for a change and equality. It refers to movements aimed at defining, establishing and asserting equal political, economic and social right and equal opportunities for

women. Thus, feminism advocates that women need to emerge as full human beings liberated from all forces which have kept them in subjugation.

Singleness

In Africa, marriage is respected, and nobody should be left out without marrying or being married. This is one reason why singlehood has been perceived to be problematic and not acceptable, not only in society but also in the church (Kathanya, 2021). Singleness is a growing challenge. According to Aune, it is also currently a global challenge, who argues, “given that the proportion of single women in society is rising steadily, singleness is in urgent need of discussion and understanding by the Church. For the society towards which the Church has a mission is acutely touched by the issue of singleness” (Aune, 2002, p. 10).

In this study, singleness implies women who are not married, who have been divorced and women who are widowed but have children to take care of. In Ghanaian society, widows are thought to be ‘*mbaa abonsam*’ meaning ‘satanic women’. The Ghanaian women in the society are expected to marry and have children. This is because it is perceived that the women who do not marry turn to be morally weak. There are certain obstacles in the form of cultural restitutions that inhibit their performance (Grace Sintim Adasi, 2013). In the Ghanaian cultural context in which the church women live, every woman is expected to marry at all cost because marriage as Dolphyne (1991) put, “confers on a woman a high degree of respectability in her community. Whether her level of education, professional status or economic independence, an African woman would not choose to remain single, although it is also true to say that higher

education and professional status do confer a very high degree of respectability on a woman, irrespective of her marital status.

Overview and Meaning of Woman (Mother)

The term “woman” represents the female category of gender of human beings. Female in this context refers to a set of attributes, behaviours, and role generally associated with femininity. Woman can also be defined as adult human being who is biologically female, who is, capable of bearing offspring (Rice, 1998). Marianne et al (2010) are of the view that women are not biologically distinctive but are also defined by the physical, moral and social characteristics they exhibit. This assertion posits that; woman only derives its meaning when contrasted with the male counterpart “man”. Interestingly, women share peculiar attributes that determine the place in the home, church, workplace and the society at large. In the Ghanaian society for instance women are considered house keepers. Traditionally, women are noted for their vulnerable and dependant nature. Thus, are limited or restricted to certain roles, responsibility and rights in society. These limitations may include; the right to formal education, career, employment, leadership and managerial positions, politics, work etc. Today the story line is different. We however are believed to live in a society where women persistently protest for their right for gender equality in every aspect of life. Today, more women are employed in the formal sector than before and the placement of women in leadership positions have increased accordingly even in politics.

Characteristics of Women in the Informal Sector

Althaus (1991) is of the view that, women are generally over-represented in the informal sector. This shows that, the informal sector is the largest primary source of employment for women in most developing countries. Existing data suggest that the majority of economically active women in developing countries are engaged in the informal sector. Many observations argue that few women are to compete in labour, capital, and product markets because they have relatively low levels of education and skills or are less likely to own property or have market know-how. The authors continued to opine that, factors such as adolescent pregnancy, early marriage and household burden serves as obstacle to many women receiving formal education and in the achievement of their career development goals.

In many African countries, almost all women in the informal sector are either self-employed, casual workers and home or family workers. However, women in the informal sector are mostly subcontractors and are less likely to be owners of the enterprise. Interestingly, women who engaged in the informal sector as market or street vendors, hawkers or home worker, earn lower income and do not receive minimum wage and worker benefits such as over-time allowance and sick leave. As a result, they are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation by employers as they often work without contracts. Wyatt (1997) argued that, this may expose them to safety and health risk. Thus, the provision of common protection, including health insurance, pensions, and maternity benefits, improving occupational safety and reducing work hazards, improving access to child care, and building informal worker's organisations, alliances and

networks are some of the measures that can be undertaken to improve the conditions of women who participate in the informal sector.

The Concept and Definition of Single Women

In the time past, a single woman is a woman who is never been married. Today, the definition and meaning of single women has undergone change to include divorces, unmarried women over 35years of age and other single women. Thus, single women may simply defined as women who may have abandoned their husbands, who are divorced with their spouses, whose husband are dead and those who are still unmarried at the age of 35years. However, the understanding for single women varies from differences of nature and forms of single women. Unmarried, divorced, separate and widow are the various forms of single women and all these forms are defined in different ways. Literally, a single woman refers to a women who is not married or has an unmarried status. A divorce single woman is one that has legal ending of a marriage. Similarly, a separate single woman is one who has stopped living together as a couple. Such a single woman although married, lives a separate live from the husband and the children if any. Furthermore, a widow simply refers to a woman whose husband has died and who has not married again. However, widowhood state is generally considered a natural phenomenon of a single womanhood (Paludi, 2002).

Causes of Single Womanhood (Motherhood)

There are many causes of single-motherhood phenomenon ranging from death of husband, separation of spouses, out-of-wedlock pregnancy as a result

of premarital sexual relationship, unintended pregnancy, broken relationship, or divorce after which a woman may close the door to marriage and choose definitively to remain single (“Single-Parent”, Wikipedia, 8 June 2011). Also, many marriageable young women, coming through the bruises of premarital relationships, opt voluntarily for single motherhood. Often also, as Ruth Olurounbi (2011) suggests, it is an option for freedom and independence: “single parenthood, contrary to general belief, does not just happen as a result of unsuccessful relationship or divorce; it is sometimes created through widowhood, unplanned pregnancy, adoption and other life-changing situations. And those who choose this path, according to them, crave freedom and independence, among other reasons” (Olurounbi, 2011).

For many men, all relationships with women are about sexual conquest with little responsibility in mind. Popular culture teaches kids poor values about sex and relationships. In addition, mediated images teach young boys that women are sex objects. In the media, women are portrayed as disposable material commodities that are used solely for sexual gratification purposes.

In an interview, Alaefule (2010, cited in Essien and Bassey, 2012) said that some ladies who are deeply in love with men only find out that the men are insincere and have been cheating on them, never ever want to give their life to any man no matter the psychological treatment offered to them. Many of the ladies go through the emotional trauma that is difficult to heal; they just decide to raise children on their own. Alaefule (2011), inferred that, ‘another thing that has contributed to increased single motherhood is money and education’. An instance where the woman has so much money, she finds it difficult to come down and stay under a man and wonder why she should answer “sir” to a man

when she can fend for herself. However, there have been cases of women who submitted to their men despite their wealth.

Obot (2011) corroborates, maintaining that “the issue of women empowerment (be it economic, educational or both) has increased single motherhood all over the world.” But according to him, education as a possible cause of single motherhood would not apply to the illiterate rural lot: “Macro International shows that though there are improvement in girl’s access to education, many women throughout the rural areas in the country and particularly in the Northern part, still lack access to secondary school both as a result of traditional bias of educating girls and economic crisis” (Obot, 2011).

Church

Many people today understand the church as a building. This is not a biblical understanding of the church. The word “church” comes from the Greek word “*ekklesia*” which is literally defined as “an assembly” or “called-out ones.” The root meaning of “church” is not that of a building, but of people, and its basic responsibility is to proclaim the good news worldwide. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the church for empowerment till now, the gospel has been proclaimed and many souls have been saved for the emergence and growth of the church. Several years ago, Wagner (1976), defined church growth as “All that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with him and into responsible church membership”. He notes some aspects of his definition of church growth as: (1) it is scientific in nature, (2) its scope is Christian churches, (3) it is related to the implementation of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-

20), (4) it combines eternal theological principles with insights from contemporary social and behavioural science, and that his approach was referenced from Donald McGavran's theory of church growth (Wagner, 1976).

The growth of the church could not be possible without the factors of women (both married and single). Church management is the gift of God. God is the only one who can call and empower any one to serve effectively in the vineyard in whatever role he/she will play in the church.

Christianity

The Bible does not directly address single motherhood, much less voluntary single motherhood (Raising-Godly-Children, 2012). The term is not biblical, but single mothers appear under the class of widows, and included all women of marital age who had lost a spouse. Hagar, a favorite Bible character, a young, Egyptian girl and the attendant to Sarai, the wife of Abram, was the first single mother in the Bible, the first woman and mother "put away" or abandoned by her man (Cf. Genesis 16: 1-16 ; 21: 1-16). The prophets, Jesus and the New Testament Church ministered to single mothers. Elijah and Elisha ministered to widowed single mothers (1King 17: 10, 12-14 and 2 Kings 4: 1-7). Jesus comforted the widow of Nain and raised her son back to life (Luke 11: 12-16); he also rebuked the religious leaders of his day for their exploitation of widows (Mark 12: 38- 39). Timothy, a great church leader, was raised by a single mother of sincere faith, Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5) (Garrett, McDonnell, Fruge, 2012).

