

**THE ROLE OF GODPARENTS IN EDUCATING CHILDREN FOR HOLISTIC
GROWTH : A STUDY OF NYARHODHO PARISH, DIOCESE OF NEBBI**

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DECLARATION

I Egati Eric declare that this is my original research dissertation and was not been presented in any institution of higher learning for any academic award

Signature..........

Date.....19-09-2025.....

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research dissertation titled, *The role of god-parents in educating children for holistic growth at Nyarwodho parish, Diocese of Nebbi* by Egati Eric has been conducted under my supervision and submitted to the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology with my approval.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my dear lovely wife Atizuyo Sally who stood in prayers and work with me hand to hand in all aspects to help me in the period of this study. In addition, my children Munguleni Tracy, Aitah Livingstone, Mungueconi Ernest Deogratias and Fetah Joseph Godswill for their love, support, endurance and prayers rendered to me while away from home during the study time at the university. May God's bless them.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

C. O.U:	Church Of Uganda
ESV:	Standard English Version
NIV:	New International Version
COVID19:	Corona Virus Disease 2019
M. U:	Mothers' Union
F. U:	Fathers' Union
CWF:	Christian Women Fellowship

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development in Nyarwodho Parish, Goli Central Archdeaconry, and Nebbi Diocese. The objectives of the study were, to examine the current practices of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development at Nyarwodho Parish, Nebbi Diocese. To identify the challenges or problems that hinder effective god parenting in promoting holistic child development. To explore the strategies employed by the church to address the challenges faced by godparents in fulfilling their roles. The research was guided by the concern that, while godparents are chosen during baptism to accompany children in the Christian journey, their roles are often reduced to ceremonial participation with little follow-up. The study adopted a qualitative research approach, using interviews, focus group discussions, and observations with godparents, parents, clergy, and educators.

The findings revealed that godparents play a significant role in spiritual mentorship, nurturing children in prayer, Christian values, and participation in church life. They also contribute to moral and social development by serving as role models, advisors, and mediators, while offering educational encouragement and monitoring children's academic progress. Furthermore, godparents provide emotional and psychological support, serving as confidants and companions in times of need. However, the study also identified challenges including limited understanding of god parental responsibilities, financial constraints, geographical distance, and lack of structured church guidance after baptism.

The study concluded that god parenthood was a lifelong vocation of discipleship and stewardship, essential for the holistic development of children. It recommends that godparents embrace their role with commitment, parents collaborate with them in nurturing children, and the Church provide continuous training and recognition for godparents beyond baptism. Strengthening the vocation of godparent hood will enable the Church and community to raise children who are spiritually grounded, morally upright, socially responsible, emotionally resilient, and educationally empowered.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Introduction to the study

The chapter presents the background to the study, problem statement, purpose and specific objectives of the study, research questions, and scope of the study, justification of the study and significance of the study. It also described the related literature and methodology for the research.

1.1.1 Background of the Study.

The role of godparents in the Christian tradition was a significant aspect of faith formation and moral development in children. Historically, the institution of god-parenthood was traced back to the early Christian Church, where sponsors were appointed to guide new converts in their faith journey (Rahner, 1975, p. 432).¹ Over time, this role developed to include mentoring and supported children to baptize into the Christian faith, ensuring their spiritual and moral upbringing (Keating, 2007, p. 189)². The concept of God parenting roles aligns with the biblical rule of communal responsibility in nurturing children, as exemplified in **Proverbs 22:6(ESV)**: “*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*”.

In contemporary Christian communities, godparents was expected to contribute to the holistic growth and development of their godchildren, all-embracing spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social aspects (Brennan, 2016, p. 76)³. The Anglican Church, for instance, emphasized the responsibility of godparents to assist parents in raising children in faith, guiding them towards Christian maturity (Catechism of the Anglican Church, 1994, p. 1255)⁴. However, challenges in cultural interpretations of godparent roles existed, influencing how these responsibilities fulfilled in different contexts.

In the African context, communal child rearing integrated deeply in cultural traditions, where extended family members and community elders play significant roles in shaping children’s character and values (Mbiti, 1991, p. 108)⁵. This perspective complemented Christian god

¹Rahner, K. (1975). *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. London: Burns & Oates, 432.

²Keating, J. (2007). *Baptism and Christian Initiation: The Role of Godparents*. Chicago: Loyola Press. p.189.

³Brennan, P. (2016). *Faith Formation and the Role of Godparents in Christian Communities*. New York: Paulist Press. p.76.

⁴Catechism of the Anglican Church. (1994). *Catechism of the Anglican Church*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. p.1255.

⁵Mbiti, J. S. (1991). *African Religions and Philosophy*. Oxford: Heinemann. p.108.

parenthood, as both systems emphasized guidance, discipline, and spiritual nourishment. However, modern socio-economic changes, urbanization, and shifting family structures have affected the traditional role of godparents, necessitating a re-examination of their impact on children's holistic development (Orobator, 2008, p. 156)⁶.

