The MisEducation of Single Mothers

When you see a young minority single mother, what thoughts do you get in your mind? Where is the father? Was she promiscuous? How is she providing for that child? How about strength, perseverance and financially stable? The paper will break down the effects of being raised by an African American single mother in the time period of 1980s-current. Society tends to stereotype this population instead of taken the time to really be educated on this growing trend. Being a young single mother in today's society is challenging with the lack of help and opportunities, single mothers are struggling to maintain stability for their family. This paper will allow you to see a prospective on both a negative and positive impact on being raised by a single mother. Today, 1 in 3 children – a total of 15 million – are being raised without a father. Of that group, nearly half live below the poverty line.

With the lack of opportunities single mothers become more of statistics then a success story. The United State government set up a structure of oppression in which they classify as “Public Assistance” in which many of these young single mothers are misguided to live off of. The modern form of oppression doesn’t not only affect the young mother but also her child creating an inferior upbringing with can cause lasting effects such as Recidivism, a Generational cycle ( in which you see in young girls) and many of other issues. Although this topic seems to show some negative aspects, some young mothers where fortunate to take their situation and use it towards their ability to strive to provide a positive structure for their children upbringing. This paper will tackle both sides of being in allowing others to finally understand the structure behind some of youth.

“It take a village to raise a child”- African proverb. This quote has been passed through many of generations but to seem to have no effect in modern day society. Single Mother seems to be a growing trend in society especially minorities. “There are so many young African American mothers in today’s society that it’s become a norm to be raised by one-parent family with a young mother in charge”. Being a young single in today’s society is pressure, hardships and everyday struggle that single mothers have to endure sends a better message about ethics and determination to the children they bring up with the lack of help from the government. There has been an increase in single motherhood between the years 1980 to present day. This has both created both a negative and positive impact on the developmental, educational and generational outcomes in females as well as male of single mother homes.

In the United States, the number of single mother families has risen drastically over the past few decades. This growing trend has concern policy makers and the public to identify this as a main factor of the long term increase within the poverty. During the late 70’s to the early 80’s the increase within the minority population of single mothers lead to numerous initiatives within government to strengthening marriage. It can be seen in the legislation of the “Welfare Reform” to encourage the “two-parent family” formation in efforts to provide structure and stability to children during this time. This trend has progress through the time with little of growth. With some of the same factors that effected single mothers of the past Society has seem to build a growing acceptance of this trend.

In the effects of being raised in a single mother home it has been shown to go beyond the economic standpoint and impacting the developmental aspect of the child. According to the author Thomas Deleire in his piece ***“Good Things Come in Threes: Single-Parent Multigenerational Family Structure and Adolescent Adjustment***” he stated that ‘Researchers have not reached a consensus as to why and how family structure matters. Four theories prevail: economic deprivation, socialization, stress, and community resources (Haurin 1992; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994). The economic deprivation perspective argues that much of the difference in child outcomes between single-parent and two-parent families is a result of poverty. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) found that family economic resources account for half the differences in child developmental outcomes between single-mother families and their two-parent counterpart”. In meaning due to low economic stability most single mothers can’t afford to provide cultural experiences and other developmental experiences that would provide a cultural outlook on life such as if in a two parent family they have more of a possibility of affording developmental experience’s and providing their children with a variety of activities that enrich the mind. Although he makes a point of providing your child with experience Actor/Host Terrance Jenkins provide in his book “***“The Wealth of My Mother's Wisdom: The Lessons That Made My Life Rich”*** a product of a single mother family he allows us to witness his mother struggles to raise him and provide a great example of a positive developmental impact she had on his life to lead him to success. “Outside of her job, Mom was 100 percent focused on me. Weekends were about taking me to the park, or the zoo, or riding a train to the beach-just the two of us.” Jenkins prove that money doesn’t have to be a main factor in developing your child more than likely you can allow you can allow your child to develop well through free activities.

. Another point of which developmental comes through is through socializing and behavior.” The socialization perspective argues that two parents are crucial for providing an optimal childrearing environment and that children benefit from the presence of a male role model in a two parent home. For example, children in two-parent families have a theoretically greater opportunity to be taken on cultural outings, to have their television and after-school activities monitored, and to have an adult become involved in school activities. (Deleire, 2002) This argument totally can be proven in the success in Jenkins in which his biological father didn’t play a major role in his life but his stepfather did which he provided a strong male figure for him to follow and gain the proper develop to be a strong male figure.