Modern day choice single motherhood is more than singleness by death of spouse or by abandonment, and there are difficulties within a patriarchal

religion in a patriarchal society. Many church or religious bodies or organisations keep the unmarried (single mothers) away from responsible work positions but rather give to the married who may be younger and inexperienced than the unmarried...This is born out of the misconception that the unmarried singles are prone to the sin of impurity than the married (Nyoroh, 2004).

Socio-Religious Challenges Facing Single Women

For Myers (2012), parenting is hard. Single mothering is harder; it is the playing of two roles by one person and can have some unwanted impact on the development of a child, especially where there is more than one child. It is “carrying the world on one’s shoulders” (Myer, 2012). Stigmatization, discrimination, and rejection do come from culture, society, and religion. Single mothers are often demonized as being promiscuous. However, not all single mothers are whores. Impurity is independent of one’s state of life. Single mothers will often encounter the problem of explaining the single status to their kids. Alaefule (2011) is of the view that these children need and miss that fatherly love and at a point in life when they grow up and they would begin to ask questions, wanting to know who their father is. Naturally, the mothers would not want to disclose their father’s identity, so they will try to cover up by telling them their father is dead or that he had an accident (Alaefule, 2011). For children, since they form their identity around the cues they get from both father and mother, have an ingrained (usually subconscious) need to know who their father is and why he is not with them. Cues from mothers alone leave a void about who the children are from a male perspective. At times, children innocently in their own way, but very unfortunately, and until their brains have

developed more fully, blame themselves for their father's absence, leading to self-crushing sadness, depression, disappointment and anger (Meeker, 2011). Single mothers who may still be open to marriage find it hard to get someone who would want to marry them with the extra load of children fathered by another man" (Alaefule, 2011).

Kathanya (2021) in his study, revealed that single women are far more excluded and negatively impacted than their male counterparts. It was clear that cultural beliefs were the main factors leading to the marginalization of single women in the church. The informants expressed how they are negatively treated and perceived as immature and incomplete, hence exclusion from church leadership positions. The same cultural impact led to the exclusion of single women in church activities, name-calling, low self-esteem, among other challenges. In addition to the many challenges faced by single women, they also lacked pastoral care. They were stigmatized; even their children were stigmatized and shamed, for example, during baptism, when the pastor demands to know the child's father. In society, the patriarchal practices and social structures formulated by men are demeaning, devaluing, and discriminative to single women in many ways. These patriarchal structures and systems elevate men and exclude women, for example, by denying single women property. This aspect of being devalued and side-lined creates low self-esteem, poverty, and a series of other challenges related to poverty, such as prostitution

According to Macionis (1997), "the most serious problem among families with one parent, especially if that parent is a woman, is poverty." This view is reverberated by many commentators on this issue. With the cost of living, especially for the common man, far exceeding today's wages, except one

is born with a silver spoon in the mouth, it takes two people to provide adequately for a family. Single mothers are thus financially challenged and are at higher risk of poverty than coupled mothers (Olurounbi, 2011). Single mothers experience difficulties with role identity and adolescent children supervision. An adolescent in a single parent family is susceptible to delinquent behaviour, especially when a mother introduces a man she is dating to her child/children (Tijani and Ogunbanwo, 2012).

According to Labeodan, (2002), the challenges of women in Ghanaian society are myriad. There are challenges in almost every aspect of life, including the family, home management, workplace, the achievement of career goals and even in the churches and religious bodies. These challenges indeed appear to have a significant impact on the role and contribution of women in the economic development of the country. It is, however, imperative that these challenges confronting single women are brought to the surface and discussed openly. However, Labeodan (2002) presented some common challenges of the single women as follows;

Home management

Home management emphasizes the management of resources in the home. It incorporate principles of foods & nutrition, principles underlying the clothing of the family and development of general skills required for managing a home. McCormick & Schmitz (2002, cited in Labeodan, 2002) postulated that home management employs practical skills and knowledge in managing domestic affairs and recommends that valuable time be allotted to it. Managing the home incorporates some business principles and practices. This assertion explain that modern home management is integrated or aligned with business

management principle (Cotter et al., 2001). Thus, it is substantial to say effective home management practices require the performance of some amount of managerial functions; organisation, controlling, planning and implementing activities related the home affairs.

Hallman et al. (2003) however added that, home management is much more than common sense; it involves discipline, creativity, analytical skills and basic managerial knowledge. From this perspective, it makes sense that home management is the administration of household affairs. It is also imperative to conclude that home management is a complex and multi-tasking responsibility of the home. Which requires commitment, time and effort to be assigned to it.

In view of the foregoing, Arendell (1987) emphasized that time constraint is a major challenge faced by some single women in managing the home and this challenge is much more experienced by those employed in the formal sector. The authors argued that, single women who are gainfully employed have little or no time for participating in the management of the home. Interestingly, such single women expend much of their time resources at their workplaces and are barely allotted valuable time for planning meals, child care (if any), cleaning and sanitation, repairs and maintenance, etc. in the home. Most often relatives, friends, and hired domestic servants assume the responsibility of managing the home. Thus, single women play passive roles in the upkeep of their homes. Nevertheless, many of the single women that have a low level of education and are either unemployed or self-employed do not usually have problems with time but are most challenged with the issue of finance coupled with the necessary knowledge and skill that is needed to effectively administer

the home affairs in areas such as; family planning, child care, and general maintenance, etc.

Achievement of Career Goals

In recent times many single women particularly those employed in the formal sector, aspire to hold various managerial positions in the organisation as they are poised to soar to achieve their career development goals. However, the financial problems appear to be one of the top issues that militate against the success of many women. This challenge is even more pervasive for some single women with children, who may have commitments to other family members. This circumstance is unlike that of the married woman whose education or training is partly or fully financed by the husband. Apart from the financial challenges, the time constraint is another factor impeding the chances of single women from achieving their career objectives. Many at times, single women are expected to balance their time resources between the achievement of career goals and management of the home. In most instances, they become constrained with time. Interestingly, some single women do not receive any moral support or any form of encouragement from friends and relations. They are left to bear the burden of progressing in their career all by themselves (Laboedan, 2002).

Organisation

Single women have always suffered discrimination from different areas of life's endeavours ranging from the society to the workplace. In many organisations, some job roles have become the preserve for married women. Single women who are equally qualified for certain positions are disqualified. Notwithstanding, in other situations, single women are assigned more responsibilities as they are considered to have plenty of time available to focus

on the performance of job roles as compared to the married woman who may be persistently occupied with one family responsibility or the other. Remarkably, the marital status of women as a prerequisite for some positions is perhaps a determinant of a woman's level of responsibility and success in life. Furthermore, single women also suffer discrimination in terms of rewards and compensation. In some organisations, married women and single women do not rank on the same rewards and compensation schemes. Single women are not entitled to some benefits and allowances like child dependency which married women are entitled to (Amu, 2005).

Family

The family as the first agent of socialization is an important factor that constitutes challenges to single women in Ghana. The family in this context as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit. In other words, the people living together by ties of marriage, blood or adaptation, thus represents a single household. According to sociology, the family has a primary function of reproducing society; biologically, socially, or both. The family in this sense, as a challenge to single women, explains that; the family has a high expectation for women to play their roles in procreation to ensure continuity of the family lineage and the society at large (Demoss, 1995). Particularly amongst the families of the ethnic and tribal groups in Ghana, childbearing is an important process in the life of every woman so far as marriage is concerned. Thus, the family prohibits or frowns on single womanhood, as it is considered a part of womanhood that inhibits the childbearing process of a woman's life. It is not surprising that most

ethnic groups in Ghana criticize and discriminate against women who are single irrespective of the circumstance surrounding their single womanhood.

Implications of Single Motherhood on the Marriage Institution, Religion, Morality & Health

The view of singlehood is changing; it is increasingly being viewed as a legitimate alternative to marriage. Voluntary motherhood undermines the sacredness of marriage as a divine institution and sex as serving the ends of a conjugal union. For Tijani and Ogunbanwo (2012), “the suggestion, therefore, is that maybe, marriage no longer serves women interest. If women can support themselves, they do not need to marry. They feel they are secured economically. If a single parent can have sex at will with any man she fancies, have her own house, and gain the respect of friends and co-workers, she does not see any need to tie herself to the apron-string of any man in bondage called marriage” (Tijani and Ogunbanwo, 2012).

In single motherhood, a fresh vocation or state of life, which cannot forever be denied, ignored, or rejected, is available for recognition, study, consideration, and possible integration by institutional religion which would best approach human issues with an air of adaptability and pliability. Single motherhood has moral implications. Single mothers have loneliness and emotional needs to grapple with. According to Alaefule, “when they want a man, they know what to do and how to go about it. When they want to get pregnant they play their card well by seduction and when they get pregnant they do not tell the man about it but keep the child to themselves after delivery” (Alaefule, 2011). It, therefore, means that this trend, men may not always have

to “worry” or “care” much about sexual precautions, consequences and responsibilities because the woman will have taken care of the situation; what a free sex world for men; but it tantamount to the undermining of responsible fatherhood, the instrumentalization of the menfolk and the impersonalization and desacralisation of the sexual act by it’s being converted purely into a tool of self-gratification.