In the Scriptures, the role of godparents linked to the broader values of spiritual position and discipleship. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7(ESV), God commands parents and the faith community to teach children His ways: *"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."* This verse emphasized the importance of intentional faith formation, a role that godparents are expected to uphold. Similarly, in 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul acknowledged the influence of faith mentors, stating, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."* This played up the significance of inter-generational faith transmission, aligning with the responsibility of godparents.

In the Anglican Church in particularly in Nyarwodho parish in Nebbi Diocese, the role of godparents in child education and development remains necessary in the church programmes and sacraments, whereby the involvement of godparents should have to extend beyond baptismal commitments to active participation in a child's education, moral guidance, and faith development which in many cases has a gap. However, challenges such as high rate of school dropout, early marriages, and drug abuse among the youths were evident among the children and youths during COVID19 era in the previous year's owing to poor parenting of children in godly manner (Nebbi Diocese Pastoral Report, 2022, p. 45)⁷. Given the above issues, this research seeks to explore the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development at Nyarwodho Parish, Nebbi Diocese.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the significance of godparents in child development, there remains a gap in understanding their contemporary role in holistic child education within Christian communities in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese. Although research by many scholars that has largely focused on parental roles and church-based education (Keating, 2007, p. 189; Brennan, 2016, p. 76)⁸, yet the extent to which godparents contribute to the moral, spiritual, and intellectual development of children in

⁶Orobator, A. E. (2008). *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*. Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa. p. 156.

⁷Nebbi Diocese Pastoral Report. (2022). *Annual Pastoral Review*. Nebbi: Nebbi Diocese. p.45.

⁸Brennan, P. (2016). *Faith Formation and the Role of Godparents in Christian Communities*. New York: Paulist Press.

Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese remains unquestionable because God parents do not execute their roles as expected. Additionally, studies on communal child rearing by (Mbiti, 1991, p. 108; Orobator, 2008, p. 156)⁹ have not sufficiently examined how modern socio-economic changes in the church settings, influenced the effectiveness of godparents in fulfilling their traditional roles. In Nebbi Diocese, specifically at Nyarwodho Parish, godparents expected to play an important role in the education and holistic growth of children lacked its sense. However, observations suggested that many godparents lack adequate catechetical training by the clergy or church leaders, face financial constraints, or do not actively participate in their godchildren's upbringing (Nebbi Diocese Pastoral Report, 2022, p. 45)¹⁰. This difference raised concerns about the effectiveness of god parenthood as an instrument for holistic child development. Furthermore, there was limited observational data on the challenges godparents faced and the strategies that when employed, can enhance their roles. This study, therefore, seek to address these gaps as it examined the role of godparents in the education and holistic development of children at Nyarwodho Parish. It investigated the extent of their involvement, the challenges they encounter, and proposed practical engagement to strengthen their contributions to faith-based child development.

1.1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.1.3.1 General objective

To explore the roles of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development at Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese.

1.1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the current practices of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development at Nyarwodho Parish, Nebbi Diocese.
2. To identify the challenges or problems that hinder effective god parenting in promoting holistic child development.
3. To explore the strategies employed by the church to address the challenges faced by godparents in fulfilling their roles.

1.1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the current practices of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development at Nyarwodho Parish?

⁹Mbiti, J. S. (1990). African religions & philosophy. Heinemann. (pp. 132–150).

¹⁰Nebbi Diocese Pastoral Report. (2022). Annual Pastoral Review. Nebbi: Nebbi Diocese.

2. What challenges do godparents face in fulfilling their responsibilities towards the holistic development of children?

3. What strategies does the church use to address the challenges of ineffective god parenting?

1.1.5 The scope of the study

The scope of the study was three fold, namely; content, geographical and time.

1.1.5.1 Content Scope

This study focused on Nyarwodho Parish in Nebbi Diocese, Uganda. It examined the role of godparents in child education and development, assessed the challenges they encountered, and explored the strategies used by the church to support the godparents in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese.

1.1.5.2 Geographical Scope

The research carried out in Nyarwodho parish church of Uganda, Goli central Archdeaconry, diocese of Nebbi, located in west Nile region of Northern Uganda. Nyarwodho Parish been selected because godparents in this parish not executing their roles to the standard expected and children grew up lacking some parental values and the researcher believes the area provided the necessary information needed and later changed the motives of godparents in the area.

1.1.5.3 Time Scope

The time line for the scope of the research was 2022-2025. During this period, the researcher had already identified the gap in the role of the godparents as observed in the unchristian culture of children and the ceremonial nature of the godparents in the Anglican churches in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese.