Another aspect of being raised by a single mother that is shown is through education. Research concludes that” is being raised by a single mother increase the child of dropping out of school and disconnecting from the work force”. Single mothers often spend over half of their income on housing expenses and a third on child care, leaving them with less money for educational expenses. With lack of education it is seen in young man they begin to turn to the street and continue with a life of crime that usually lands them in jail. This brings up the topic of Recidivism. It is seen in society that today’s generation is taken a turn for the worse with the prison rate increasing .It is shown in several of studies that more than half of inmates released return to criminal behavior after arrests, convictions, punishments, and correctional program participation. “Recidivism is defined as “a tendency to relapse into a previous condition or mode of behavior; especially: relapse into criminal behavior”. Although serving their time ex-offenders are still not given the best of opportunities when released, to better themselves whether it is due to the financial problems or through family/friends influences. According to Paul Florsheim, Patrick Tolan and Deborah Gorman-Smith the authors of ***“Family Relationships, Parenting Practices, the Availability of Male Family Members, and the Behavior of Inner-City Boys in Single-Mother and Two-Parent Families”*** they provide the following study to show with an lack of education plays in the role of young boys turning to a life a crime. “The primary goal of this study was to clarify if and how differences in the functioning of single-mother and two-parent families relate to the occurrence of behavioral problems among inner-city boys (ages 10-15). Data were collected on family relationships, parenting practices, the positive influence of male family members, and the severity of externalizing behavior problems. Results indicated that (1) multiple family risk factors contribute to the occurrence of behavior problems; (2) most family risk factors were generalizable to both single-mother and two-parent families; (3) although boys in single-mother families were at greater risk for developing behavior problems than boys in two-parent families, the risks associated with single motherhood were offset by a structured family environment, an effective disciplinary strategy that allowed for some degree of adolescent autonomy, and the positive involvement of a male family member; and (4) not all differences and the functioning of single-mother and two-parent families were associated with problem behavior, underscoring the importance of distinguishing between adaptive and maladaptive aspects of single-mother family function” . This effect has correlation with developing the child right and enforcing a great education in which can be proven with then any aspect.

Many women take for granted the freedoms that they have today. Some have forgotten what their own mothers and grandmothers went through. In a generational standpoint seen in most young girls they tend to follow their parent footsteps. Author Elaine Bell Kaplan discusses this topic dealing with the African American Culture in ***“Black Teenage Mothers and Their Mothers: Impact of Adolescent Childbearing***. Kaplan states ““The popular view assumes that Black families condone teenage motherhood. This study argues that this assumption is incorrect, finding instead that teenage motherhood can produce long-term conflict both in family relations and structure”. Jenkins also provides in his piece the story of the young girl he mentoring and her following the footsteps of her mother in which she ended up pregnant at a young age. In society young girls are ended up pregnant at a young age due to the lack of developing of oneself esteem and knowing ones worth. In relations to that it is proven that the Mother usually taken blame for the daughter following her footsteps she tries to avoid leading her down that road in trying to provide everything she wasn’t given at the age. In some case many mothers avoid being young grandparents but it few case it was unavoidable. The argument coincide with the lack of developmental and education playing a role in the total view.

In reference of the whole argument of being raised by a single mother it shows the reason of Poverty being the main point. It shows lack of being economical sufficient. Not being able to provide for one leads through a pile of problems. These problems can cause an effect in one trying to succeed in life. With an strong poverty line one may not receive the best education or live in the best neighborhood in which one can develop correctly and sufficiently. Poverty tends to affect minorities a lot and can be seen as a form of oppression not allowing one to achieve their full potential. This topic relates to classes in which we saw throughout the semester the effects of poverty to the minority race and how it plays a role in society’s structure.

There has been an increase in single motherhood between the years 1980 to present day. This has both created both a negative and positive impact on the developmental, educational and generational outcomes in females as well as male of single mother homes. This topic means so much to me due to I was raised by a single mother in which I seen her struggle to provide for her family. The struggle I seen my mother go through motivated me to strive for success and give back to the community. In light of offering new ideas a program should be created in which it allows education to play a major part in developing these young ladies to be active citizens in society. If one could provide a sense of empowerment to these ladies it would allow them to have even chance to succeed in life and afford the negative of effects of getting pregnant at a earlier. Although this is a touchy topic it was proven that not all single mothers have a negative end with the success of Terrance Jenkins.

SINGLE MOTHERS

Glen Williams

Young Mothers Society has you painted as a disgrace, only if they knew the look upon your face show sadness and displace. The world is on your shoulders & the journey has just begun. All you ever wanted was one night of fun. Did he forget it took two to make one. A stereotype of life you feel like you lost this fight. To strive is no longer your promise. You have a child to raise & nobody said it would be easy. This is not the life you planned for yourself. You don’t want to be on public assistance but how can you provide for em’. How could you pretend to be right within if society has no options for you? Lack of an Education whose going to hire you? But you’re determined to get right but while you’re getting right whose raising your kids? These streets aren’t no joke. But these streets are all these children know. Mama’s at work so these streets become all they are worth. Young boys become “THUGS” and Young girls become “Mothers”. Do you see the cycle? Lost for words some of us are fortunate to make it. I myself had the same options at you but I was determined to make do with what life had plan for me striving to fight against adversity of what was offer to me. I seen my mother struggle and took as my motivation. Young Mothers Society has you painted as disgrace, only if they knew the look upon your face show sadness and displace. Now the journey is continuing and who knows where it will end but my words to you is to fight to win.