Young single mothers run the risk of posing possible moral dangers to their child(ren) and beyond. That a woman is a single mother does not mean she will stop feeling lonely and occasionally want a link with a man for the fulfilment of her emotional needs. But what is intolerable is a single mother, who may be staying in one apartment, bringing her lovers home and indulging in sex, unmindful of their children’s presence in the house (Francis, 2011). Single motherhood is like working at two or more jobs simultaneously and could therefore impinge on the health of the parent (Olurounbi, 2011). The basic health concern of the surreptitious use, by a choice single mother, of a man as a sperm donor for the purpose of natural insemination is that the requirements of medical tests especially in respect of the health status of the donor might be overlooked or at best presumed.

Psychological and Emotional Imbalance

The state of single womanhood has moral implications. Very often, single women go through hard times of controlling their sexual orgies (libido), such women become lonely and helpless as they do not have partners to share their sexual needs with. This, in most cases, leads to psychological and emotional imbalances (Paludi, 2002). Young (2011), however, observed that

single women that are unable to control their sexual emotions often indulge in an immoral lifestyle, which consequently results in unwanted pregnancies accompanied by health-related issues. In some instances, they may contract the common sexually transmitted disease (STDs) such as HIV, gonorrhoea, syphilis, etc.

Perception on Single Womanhood

Researchers over the time past have raised unabated arguments about single women, as to whether or not the state of single womanhood is a matter of choice. Uprety & Adhikary (2009) opined that, single womanhood is a deliberate or voluntary decision of women to remain unmarried. This assertion posits that single womanhood can be a conscious decision women make at a free will. Waddell et al. (2012) emphasized that women who choose to remain single are not compelled to the state of singleness, although the circumstances that usually puts them in those situations are somewhat uncontrollable. The decision to marry or remarry is ultimately dependent on the woman. Nevertheless, it is believed that, women are only influenced by circumstances which are unforeseen and this compels them to remain single. This suggests that no woman wishes to remain unmarried forever, except the unexpected happens. Thus, the state of single womanhood cannot be said be deliberate.

Whatever the reason for a woman remaining single, the fact still remains that the state of single womanhood is an issue one does not bargain for. In the Ghanaian society today, single womanhood is highly unacceptable and any woman who is rightfully pronounced or termed “single woman” is perceived in a completely different way. Consequently, the single women are often regarded

as irresponsible, disrespectful, dishonourable and completely blamed for such state of life. In some circles of societal gatherings or groupings, single woman are prevented from partaking in certain activities such as church meetings, woman's movements and associations. Sometimes, single mothers who may still be open to marriage, find it hard to get someone who would want to marry them the extra responsibilities of children, fathered by another man (Akintunde, 2001).

Alaefule (2011), in his study, interviewed a young single mother with four kids (three by her first man who later abandoned her with the kids and one by an in-and-out man) who loathes her social stigmatized single status. However, she has not given up hope of someday settling down with a husband. Conscientiously she admits that her predicament keeps her away from actively engaging in leadership roles in the church as the members look up to her as a model. The single woman mentioned that, she is traumatized by the stigmatization of the church and the society that she is morally debased.

Notwithstanding these perceptions about single women, many single women seize that opportunity to attain total independence from the control and "stewardship" in a family (never want to be controlled by the ties of a family). This also suggests that single women perceive marriage as an institution that presents a set of responsibilities and duties to the woman as a wife to a husband and mother to the children. Thus, the single woman believes the state of being unmarried allows one to be free of such responsibilities. Interestingly, some other single women think, the single womanhood presents an opportunity for them to pursue their career goals at any time they deem fit. Carter (2000) and Hewlett (2002) noted that, single women have a higher prospect of advancing

on their career, training and developing their skills and talents through learning a trade or vocation than married women. However, single women also have the privilege of changing their decision about their careers without restrictions or influence by other people.

The Effect of Single Womanhood

The impacts of single womanhood on the society are many however, this can be identified with the single parenting role (single mother). Forgatch (2012) is of the view that single motherhood is a very challenging part of the life of single women. In that, single women are required to provide for all the needs of the home and the children if there are any. They are expected to provide the care, protection and attention that their children require. Nevertheless, single parenting (motherhood) has numerous ripple effects on the home and the society. Tijani & Ogunbanwo (2012) explained that, single women playing the role of single mothers has less resources in terms of finance and time to manage the home and adequately provide for the needs of the home. That is, the single mother has the responsibilities to provide clothing, medical care, good shelter, food, repairs and general maintenance of the home and make payment of school fees where children are involved.

In most situations, single women do not get any form of financial support from friends and relatives. Interestingly, Landes (2011) concluded that where the single mother is unemployed or earns a meager income that is insufficient to meet the needs of the family, the probability for some single women indulging in social vices and deviant behaviours and attitudes such as prostitution and other criminal activities are high. Though, the children of these

single mothers may be looking up to the life style of the parent. In some instances the children may also adopt the life style of other children learning from the bad habit and corrupt practices such as stealing, gambling, prostitution, robbery, delinquency etc.

Conclusion

Women play significant roles in every domain of society they find themselves in. Their roles are not only limited to procreation (childbearing) but also a contribution to the economic life of a country. It must be emphasized that the place of women is indispensable and such must be given the platform to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities. It is no doubt that women continue to protest the right to gender equality. However, single womanhood has become a very predominant phenomenon, particularly in Ghana despite the discrimination, criticism and ridicule associated with it. It was

Amongst some ethnic and tribal groupings, the state of single womanhood is abhorred and associated with superstitious beliefs. Nevertheless, single women are confronted with a lot of challenges including financial, time, psychological and emotional traumas. This stems from the responsibility and commitment to home management, church leadership, family, organisation and the society at large. Although various arguments have been made about what leads to single womanhood, whether it is a voluntary decision or an incidental part of a women's life some single women asserts that single womanhood provides the avenue to remain free from family ties and make ones' life decision on the achievement of career goals and fulfilment of aspirations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In its most basic and simple form, research is a way of finding out answers to questions (Mackey & Gass, 2015). This chapter will present a discussion of the various methods the researcher will use in the collection and analysis of data. The research methods is considered a very focal aspect of the study, which will identify the procedures to be followed by the researcher to analyze data, establish findings and ultimately arrive at valid conclusion that will serve as the basis for making relevant recommendation for the study. The methodology comprised of the research design, population, sample size and sampling procedure, instrument and data analysis.

Research Design

This research will be an exploratory survey study. The researcher considers this approach simply because, the study seeks to investigate the challenges that single women face in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor. Furthermore, this exploratory study will be used to analyze and clarify the research problem, gain better understanding of the nature of the problem, provide significant insight into the prospects and challenges of single womanhood in the Ghanaian society. In this study, two types of data will be considered. They are primary and secondary data. The primary data to be used in the study will be collected mainly through the administration of questionnaire and interviews with the members of the church and some people of the society

of Ofankor in Ablekuma North District of Accra. However, the secondary data will be sourced from literature that relates to single women. This will include literature from the internet, text books, journal and articles.

The researcher will also employ descriptive statistics in the analysis of primary data to be collected and the secondary data will be used as bases for the interpretations and discussions of the findings that will be made from the field data. Also, the researcher will use qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedure or approach to achieve the intended objectives of the study. The quantitative method will involve the gathering of numerical data (statistical data) that will be used to depict or illustrate various view and opinions of the study. The qualitative on the other hand, will be employed in generating non-numerical data. This approach will focus basically on gathering of verbal data which will be based on the knowledge, observations, opinions, views and perception on single womanhood in the church and the society.

Population

The population is a selected group of respondents that a researcher widespread his or her results for the study. Sarantakos (1997) claimed that, the entire group or selected category of units or individual to acquire information for a study is termed as a research population.

The population of the research will be chosen based on the outcome of personal observation and enquires from some members in the church and the society. This will particularly be helpful to assess amongst the women, the various categories and the challenges of single women in the church. Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Ablekuma North district in the Greater Accra region has

a population of over five hundred (500) members which seventy (70) single women will be used and considered as a sample size of the study area. The various categories of single women in the church including the divorced women, unmarried women over 32 years, widows, women who have been separated from their husband and vice versa will constitute the target population of the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

In this study, the researcher anticipate a sample size of seventy (70) single women respondents would be selected from the church that constitutes the target population of the study. Thus, 70 questionnaire will be administered to the respondents (participants). The selection of the respondents will be done using the simple random sampling and convenience sampling method (in which people are sampled simply because they are ‘convenient’ for the study). The simple random sampling is one which presents equal opportunity for every single woman in the church to be selected to participate in a studying.