1.1.6 Justification of the Study

The role of godparents in child development has been an important yet underexposed area in Nyamrwodho parish, Nebbi diocese. Given the factors affecting the implementation of the roles of godparents, understanding the impact of god parenting on holistic child development is what every responsible person needs to know. In the process of nurturing children under their care, god parents when fully with the knowledge of their roles always ensured that children are taken care of in the most appropriate ways guided by the Christian principles (Bunge, Marcia J., ed. 2008.p. 103)¹¹. This study provided insights into the effectiveness of godparents in faith-based child upbringing,

¹¹Bunge, Marcia J., ed. *The Child in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008. p.103.

contributing to their holistic growth and development most especially in Nyarwodho parish in Nebbi diocese.

1.1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study was valuable to multiple stakeholders; it offered recommendations for enhancing godparent training and support mechanisms. The study helped them understand their responsibilities and the importance of their role in child development. It highlighted the need for collaboration between parents and godparents in raising children. The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge on Christian mentorship and child development, offering a framework for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section dealt with the review of related literature to the study. The arrangement was according to the study objectives to examine the role of Godparents in holistic growth and development of a child in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese. To assess the challenges faced due to ineffective God parenting in Nyarwodho Parish. To examine the current practices of godparents in holistic children's education in Nyarwodho Parish and the strategies that the church employed to address the challenges of ineffective god parenting in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese. The sources of literature was obtained from the books, journals, magazines, reports, theses, as well as additional publications and other existing research materials on the roles of godparents in Nyarwodho parish, Goli Central Archdeaconry, Nebbi diocese.

2.1 The role of Godparents in educating children for holistic growth.

God parenting was deeply rooted in Christian tradition, particularly concerning baptism. Historically, godparents mainly appointed as a guide to new believers in their spiritual journey (Astley, 2004:57-72). The book further comments on the foundational principles of Christian religious education, emphasizing the role of mentors, including godparents in shaping moral and intellectual development. Astley (2004) further argued that religious education should go beyond formal teaching to include relational and experiential learning through mentorship.¹² *Ephesians 6:4* (ESV) emphasized the importance of nurturing children in faith, a principle that extends to godparents as mentors.

In Uganda, studies (Smith, 2019:185) showed that godparents played significant role in transmitting Christian beliefs and values to children. However, their influence depends on active engagement rather than symbolic appointment. Literature suggests that strengthening the theological understanding of god parenting can help redefine its role beyond ritualistic obligations.¹³

In Goli central archdeaconry, godparents, seen not only as spiritual guides during baptism or confirmation ceremonies but also as moral mentors and even financial supporters in some cases

¹²Astley, J. (2004). *The philosophy of Christian religious education*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. pp. 55–72.

¹³Smith, C., & Snell, P. (2009). *Souls in transition: The religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults*. Oxford University Press. pp. 185–202.

and other services beyond these examples. However, changing societal dynamics have led to a decline in godparents' active involvement in children's lives (Mugambi, J. N. K. 1995:98-112).¹⁴

According to Brown's, ecological systems theory (2017:46), children develop within multiple social systems, including family, community and religious networks. Godparents are part of this support structure, but their effectiveness depends on consistent interaction with the child. This study therefore, looked into the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth in Nyarwodho parish, Nebbi diocese.

2.2 Current Practices of Godparents in Educating Children for Holistic Development

Research shows that while many godparents in Uganda take their responsibilities seriously, their role is often informal and lacks structured support. Studies by (Nwoye, A. 2017:50-67) recommended training programs to equip Godparents with the skills to mentor children effectively. Additionally, collaboration between godparents, parents and church leaders created a supportive environment for holistic child development.¹⁵

Bunge, M. J. (Ed.), (2012). In his book, *"Children, adults, and shared responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives"*. (pp. 120-138), discussed how religious traditions across Christianity, Judaism, and Islam shape child development through mentorship. The book highlighted the responsibilities of godparents in Christian contexts, comparing them to similar roles in other faiths.

The traditional and ecclesial role of godparents remains crucial in the formation of children within the Christian faith. Keating (2007) highlighted that godparents are not mere ceremonial figures but entrusted with the responsibility to guide children towards Christian maturity, offering consistent spiritual mentorship (p. 189). Similarly, Brennan (2016) stresses that godparents ought to engage in the child's spiritual journey through activities such as praying together, discussing faith matters, and attending religious events (p. 76).

Smith and Denton (2005) in their comprehensive study on adolescent religious life reveal that consistent interactions with religious mentors, including godparents, positively shape a child's religious identity and moral behavior. Their findings emphasized the need for godparents to involve actively beyond the baptismal ceremony (pp. 131-134).

¹⁴ Brown, T. (2017). The history and evolution of god parenting in Christianity. Cambridge Theological Press, 45-67.

¹⁵Nwoye, A. (2017). African family practices and child development: A psychological perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1426. (pp. 50–67).