Additionally, the convenience sampling method will be adopted, since the researcher intends to use respondents (single women) who are willing to respond to the questionnaire to obtain relevant information. The two sampling methods will be used in selection of the respondents.

Data Gathering Instrument

The primary research instrument of the study will be questionnaire and interview guide. The researcher intends to use the questionnaire because it is used to collect first hand and unbiased data. More so, the use of questionnaire

is expected to be comparatively less expensive, save time and convenient for the respondents to complete. The questionnaire will be structured and designed in two parts based on the respondents' characteristics and on the objective of the study.

The questionnaire will consist of close ended and open ended questions. The use of the close ended questions will compel respondents to fix alternatives or options of responses and to facilitate easy categorization, as it will also remind the respondents of any responses they may have forgotten. The open-ended questions on the other hand, will be used when it becomes necessary for the respondents to provide additional information. However, the questionnaire will be administered by the researcher to the respondents and ample time will be allowed for filling and completion of the questionnaire by respondents. In addition, the researcher will conduct an unstructured interview with some of the respondents where necessary to clarify some responses or solicit additional information to complement the worth of data to be collected from the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data collected will be qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed based on the objectives of the study using Microsoft Excel (2013) programme and integrated package on a personal computer. The data analysis will involve presentation, description and interpretation of the data collected from the field work. This will be done using tables, graphs and charts which will be used to determine the proportion of respondents choosing the various responses. This

will also help to explain what the data implies and make them more meaningful, valid and reliable information.

Ethics

According to Ezzy (2013), ethics deals with correct moral conduct. This research was carried out competently and honestly. Acceptable behaviours required by research ethics were conformed. Participants of questionnaires were allowed to decline answering questions if they felt uncomfortable about a question. They were also permitted to drop out at their will.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected and the discussion of findings of the study. The discussions are based on the responses received from the respondents (participants). This chapter sought to produce valid and relevant information from the field work, required by the researcher to answer the question raised in the research questions.

In this study, a total of seventy (70) questionnaires were distributed to single women (respondents) in the church; however, four (4) questionnaire were not answered and sixteen (16) of the questionnaire were reported missing, as it might be due to obvious carelessness of the respondents in handling the questionnaire. This indicated that, out of the seventy (70) questionnaire administered, fifty (50) questionnaire were fully completed by the respondents and retrieved by the researcher. Therefore, fifty (50) valid questionnaire were eventually used in the analysis.

Analysis of Field Data

Section I: Bio data of Respondent

This is the personal background of information of fifty (50) respondents' representing 100% of the total respondents that participated in the study.

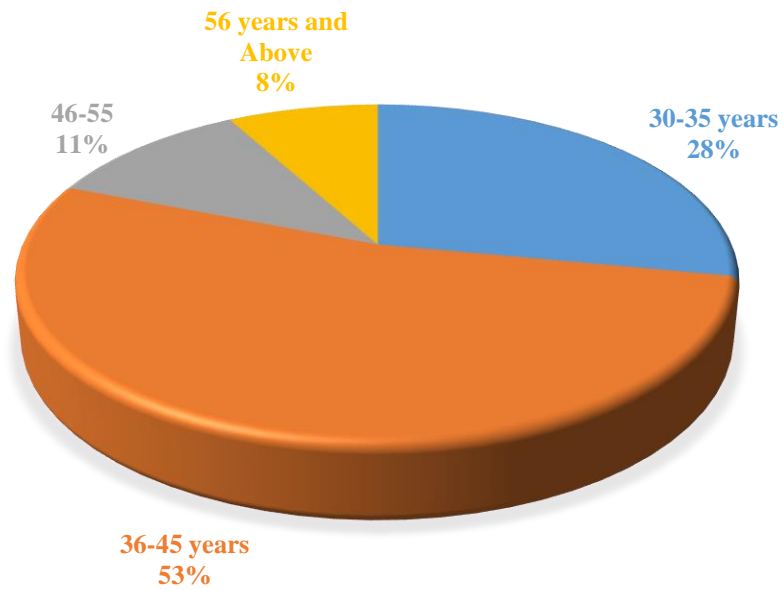


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Figure 1 presented data on the age distribution of the respondents and it showed that; 28% of the respondents were within ages 30-35 years, 53% were within ages 36-45 years, 11% were found to be within ages 46-55, and the remaining 8% were 56 years and above. These responses showed that, a greater proportion of the respondents of the study were matured single women. This is an indication of the respondent's age group whose views or responses were over represented in the study. It can also be inferred that, the single women who were either divorce or widow before constituted the majority of respondents for the study.

Table 1: Highest Educational Qualification of Respondents

| Highest Educational Qualification | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|--|------------------|------------------------|
| No Formal Education | 3 | 6% |
| Senior High School | 26 | 52% |
| Highest National Diploma (HND) | 7 | 14% |
| Professional | 6 | 12% |
| First Degree | 5 | 10% |
| Masters | 3 | 6% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 1 indicated the highest educational qualification of the respondents, which was discovered that, 3 respondents representing 6% had no formal education, followed by 26 respondents representing 52% hold a senior high certificate, 14% of the respondents hold a higher national diploma (HND) certificate. However, 6 respondents representing 12% had professional qualification, 5 respondents representing 10% were first degree holders, and 6% of the respondents hold post graduate qualification. It shows from Table 1 that, the majority of the respondents were senior higher school certificate holders. Thus, it can be asserted that, the majority of the respondents were not highly educated.

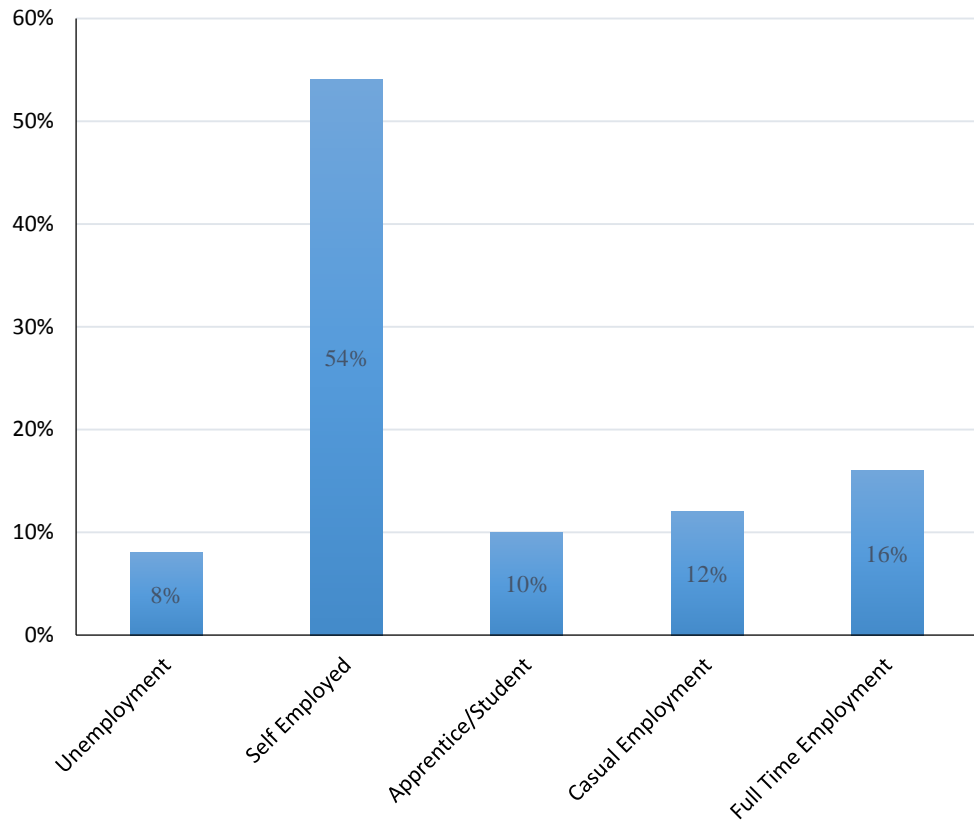


Figure 2: Employment Status of Respondents

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Figure 2 presents the employment status of the respondents. It was indicated in that, 8% of the respondents were unemployed, 54% of the respondents were self-employed, 10% of the respondents were either apprentice or students and 12% were engaged in casual employment (usually contract for service). However, the study brought to the fore that 16% of the respondents were in full time employment with an organisation and serve as employees of organisations. Thus, it can be ascertained that, the majority (more than an average of the total respondents) were sole self-employed and managing their own businesses as proprietors.

What the Respondent Specifically Does for a Living

The responses solicited shows that, the respondents were engaged in various economic activities. It was revealed that some of the respondents operated cold stores, chemical/Pharmaceutical shops and restaurants. However, majority of the respondents were into petty trading, food vendors, hair dressing, dress making, baking, sale of foodstuffs, clothing, cosmetics, mobile phone and accessories and stationaries notably, few of the respondent that, they have enrolled in various tertiary institutions and vocational schools learning a trade or profession whilst doing some business of a sort.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Never Married | 32 | 64% |
| Divorced | 8 | 16% |
| Widow | 6 | 12% |
| Married but Separated | 4 | 8% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 2 shows the marital status of single women in the church. It was revealed that; 32 respondents representing 64% were never married, 8 respondents representing 16% were divorced women, followed by 6 respondents representing 12% were widows and 4 respondents representing 8% were married but separated from their husbands. It shows from the responses

solicited that majority of the total respondents in this study have never been married.

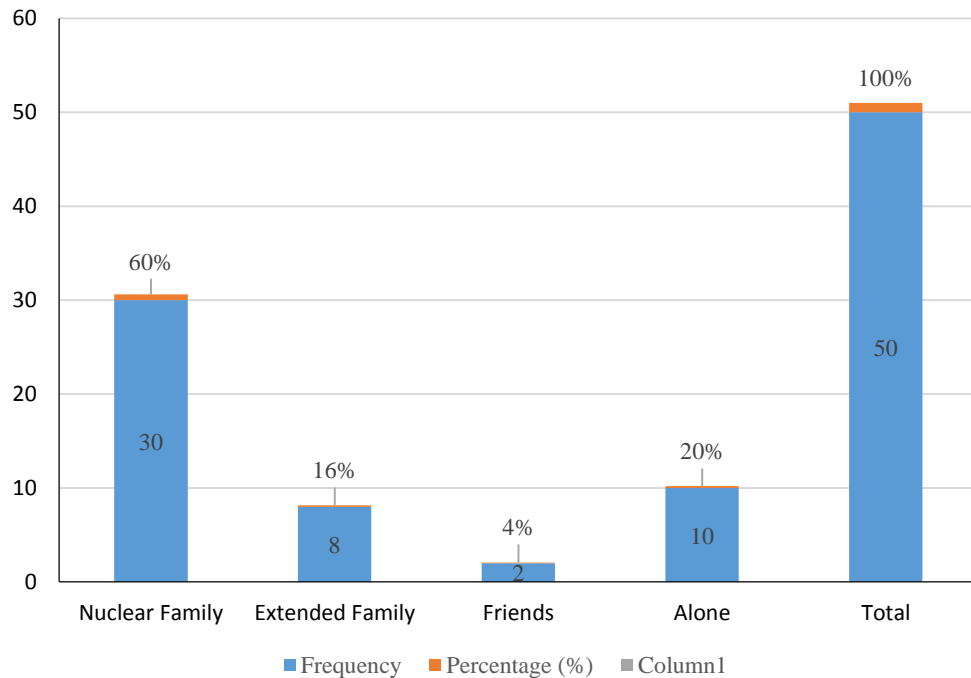


Figure 3: Friends and Family Members living with the Respondents

Source: Field Data, August 2021

It was revealed in the Figure 3 above that; 30 respondents representing 60% live with their nuclear family members, 8 respondents representing 16% live with their extended family members. However, 2 respondent representing 4% live with friends and 10 respondents representing 20% live alone. The study showed that majority of the respondent live with their nuclear family. These are women who were never been married before. However, the nuclear family may include; the parents (mother and father) and siblings living as a family with the respondents.

Prospects of Single Women in the Church

Table 3: Respondents Participation in Activities that Enhanced Personal Development

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 21 | 42% |
| No | 29 | 58% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Sources: Field Data, August 2021

Table 3 presents the participation of respondents in various activities that enhanced their personal development. However, Table 3 apparently reflects that; 21 respondents representing 42% have participated in one form of activities or the other, which has enhanced their personal development. On the contrary, 29 respondents representing 58% noted that, they have never participated in any activity that enhanced their personal development goals.

Forms of Activities Participated by the Respondents

The respondents who acknowledge their participation in personal development activities spelt out clearly that, they were involved in short course vocational programs include: interior decoration, catering, basketry and beads making etc. however, the respondents who were employed in the formal sectors opined that, they have either participated in training programs provided by their employees at the work place or pursued formal education to acquire the requisite skill and competency to perform on their job roles. The respondents perceived this as an avenue to advance their career goals.

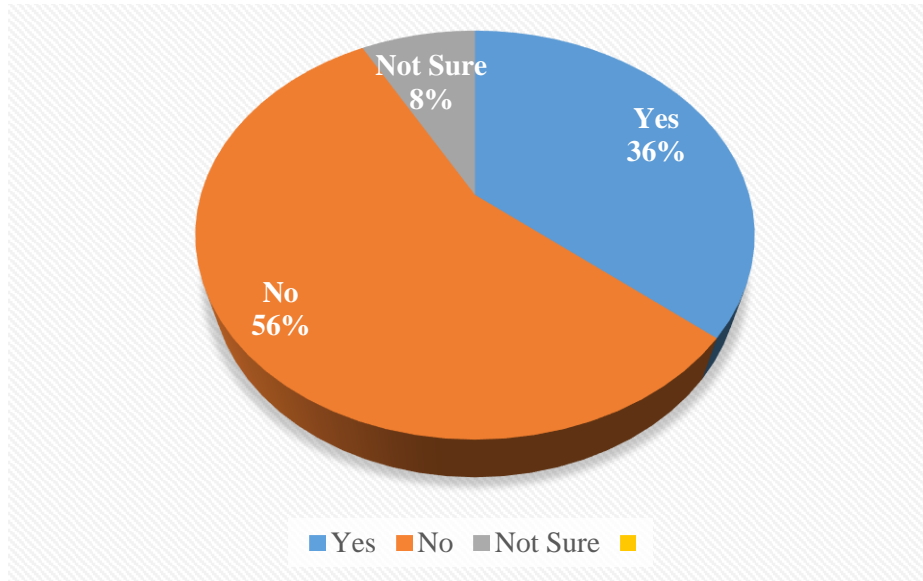


Figure 4: Contribution of Single Womanhood to the fulfillment of Aspirations

Source: Field Data, August 2021

As presented in Figure 4 above, 36% of the respondents believed that, their state as single women has contributed to the achievement of their aspirations while 56% of the respondents asserts otherwise. However, the remaining 8% of the respondents stated that, they were not sure whether or not their state as single women had contributed or influenced their aspirations. Thus, the study revealed that the status of single womanhood has not actually contributed to fulfillment of aspirations as attested to by the majority of the respondents.

Following the data presented above, the few respondents that believed the state of single womanhood has contributed to achieving aspirations indicated that; it was an avenue to identify, groom, develop and utilize one's talent, potentials and skills to the benefit of herself, church, family and the society as a whole. Others noted that, it was an opportunity to discover and pursue one's career choices and take the advantage of the full strength and

capability enshrined in them. Nevertheless, some of the respondents opined that, it gives a woman the freedom of been committed to martial responsibilities and family ties response were peculiar with the single women who were never married. For those that were either divorced or widowed they posit that, it is a period that comes with its own challenges yet an opportunity to examine women’s ability to make independent decision and direct the focus of life without much influence of a spouse. However, it was highly emphasized notwithstanding the view that single womanhood is a very much challenging state of women life, others believed it is an avenue to develop self-confidence and take responsibility over what is aspired to be achieve in life.

Table 4: Assessing the Impact of Single Women on the Church

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Positive | 16 | 32% |
| Neutral | 10 | 20% |
| Negative | 24 | 48% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

In Table 4 above, 16 respondents representing 32% are of the view that, they are able to impact positively on the church as single women. On the contrary, 24 respondents representing 48% disagree with this proposition. However, 10 respondents representing 20% held a neutral view.

Challenges of Single Women in the Church

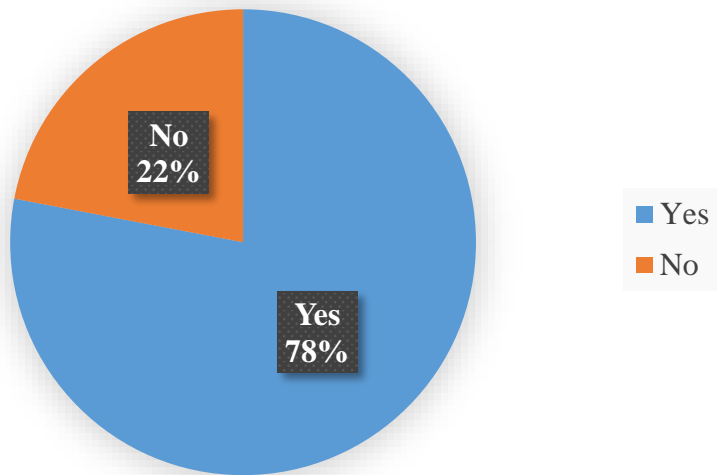


Figure 5: Problems of Managing the Church

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Figure 5 showed that, 78% of the respondents have problems with the management of their church. On the contrary, 22% of the respondents indicated that they do not have problems managing their church.