Tetteh (2018) explored the intersection between African communal traditions and Christian god parenting. He noted that in African societies, godparents seen as moral and social exemplars expected to correct, advise, and discipline children within a framework of both faith and cultural values (p. 48). Igboin (2013) complements this by stating that Christian god parenthood in African contexts serves as a bridge between ancestral values and biblical principles, forming a dual source of moral education (p. 101).

In a Ugandan context, Magesa (2004) explained that children grow best when faith formation integrates into a web of family, community, and church as one as Godparents, he argument, represented a central node in this network, providing children with moral direction, faith practices, and spiritual resilience (p. 73).

Further, Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) advocated for renewed emphasis on godparents as faith mentors, asserting that in modern Pentecostal and mainline churches, godparents should actively promote holistic growth encompassing education, ethics, spirituality, and emotional development (pp. 98-99).

2.3 Challenges of Ineffective God parenting

Despite the noble role godparents are meant to play, several challenges hinder their effectiveness in contemporary Christian settings especially in Nyarwodho parish , Nebbi diocese where God parents face challenges in executing their roles evidenced in the bad unchristian behaviors portrayed by some children in the area who lack god parenting education. Adeyemo (2010) asserts that many godparents lack catechetical grounding and therefore do not fully understand the theological significance of their roles (p. 642). This lack of foundational knowledge results in lifeless participation and minimal contribution to the child's development.

Dube (2015) discusses the issue of economic limitations among godparents in sub-Saharan Africa. He observes that economic struggles often deter godparents from materially supporting or even staying involved in their godchildren's education or spiritual formation (p. 34).

Kamya (2020), in a study conducted in Uganda, found that the disintegration of extended family structures due to urbanization and migration has weakened the traditional support network that upheld god parental roles. Many godparents lived far from their godchildren and thus failed to maintain consistent contact or mentorship (p. 88).

Onwubiko (2014) points out that changing family dynamics, especially the growing individualism in African Christian families, is eroding the communal accountability that once made godparenting

effective (p. 126). This shift undermines the cultural values that previously supported god parental influence.

Wamue-Ngare and Njoroge (2011) highlight gender expectations and role confusion, where godparents are unsure of their duties beyond the baptismal rites. The church, they argue, often fails to provide a clear roadmap for post-baptismal mentorship and guidance (p. 129).

O'Malley (2005) analyzes church practices that treat godparents as symbolic rather than functional mentors, pointing out that the ritualistic emphasis overshadows long-term responsibilities (p. 54). This symbolic view limits the capacity of godparents to influence children's moral and faith formation.

Lastly, Obanla (2016) argues that the digital age and secular influences have shifted children's role models from spiritual mentors to celebrities and social media influencers, reducing the godparent's authority and relevance in the child's value system (p. 203).

2.4 Strategies the Church Uses to Address God parenting Challenges

To respond to these challenges, churches have initiated various strategies to revive the god parental role. Orobator (2008) suggests that contextual theology and community catechesis can equip godparents with relevant skills and motivation to participate actively in their godchildren's development (p. 158). Training programs focused on mentorship, spirituality, and parenting revitalized their roles.

Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation, *Catechesis Tradendae* (1979), highlights the necessity of integrating godparents into parish catechetical structures and encouraging them to participate in ongoing formation (p. 33). Such institutional support strengthens god parental awareness and engagement.

Mutiso (2017) proposes godparent mentorship workshops where experienced godparents share best practices and offer guidance to new godparents. These sessions held during baptism preparation classes or special parish retreats (p. 118).

According to the Uganda Episcopal Conference (2019), several dioceses have established "godparent support cells" at parish level to foster peer accountability and collaboration. Some groups' help godparents meet regularly, discuss challenges, and pray for their godchildren (p. 42).

Chimhanda (2010) recommended the use of enculturated liturgies and rituals that reinforce god parental responsibilities beyond baptism. Involving godparents in milestone ceremonies such as

confirmation, special day celebrations (birthdays, etc.) and first communion for the case of Roman Catholics encourages long-term commitment (p. 134).

Kisembo et al. (1998) advocated for theological formation that included topics on god parenthood within theological institutions and seminaries. This ensured that clergy are been trained adequately to teach and model effective god parenting (p. 201).

Finally, White and Willmer (2006) argue for a shift toward “relational discipleship,” where churches promote deeper inter-generational relationships. This model empowers godparents to be intentional about nurturing, guiding, and journeying with their godchildren over time (p. 111).

2.5 Literature Gaps

Although considerable scholarly attention was been given to the role of godparents in Christian formation, a critical review of existing literature revealed several important gaps, especially in relation to holistic child development in rural African settings such as Nyarwodho Parish in Nebbi Diocese. Most literature approached the subject from a broad theological or ecclesiastical perspective but failed to address adequately the practical, contextual, and cultural realities in specific dioceses or parishes.