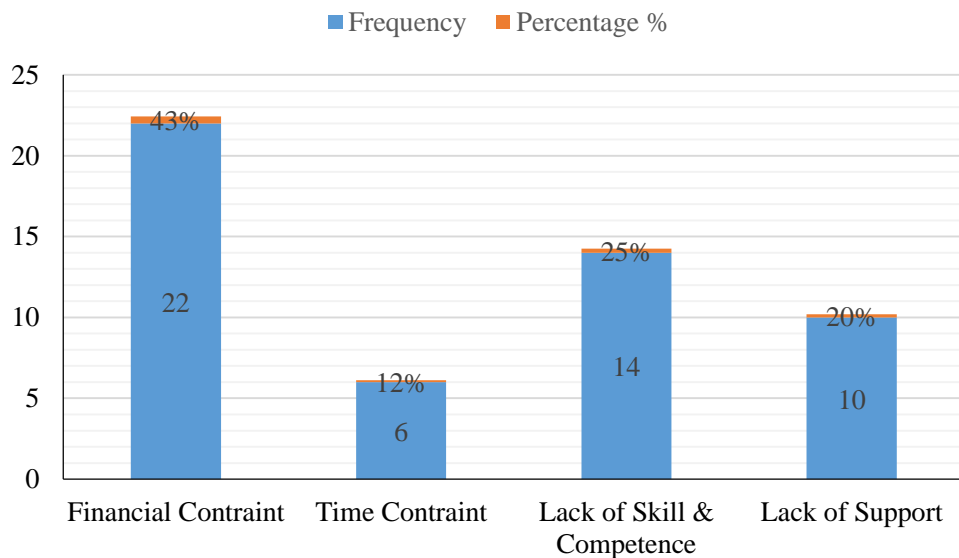


Figure 6: The Challenges that mostly affect Single Women in the Church

Source: Field Data, August 2021

It was clearly disclosed in Figure 6 above that; 22 respondents representing 43% noted financial constraint as the challenge that mostly affects them, because they are not employed or given a position by the church to work for their daily bread as others. 6 respondents representing 12% opined time constraint as a challenge that mostly impact on them. However, 14 respondents representing 25% cited lack of skill and competence to handle matters or issues at the church as a challenge that mostly affects them. Interestingly, 10 respondent representing 20% noted that lack of support mostly affect them.

Table 5: Respondents receipt of help from other Relations (friends or families) of the Church

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 20 | 40% |
| No | 30 | 60% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 5 established that, 44% of the respondents do receive some forms of assistance from family relations and friends while 60% of the respondents indicated that they do not receive any help from friends or family of the church.

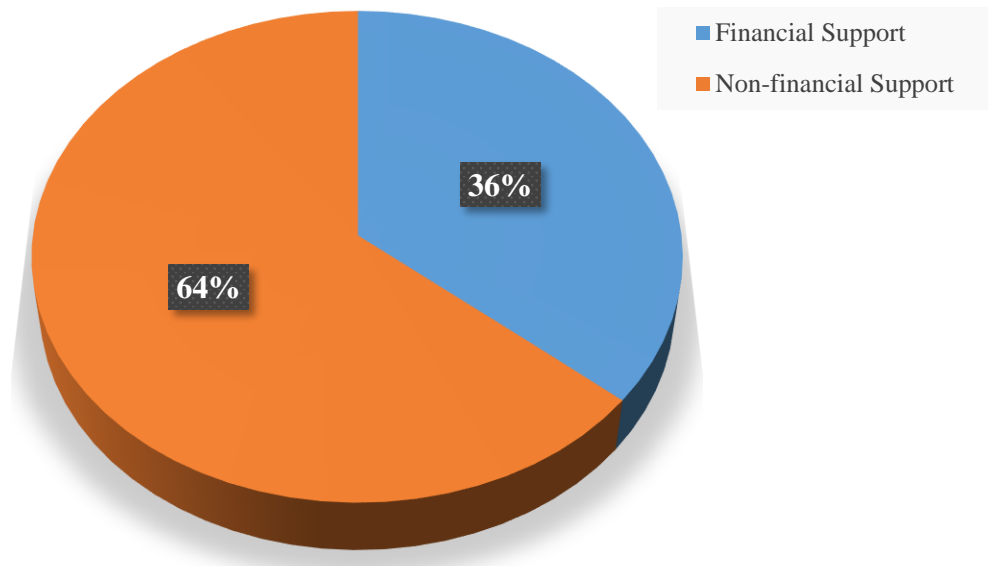


Figure 7: Form of help Provided to the Respondents in the Church

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Figure 7 present that, 36% of the respondents noted that they provided with financial support. However, the majority constituting 64% of the respondents stated that they are provided with non-financial support from their church relations (friend and family).

Table 6: Problem of Managing the Home

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 36 | 78% |
| No | 14 | 22% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 6 showed that, 78% of the respondents have problems with the management of their home. On the contrary, 22% of the respondents indicated that they do not have problems managing their home.

Table 7: Aspects of Home Management Respondents mostly Encounter Problems

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Child Care | 5 | 10% |
| Providing Meal | 9 | 18% |
| Health, Sanitation & Hygiene | 25 | 50% |
| Repair & Maintenance | 11 | 22% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

In Table 7 above, 50 respondents represent 100% of the responses of the total respondents provided to the question. However, the respondents presented a number of challenges with some aspects of home management. It was revealed that, 10% of the respondents indicated child care, 18% of the respondents cited provision of meals and 50% stated health, sanitation and hygiene as problems associated with home management. Interestingly, 22% of the respondents mentioned repairs and maintenance as a major challenges with home management. The table above showcased that, majority of the respondents have problems of health, sanitation and hygiene which basically involve good health and medication, waste management, safety and welfare in the home.

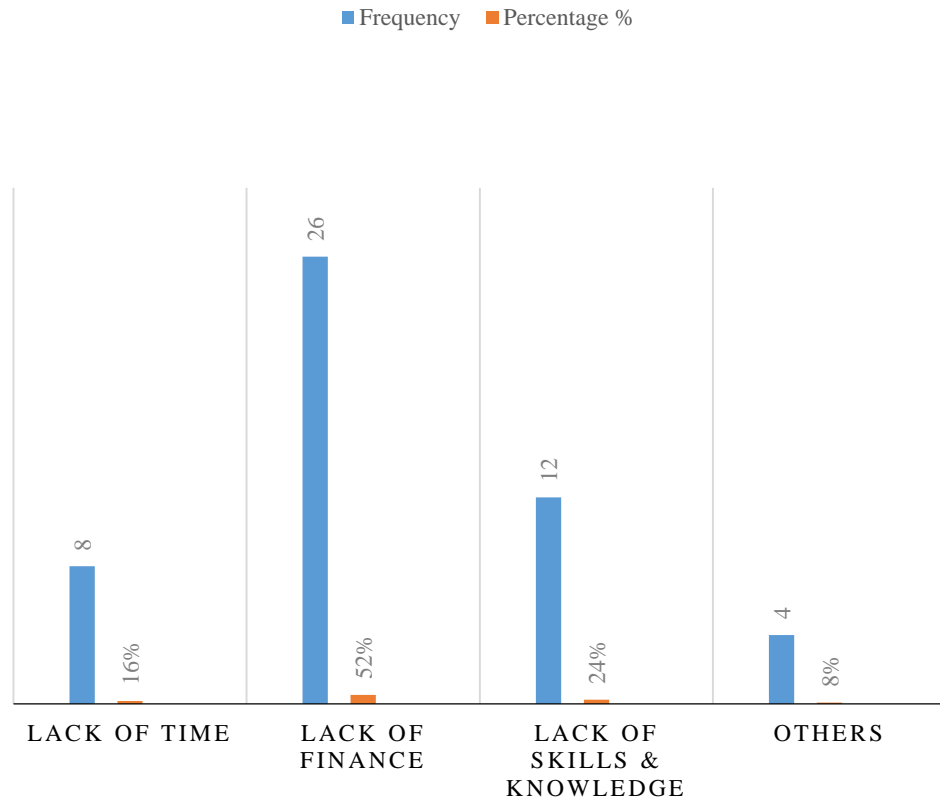


Figure 8: Major Causes of the Problems of Managing the Home

Source: Field Data, August 2021

From Figure 8 above, it was unveiled that, 50 respondents represent 100% of the total responses of the respondents provided to the question. 8 responses representing 16% of the respondents indicated lack of time as the major cause of the problem of managing their home, 26 respondents representing 50% mentioned lack of finance as the major cause of the problem of managing the home, 12 respondents representing 24% were of the opinion that lack of skills and knowledge on home management was the major cause of the problem of managing the home. Notably, 4 respondents representing 8% pointed out that, others (lack of family support) were a major problem of managing the home.