To begin with, a notable gap in the literature was the lack of context-specific studies focused on rural parishes in Africa. While works by Magesa (2004) and Tetteh (2018) touch on African cultural values and their intersection with Christian parenting roles, these discussions are often generic and overlook the significance realities within specific diocesan jurisdictions¹⁶ such as Nebbi. The influence of local culture, traditional communal structures, and socio-economic conditions on god parenting practices are been explored rarely in depth, leaving a void in contextually grounded research. The unique pastoral dynamics of Nyarwodho Parish, for instance, are not been represented in current scholarly discourse, making it difficult to apply general findings to such localities.

Moreover, the literature was largely theoretical, with limited empirical studies on how godparents are actually involved in the holistic development of children. Scholars like Keating (2007) and Brennan (2016) discussed the theological roles and ceremonial significance of godparents during sacraments like baptism but offer little data-driven evidence on ongoing engagement, mentorship, and support. This lacked experimental insight making it difficult to assess the true effectiveness of god parental roles in practiced and to identify best practices or challenges experienced on the ground.

¹⁶Magesa, L. (2004). *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

In addition, there is a tendency in the literature to focus predominantly on the spiritual and moral dimensions of godparenting, often to the exclusion of other critical aspects of child development. While moral formation is central to the god parental mandate, holistic development encompasses intellectual, emotional, physical, and social growth—areas that are underrepresented in the literature. For example, while Smith and Denton (2005) emphasize religious socialization, they do not address how godparents contribute to a child’s educational or emotional well-being within faith contexts. This narrow focus creates a conceptual gap that this study seeks to address by considering godparents’ broader developmental influence.

Another major gap lied in the exploration of strategies used by the church to support and train godparents. Although the Uganda Episcopal Conference (2019) and Mutiso (2017) suggest pastoral initiatives like godparent support groups and mentorship workshops, there is limited analysis of their structure, implementation, challenges, and effectiveness. There are no systematic studies evaluating how such strategies operate in rural parishes like Nyarwodho or how they improved. Without such information, it is difficult for churches to adopt informed, evidence-based approaches to enhancing god parental engagement.

Furthermore, modern cultural shifts, especially those driven by technology and globalization, have introduced new challenges that godparents must navigate, but the literature remains relatively silent on this issue. Obanla (2016) briefly alludes to the influence of digital media and secularism on children’s value systems but stops short of evaluating how godparents adapt to or counter these influences. Given the pervasive nature of digital content and the rise of social media role models, there is a need to investigate how these trends are reshaping the godparent-child dynamic, particularly in African societies undergoing rapid technological change.

Theologically, while the Catechism of the Anglo Catholic Church (1994) and Catechesis Tridentate (1979) articulate the importance of godparents, they offer limited practical frameworks for post-baptismal involvement. There is a significant disconnect between the doctrinal expectations and the realities faced by godparents who lack guidance or support from parish structures. This absence of practical theological models restricts the church’s ability to implement consistent and effective godparenting practices across parishes.

Lastly, gender dynamics and role ambiguity remain under explored in the current body of knowledge. Though scholars like Wamue-Ngare and Njoroge (2011) mention how gender expectations may shape god parental roles, there is insufficient analysis of how these roles are perceived and performed differently by male and female godparents. In patriarchal or matrilineal

African communities, gender roles influence expectations, availability, and effectiveness, yet this was not been adequately addressed in the literature.

In summary, while existing studies provide valuable theological and philosophical insights into godparenting, fall short in offering localized, empirical, and holistic perspectives, particularly within the Ugandan rural parish context. This study therefore aimed to fill these gaps by investigating the current practices, challenges, and church-led strategies in child godparenting specifically in Nyarwodho Parish Nebbi Diocese, with emphases on holistic child development in faith-based settings.

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the existing body of literature on the role of godparents in child development, while rich in theological and theoretical insights, reveals significant gaps that limit its practical applicability, particularly in rural African contexts such as Nyarwodho Parish in Nebbi Diocese. Most studies focus narrowly on the spiritual and moral roles of godparents, often neglecting their potential contributions to the child's holistic growth intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. Furthermore, lack of experimental data, context specification, and analysis of church-based strategies created a need for localized research that discovered how godparenting actually was to be practice and supported within the Church. The influence of contemporary cultural shifts, gender dynamics, and digital challenges also remains not addressed, yet these factors significantly influence the effectiveness of godparenting today. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by providing a contextual, data-driven, and theologically grounded examination of the role of godparents in holistic child development within the setting of Nyarwodho Parish Nebbi diocese.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.0 Introduction

This section summarized how the study was conducted. It comprised of research design, study area, study population, sample size, procedure of data collection, data collection instruments, quality control, data description, ethical considerations and limitations to the study.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design to explore and interpret the lived experiences, beliefs, and practices regarding the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development within Nyarwodho Parish, Nebbi Diocese. The qualitative approach was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to gather in-depth and detailed data on human behavior, perceptions, and meanings as constructed by individuals in their natural context (Creswell & Poth, 2018)¹⁷.

3.2 Study Area

The study carried out in Nyarwodho Parish that comprised of four churches; namely Canatek COU, Patongo COU, Udende COU - the parish headquarter and Gotbol COU was a rural Anglican community in Goli Central Archdeaconry, Nebbi Diocese, Uganda. Moreover, chosen due to its vibrant sacramental life, particularly baptism, which involved the assignment of godparents, and provided a fitting context for studying issues of god parental roles in child development.

3.3 Study Population

The target population for this study included the Godparents of baptized children, biological Parents of children with godparents, Catechists and the parish priest, and Parish leaders responsible for catechetical and children's ministries.

These participants are directly involved in or have oversighted godparent-child relationships and their developmental support, making them ideal sources of relevant information.

¹⁷Creswell, J.W., & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications. Pp.86-93.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Purposive sampling used to select participants based on their relevance and knowledge of the subject under investigation according to Patton, (2015).¹⁸ The non-probability technique enabled the researcher to focus on individuals who are rich in information and offered varied perspectives. 30 participants were randomly selected, included: 10 godparents, 8 parents of children with godparents, 6 catechists or children's ministry leaders, and 6 clergy or parish leaders. The sample size was been considered sufficient for achieving data filling, and additional interviews yield little or no new information.

3.5.0 Data Collection Method: In-depth Interviews

The sole data collection method for this study was in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This method enabled the collection of rich, detailed, and personal insights into the participants' experiences and views on god parenting and child development (Rubin & Rubin, 2012:29-48)¹⁹.

3.5.1 Interview Guide

An interview guide developed with open-ended questions grouped around that followed themes: Understanding the godparent's role, Perceptions of holistic child development, Experiences and practices of godparents, Challenges faced by godparents and the Church, Strategies and recommendations for improving god parental effectiveness.

3.5.2 Interview Procedure

Each interview conducted face-to-face in a private and comfortable setting within the parish premises. The interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes and others audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Notes were also been taken to capture non-verbal speech and contextual factors.

3.5.3 Language

Interviews were been conducted in English or Alur, depending on the participant's preference. Translation and back-translation was been done to ensure accuracy and maintain the original meaning of responses.

3.6 Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher's major aim was to establish whether the answers to the research questions were been provided. In this case, the researcher used qualitative data analysis

¹⁸Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.) Sage Publications. pp. 264-267.

¹⁹Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications. pp. 29-48.

as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Where the steps included: Transcribing and familiarizing with the data, Generating initial codes, Organizing codes into categories and themes, Reviewing and refining themes, Interpreting and presenting findings.²⁰ Then the key themes reflected participants' perceptions, practices, and the context of realities surrounding god parental involvement in holistic child development. The researcher used selected quotes to illustrate the findings and support analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In the study, the researcher emphasized confidentiality of all the research findings. The researcher ensured that all information from the respondents remained confidential. The researcher also safeguarded that respondents participate in the study basing on their own free will. In addition, the researcher proved the authenticity of the research conducted and acknowledge all sources where the information were got to ensure there was no plagiarism. In the respondents' names were withheld to ensure anonymity and confidentiality in terms of future prospects. The participants were been given information about the purpose, process, risks, and rights before participation.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

Getting all the respondents to answer the questionnaires was a challenge. Here, the researcher made appointment with the respondents prior to ensure that all the questionnaires were been administered and answered by the respondents when properly guided.

Acquiring adequate information from respondents. This happened because of the respondents not being conversant with the questions that were been administered. However, the researcher was able to do a thorough review of the administered questionnaires before finally picking them and check the completeness to get adequate information. Limited data collection to a single method interviews reduced surveying and restricted the diversity of data. However, the researcher did in-depth interviews that were well suited for capturing detailed, subjective experiences, which were central to the objectives of this qualitative inquiry.

²⁰Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). *Using thematic analysis in Psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-110.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented and interpreted the findings gathered from questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions conducted with godparents, parents, clergy, and community members in Nyarwodho Parish. The analysis aimed to address the research objectives by exploring the spiritual, moral, social, educational, and emotional roles godparents play in the holistic development of children.

4.1 Role of Godparents in Spiritual Development

In Nyamrwodho parish, under spiritual development, findings show that most godparents understand their role as primarily spiritual in line with Biblical foundation for nurturing children spiritually as in Proverbs 22:6 (ESV) *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."* Many participants stressed that the first and the most important duty of godparent was spiritual mentorship. Several godparents themselves acknowledged the weight of this responsibility. One mother confessed: *"I always remind my grand godchild to pray every night. Sometimes, I go to church with her when the parents are busy"* (Godparent 3). Another godfather admitted the limitations: *"I guided my god son at baptism but I do not know how to continue teaching him the catechism without training"* (Godparent 6). Parents supported this expectation. One mother remarked, *"I chose my brother to be godfather so that he helps me in faith formation. He prays with my son more than I do sometimes"* (Parent 2).