The pattern of the response presented in Figure 6, emphasized lack of finance or financial constraints as a major cause of the problems of home management for the majority of the respondents.

Table 8: Respondents with Children

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 16 | 32% |
| No | 39 | 68% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 8 above illustrates that, out of fifty (50) respondents, 32% of the respondents have children, whilst 68% of the respondents do not have children. This observation indicated that, the majority of the single women do not responsibility of taking care and upbringing of their own children.

Specific Challenges faced by Single Women

Home Management

The respondents in their narration cited a number of challenges face in home management. Some of the respondents opined that; they were challenged in terms of performing their roles effectively in the management of the home and on their job roles at the workplace. They asserted largely that; find it difficult combining work schedules in the organisation with the responsibilities of home management. This was much a peculiar case of the single women who were either gainfully employed as sole proprietors or as employees of organisations (popularly referred to as “working class women” or “career

women”). As the case may be, the problem was more aggravated for those with children whether biological or adopted.

The respondents added that, time factor was a major constraint confronting them as they barely received any assistance from their family relations or friends. Interestingly, some of single women interviewed testified that in the light of the time constraints; family members living with them were asked to take some responsibilities associated with the management of home. Interestingly, a few of single mothers in an interview held, opined providing for other basic necessities and maintaining the home was costly. They further added that, managing the home is simple yet required some amount vocational, creativity, innovativeness and commitment to perform effectively which they often lack in the management of their home. Notably, they stated that they do not have any formal schedules or planning for the home.

Achievement of Career Goals

The responses solicited from a good number of respondents identified within the informal sector; basically, those engaged in brisk businesses and had no formal structure for doing business revealed that, lack of finance was a huge problem that impeded their chances of accessing or pursuing formal education. During an interview with the single mother parents, it was much disclosed that financial constraints was a huge hurdle to reckon with, in terms of financing the education of children and the pursuit of one’s own career goals. In an interview with a section of the single women who were gainfully employed in the formal sector, it was interesting to find out that, they unanimously cited that time constraints was a major factor accountable to the inability to pursue career goals.

Church (Organisation)

The criteria for electing Church leaders were also highly criticized by the single women claiming that they are not only excluded in the decision making of the church but also considered unfit for Church leadership. There is a stigma surrounding women who are infertile because they are blamed for this condition. They feel like a punishment that stands to be an attack on their vision and focus on the future. Barren women in the field of my study have no status in society. They live a life of great sorrow and regrets, feeling that they are missing something important in their lives.

The responses solicited from the single women that were gainfully employed in the formal sector organisations, clearly emphasized that; some of them have at one point in their church life been discriminated in the offer of a particular job or position and specification or description of various job roles within the church or the organisation. They added that, they have also witnessed discrimination within the church in terms of leadership positions and roles such as pastors, managers/administrators, deaconess or deacons, etc.

Family

In an interview section the respondent respondents cited some challenges witnessed from their families. The respondents claimed that; their families prohibit or frowns on women who desire to remain single, as child bearing was considered an important part of every woman's life for that matter marriage. The respondents opined that the family member sometimes make abusive statements and make ridicule or mockery at them and often treat them like out casts of the family. Other respondents mentioned that, they were pressurized

and coerced to get married as they often disassociate with them particularly in family gathering.

Psychological and Emotional Imbalance

The responses provided by the respondents showcased that, some of the single women do experience for the love and affection of a man. The respondents noted that it is not easy to cope with such desires as such needs cannot be met until the single woman gets married, because religious ethics and discipline forbids act of sex outside the context of marriage. A few of the respondents mentioned that in the instances where they cannot keep up with their sexual desires they get intimate with their male associate. When the respondents were asked about their fear of getting pregnant or even sexually transmitted diseases, it was astonishing to find out that, such women even in the church were ready to take chances or risk to satisfy their sexual, psychological and emotional desire irrespective of their Christian life and the dire consequences involved. Others noted that, at the peak of the sexual appetite they become emotional and psychologically inactive and imbalanced.

Table 9: The Desire of the Respondent to Marry at a Later Time

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Yes | 20 | 40% |
| No | 30 | 60% |
| Total | 50 | 100% |

Source: Field Data, August 2021

Table 9 defined that, 20 respondents representing 40% mentioned that they do not wish to marry some time later in life, while 30 respondents representing 60% as the majority desire to marry at a later time in life. This observation is a clear indication to the fact that; most of the single women that participate in the study were mature adult in their youthful and active age, who may consider settling with a man as to make a family life.

Expectations of the Respondents from the Church & the Society towards Single Women

The responses solicited from the majority of the respondents pointed out that, single women expected the church family to show concern and love for them. Thus, they mentioned that the religious bodies should support and help them to protest against the act of discrimination of the church and the society at large. Again, some opined that the church and the society must understand that single womanhood is not necessarily an abhorred state of women's life. They further exclaimed that, single women must be allowed to relinquish their full potentials and to be useful to the church families and the entire society, instead of wasting much of their youthful and productive life waiting and preparing for marriage and becoming unproductive to the husband and the family. They added that; it only becomes a taboo of the society where the woman does not accomplish proactive role and perform the moral rights expected of them.

Some respondents of single women who were interviewed claimed that the church either excludes them from becoming leaders or are partially given fewer responsibilities like taking care of children, leading choruses, and songs in the Church. In some instances, some argued that such responsibilities are only

given to them as a way of testing them, especially single women who cannot give birth to children. One respondent said that when some Church responsibilities are given to them as a way of testing them, then they feel so frustrated and mostly are in great distress. She (respondent) stated that, she feels so frustrated in the church because the only responsibility entrusted to her is to take care of the Sunday school children. Handling children is not an easy task for her. It is challenging because married women in the church discuss her inability to give birth, even amidst their children. This makes her feel sad, and in most cases, she feel like giving up. It is like testing her faith in God because one wonders why the church does not consider giving such responsibilities to the women who have experience in childbirth and child-rearing (she said). This task, according to her, should be given to those women with children who are knowledgeable in dealing with children.

Furthermore, another respondent argued that although she feels talented enough to lead God's people, no one considers giving her the responsibility to do so. Many think she should first get married to lead God's people, which she thinks is ridiculous among people who claim to love and know God. They always ask her to lead songs and choruses as they think she have a talent, but they cannot ask her to lead prayers or become a leader of the women group, which she think is kind of discriminative since she feel she have a calling to be a leader (respondent explained).

Finally, other respondents concurred that; single women must be given the full support and encouragement to identify, groom and develop their skills, talent and potentials in order to contribute to the growth and development of the church and society in their own little way.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study examined the challenges and prospects of single women. The source of data used was from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from single women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, a suburb of Accra. The secondary data was collected from books, journals, articles and the internet.

This chapter will discuss the challenges and prospects of the single women in the church and the society as a whole as reported in the study. Also to be talked about are the recommendations made from the study.

Summary

Concerning the objectives of the study, the findings of this research were that the majority of the respondents have problems with finance or financial constraints, and lack of support from the church family. The findings have also shown that, a greater number of single women do not have children and therefore do not have responsibilities when it comes to child care.

Again, the respondents emphasized lack of health and hygiene which basically involve good health and medication, waste management, safety and welfare in the home.

Further, some of them too confessed to not being assigned in partaking in activities or roles in the church management. It was revealed that single women are far more excluded and negatively impacted than their male

counterparts. It was clear that cultural beliefs were the main factors leading to the marginalization of single women in the church. The informants expressed how they are negatively treated and perceived as immature and incomplete, hence excluded from church leadership positions.

With regards to their jobs, they said it is very difficult for them to combine work schedules in the organisation with the responsibilities of home management. This however is peculiar with single women with children. Single women with children also mentioned that, many at times their children lack proper parental care as they are usually left at the mercy of house helps because of time constraints. However, this practice is common among single women who could afford the payment of the hired house helps and nannies.

Again, in the formal sector organisation, single women are being discriminated against, when it comes to the offer of a particular job or position and specification of various job roles within the organisation in terms of pay, rewards and compensation plans.

Most of the single women also face the challenge among their families as they frown on them remaining single. Others mentioned the psychological trauma they faced and it is sometimes difficult for them to control their sexual desires. Some of them boldly declared they would not hesitate satisfying their sexual desires by every means not being careful of what the consequences may be.