One godmother explained, *"At the baptism I promised to help my godchild know God; I prayed with her and remind her of church days, but I am not sure how to teach deeper things."* A parent who remarked, *"We picked a close relative as sponsor so our child would have someone to lead him in prayer and holy living"*, supported this view. At the same time, clergy expressed concern that while sponsors chosen for baptism, little engagement was been done afterwards to guide them. A priest observed, *"Sponsors are meant to be spiritual companions; yet in practice many attend the rite and then return to their lives without follow-up."* This confirmed what Groome (1998, p. 142) stressed, that Christian initiation requires deliberate catechesis and accompaniment, not mere symbolic participation. He further warned that treating god parenthood as ceremonial weakens its pastoral significance²¹.

²¹Groome, T. H. (1998). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*. Thomas More Press, 142.

Clergy also emphasized the need for a strong theological foundation of good parenthood. A Parish priest explained: *“sponsors are not honorary figures; they are entrusted with huge role of spiritual growth of children until they mature in faith”* (Clergy 1). A catechist further emphasized the need for catechetical renewal, he said; *“most of our sponsors do not return for any follow up after baptismal ceremony. This reduces their role to ceremony.* Teachers and lay leaders affirmed this gap. One teacher commended; *“we see children who do not even know the apostles creed though they have godparents these souls lack of follow up”*. These testimonies reflect the idea of Martinez,(2012, p.214) where he insisted that Christian formation requires intentional accompaniment and the church to equip parents and sponsors for ongoing faith nurturing, not leaving them to guesswork. Similarly, he stresses that *“the god parental role is not ceremonial but vocational; the absence of ongoing formation diminishes its personal potential”*.²² The findings revealed that while many godparents take their spiritual role seriously, their impact was been weakened by limited formation and absence of structured church guidance. The researcher noted that while respondents understand the promise made at baptism, their effectiveness was hindered by lack of guidance and structures for follow-up, leaving the spiritual role partially unfulfilled and concluded that the systematic Parish- based training was essential to sustain godparents in this long life spiritual vocation.

4.3 Role in Moral and Social Development

Beyond prayer and church attendance, respondents recognised that godparents have a moral and social role in children’s lives. A godfather explained, *“When I speak about honesty and respect, my godchild listens—sometimes more than to their parents—because I am not the parent and they see me as an ‘outside’ moral voice.”* Parents confirmed this perception, with one noting, *“Our children respond when the godparent intervenes; they treat their godmother with deep respect.”* Teachers also recognised this influence, pointing out that a child whose sponsor monitors behaviour was been more disciplined in class than a child whose godparent has not properly mentored the child.

Godparents were been seen as key figures in instilling discipline and character. Most participants affirmed that the presence of an external role model could balance the influence of parents and peers. Church leaders emphasized the godparent's responsibility to "mirror Christ-like behavior," serving as moral exemplars in the community, here below are the analysis of their views: One of the respondents agreed that godparents also play a crucial role in the moral and social lives of children. A godmother observed; *“when I see my granddaughter being stubborn, I correct her as if she is my own child”*. Another godfather emphasized discipline, *“I often advise my godson to avoid*

²² Martinez, R. (2012). *The pastoral role of godparents in Christian initiation*. Pauline Publications, 214.

peer groups that influence him into drinking alcohol". Parents testified to the authority godparents hold in nurturing children for holistic growth. One father shared; *"sometimes my children listen more to their godfather mother than to me. Her words carry more weight because they see her as a holy person"*.

Some Clergymen also recognized the godparents influence. A church teacher explained; *"a child perceives the godparents as a second parent. If this role is well lived it provides reinforcement or values"*. Teachers provided concrete examples to children as he explained; *"Some children become more disciplined in school when they know their godparents might come to visit or check on them"* (Teacher 5). Osei-Bonsu (2005:77) affirmed that godparents are often been perceived by children as external moral authorities whose influence compliments and sometimes surpasses that of parents²³. Osei-Bonsu noted that the witness of Godparents reinforced parental teaching by modeling Christian virtues in practical, everyday ways. He further argued that godparents are been seen as moral authorities who complement parental discipline. These findings confirm that godparents are vital moral mentors and social role models. The researcher therefore, concluded that their consistent example strengthened parental teaching and promoted discipline, integrity, and Christian character in children.