It was very touching when some of them solicited for love and support from the church members. They also expected the church and the society to understand that 'single womanhood is not necessarily an abhorred state of a woman's life'.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was noted that; the second larger number of single women represented on figure 1, which is 28% are in their middle adulthood and may have the chance of getting married before they cross into old adulthood which is also not a disadvantage. The table 1, also showed that the largest population of single women's educational background is Senior High School. This may make it difficult for them to be employed in higher institutions for higher pay. What it means is that these number of people when nothing is done about their lives in terms of career development, their financial lives is likely to remain the same.

It can also be concluded that single women with Higher National Diploma, First Degree, Professional and Post Graduate degrees according to the research which forms the lesser percentage on the table are likely to be financially sound than those with the Senior High School Certificate. It is an undeniable fact that individuals could be involved in trading and be financially sound but other benefits that people working in the formal sector get like sick leave, medical care and others may not be available for those in personal trading. They might create it, but will be with no pay.

It was amazing to discover that 36% of the respondents took advantage of single womanhood to fulfil their aspirations according to figure 4. The conclusion is that the impact of the challenges of single women on them might be minimum knowing that after all, their life is not a waste. 8% of them in figure 4 can be said to be confused about their state of being single as they are not sure whether single womanhood had contributed or influenced their aspirations.

The study had shown that some of the single women in the church (Christians) are ready to satisfy their sexual desires not being mindful of what the outcome may be.

Finally, from the literature review, Kathenya (2021) in his study, revealed that single women are far more excluded and negatively impacted than their male counterparts. He stated that it was clear that cultural beliefs were the main factors leading to the marginalization of single women in the church. I (the researcher) second with Kathenya ideology. Because, indeed single women mostly are excluded from taking part in decision making, taking leadership roles and even not in any activities of the church and our society. They are somehow treated as immature (lack of skill & wisdom), and incomplete. Nevertheless, if initiatives are taking and leaders of our church and society rethink indiscrimination these single women will learn to develop their potential and will be matured, complete, skilled and knowledgeable in almost any of their endeavours.

Also, in the literature review, Amu (2005) asserts that single women have always suffered discrimination from different areas of life's endeavours ranging from society to the workplace. He said, in many organisations, some job roles have become the preserve for married women. Single women who are equally qualified for certain positions are disqualified. Notwithstanding, in other situations, single women are assigned more responsibilities as they are considered to have plenty of time available to focus on the performance of a job.

I (the researcher) agrees with Amu (2005) assertions because in this situation where the single woman is been given more responsibilities signifies

that the single woman is of no child(ren). Unlike single women with children, they may not get enough or plenty of time to work.

Recommendations

- Churches and other religious bodies should see it as a need to educate their members as to what it means to be a single woman and what it stands for, with the employment of gender equalities, and not to discriminate. This will however clear their minds from any stereotype they have about women who are single either by choice or by situations. This when done would help them accept any single woman that comes their ways wholeheartedly.
- Also, employers should consider gender equity and mainstream as part of their decision making policy which will afford women of all statuses the opportunity to balance work and family issue.
- Church criticizing their members who are single women should rather be loved, encouraged and supported at all times. This is believed to minimize the challenges of single womanhood. Again, they may feel secure that they belong to a church family and then think about productive issues which will enhance their personal life and family (home) growth.
- According to Stoop and Stoop (2004), money is not everything, but it is woven through our lives. It is clear that no one can do without money no matter what the status or responsibilities of the individual. Single women should first accept their financial challenges and believe that until they change the situation no one else can do. Taking initiative is

key to breaking barriers in life. Single women should not despites the small beginning when it comes to making money.

- The single woman should learn to save money no matter how small it is. There should be a way to downscale their financial needs. It is not everything that crosses one's mind which needs financial attention. Needs must be placed above wants.
- Creativity and values are very important for financial liberty. After creating businesses, one must go ahead to put a value on them to make them different from those that are already in the market.
- Non-Government Organisations that are business-minded should be able to reach out for single women especially those with children and train them as to how to do business in group and as an individual, the basis for these suggestions is that, during the interview, it was discovered that some single women engaged in 'break businesses and had no formal structures for in them'.
- Many single women are traumatized due to the factors like not being able to marry at a particular time, the death of a spouse, or divorce. Stoop and Stoop (2004) postulated that, relaxation is what is important for the individual at that time. 'One should not react to normal ups and downs negatively. Talking to friends about one's feelings is one way of getting emotional healing'.
- Since home management seems to be one of the major challenges of single women, time as a resource should be managed very well. The single woman whether with children or not should make it a point to know when to go to bed and when to wake up to be able to tackle things

that concern the home to avoid stress which serves as a challenge to them.

- Education they say 'is the key to success'. Single women should take advantage of their state and do everything possible to get themselves educated as it will boost their confidence level in life and as well as their child(ren).
- Finally, extensive research can be conducted to examine the extent of the challenges and the prospects of single women. The study could delve into that since the objective of the research was to explore the challenges and prospects of single women in Fountain Gate Chapel.

Limitation of the Study

The analysis sought to evaluate the Challenges and Prospects of Single Women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor, Accra.

Inadequate time may not permit the researcher to interview all selected respondents serving as junior and senior members of the church. Reluctant of the informants to grant the researcher interview and may delay in filling a questionnaire. The possibility that the informants may give the researcher inaccurate information on a question to be posed and finally the lack of genuine medication to eradicate this global pandemic (Covid-19) has limited consultation for further research.

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APPENDIX A
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of Theology & Education

Dear Participant,

The researcher is a student of Central University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, department of Theology & Education, researching on the topic: Challenges and Prospects of Single Women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor. The researcher would be grateful if you could respond to the following questions to assist her collect all the necessary data recommended for the success of this research work. Please note, where the researcher has written “Yes” and “No” or provide alternative answers tick one that is applicable.

Part I

Bio Data of Participants / Respondents (single women)

1. Age Group: 26-35 [] 36-45 [] 46-55 [] above 55 []
2. Education Background:
 - a. No formal education []
 - b. Basic school level []
 - c. Secondary school level []
 - d. Higher national diploma []
 - e. First degree level []

3. What is your status in the church?
- a. Pastor []
 - b. Deacons []
 - c. Women fellowship leader []
 - d. Senior Member []
 - e. Youth fellowship leader []
4. Employment Status:
- a. Unemployment []
 - b. Self-employment []
 - c. Apprenticeship []
 - d. Casual employment []
 - e. Others (please specify)
5. Single woman status:
- a. Never married []
 - b. Divorce []
 - c. Widow []
 - d. Separate []
6. Who do you live with?
- a. Nuclear family []
 - b. Extended family []
 - c. Friends []
 - d. Alone []

Part II

Prospect of Single Women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor

- 7. Are you currently involved in activities that will enhance your personal development?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []

- 8. If yes, please state the activities are you engaged in?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

- 9. Do you think your state as a single woman has contributed to the fulfillment of aspirations?
 - a. Yes []
 - b. No []

- 10. If yes, in what way do you think your state as a single woman has contributed to the fulfillment of aspirations please?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

- 11. How will you assess the impact of your ability as single womanhood to contribute value to the church and the society?
 - a. Positive []
 - b. Negative []

c. Neutral []

Challenges of Single Women in the Church

12. Do you have problems being in the church?

a. Yes []

b. No []

13. If yes, what aspects of being in the church do you encounter problems?

a. Do not feel like family []

b. Not involved in positions []

c. No assigned roles []

d. No benefit []

e. Others (please specify)

14. What do you think is the major cause of the problems of being in the church?

a. Lack of time []

b. Lack of finance []

c. Lack of skill & Knowledge []

d. Others (please specify)

15. Do you have children?

a. Yes []

b. No []

16. Which of these challenges mostly affects you as a single woman?

a. Financial constraints []

b. Time resource []

c. Lack of skill & competencies []

d. Other (please specify)

17. Do you receive help from church, family relation or friend?

a. Yes []

b. No []

18. If yes, what form of help do you receive?

a. Financial support []

b. Non-financial support []

c. Other (please specify)

19. Do you wish to marry at a later time?

a. Yes []

b. No []

20. How do you think your state as a single woman has impacted on you, the church and the society as a whole?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

21. What kinds of support do you require to help you to address your challenges as a single woman?

a. Financial support []

b. Non-financial support []

c. Others (please specify).....

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following are questions used in interviews with some participants in asking for their views on the topic: Challenges and Prospects of Single Women in Fountain Gate Chapel, Ofankor.

1. Do you have problems being in the church?
2. What do you think is the major cause of the problems of being in the church?
3. Do you have children?
4. Which of these challenges mostly affects you as a single woman?
5. Do you receive help from church, family relation or friend?
6. Do you wish to marry at a later time?
7. How do you think your state as a single woman has impacted on you, the church and the society as a whole?
8. Who do you live with?
9. Are you currently involved in activities that will enhance your personal development?
10. Do you think your state as a single woman has contributed to the fulfillment of aspirations?
11. How will you assess the impact of your ability as single womanhood to contribute value to the church and the society?