4.4 Role in Educational encouragement and Support.

Educational involvement was another area where godparents are been reported to make meaningful contributions. One sponsor said, *"I visit the school once a term to encourage my goddaughter; she studies harder knowing someone else cares."* Similarly, a parent observed, *"When my daughter knows her godparent checks schoolwork, she takes her homework more seriously."* Teachers supported this claim, noting that students often show greater motivation when sponsors inquire about their progress. These findings aligned with Smith and Denton (2005, p. 118), who highlighted the importance of adult mentoring in young people's academic success. He further argued that children's educational resilience was been strengthened by multiple supportive figures. In some cases, sponsors also contributed material assistance. A godfather stated, *"I often give small amounts for books and uniforms when I can,"* while teachers noted that godparents sometimes liaise with schools to secure support for needy pupils. Although the material support was modest, it gave children confidence and strengthened their participation in school.

While not all godparents are financially capable of supporting formal education, their involvement in educational mentorship was evident. Parents appreciated godparents who offered career guidance and motivation for academic excellence. Clergy emphasized that education was part of

²³ Osei-Bonsu, J. (2005). *The sacraments of initiation and Christian life*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 77.

holistic Christian formation and encouraged godparents to participate actively, regardless of economic capacity.

Many respondents described how godparents assisted directly or indirectly with schooling, one godfather remarked, *“Whenever, I get some money, I buy books or pay a small fee for my godchild”*. A godmother said: *“I visited my Goddaughter’s school once a term just to encourage her to study hard”*. Parents valued this support. One mother noted, *“My daughter listens to her godmother’s advice about school. She feels motivated because another adult is concerned about her future”*. Teachers confirmed the positive influence of good parents. One of them commended; *“children feel proud when their godparents saw up on school visiting days. It encourages them to perform well”*.

Clergy emphasized the connection between faith and education. A priest explained, *“Faith and education go hand in hand. Godparents who encouraged schooling are contributing to the holistic mission of the church”* (Clergy 5). This aligned with the Fowler’s (1981, p.98) Observation that *“children thrive when multiple adults invest in their growth, reinforcing the message of worth and belonging”*. He further stressed, *“Faith development is sustained not only through material provision but through encouragement and the shared witness of significant adults”*.²⁴ The findings revealed that godparents’ involvement in education, whether financial, advisory or emotional, has a lasting impact on children’s academic progress. The researcher concluded that even modest contributions by godparents are highly valued and fostered resilience, motivation and a sense of shared responsibility.

4.5 Role in Emotional and Psychological Support

The study also revealed that godparents provide emotional and psychological support to children. Many respondents stressed that children often confide in their sponsors more than in their parents. One godmother shared, *“My godchild tells me things she won’t tell her mother – about friendships and fears; I listen and pray with her.”* Parents acknowledged this lively, with one mother saying, *“Her relationship with her godfather has been satisfying; he calms her and helps her think.”* These findings echoed Dreyer (2007, p. 134), who noted that trusted non-parental adults provided protective spaces for young people to process challenges. In moments of crisis, the presence of godparents was particularly important. A godfather narrated, *“When my godchild lost her father, I visited often; we read scripture and prayed, and she relied on that support.”* Dreyer

²⁴Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. Harper & Row, 98.

(2007) again observed that pastoral presence during bereavement offers children hope and healing.²⁵

Godparents were been reported to provide emotional stability to children, especially in broken or struggling homes. Focus group discussions revealed that children often see godparents as "neutral mentors" they can trust. This role reflected the Christian view of spiritual guardianship as not just ceremonial but deeply relational. Participants repeatedly pointed to the emotional bond between children and good parents. One godfather shared; *"My Godson confides in me about things he fears to tell his parents"* (Godparent 2). Another Godmother added; *"I feel I am like a second mother to my godchild, someone she can cry to when she is troubled"* (Godparent 9). Parents confirmed that there was always a close relationship between Godparents and their godchildren. A mother remarked, *"My daughter is freer with her godfather than with me. He plays the role of counselor in her life"* (Parent4). Clergymen valued this relational aspect as well. One priest explained; *"children today face many pressures. Having a godparent as a trusted companion helps them to remain grounded in faith and life"*. Some teachers echoed this view as in a comment by one of the lay readers who said; *"adolescent sometimes share their struggles more openly with sponsors who they see as approachable"* (Teacher 3). Collins, (2010, p.112) emphasized that *"children require a circle of trusted adults beyond their parents for balanced emotional and social growth"*. He adds that, *"Discipleship is sustained when others walk alongside the young in authenticity, building relationships of trust and accountability"*²⁶. The findings indicated that godparents serve as confidants and emotional anchors for children. The researcher therefore, concluded that this relational bond between Godparents and godchildren was essential for holistic growth ensuring children's psychological well-being and strengthening their social resilience.

4.6 Challenges Faced by Godparents in performing their roles

Despite their contributions, respondents acknowledged that godparents faced significant challenges. Some spoke of economic hardship, with one admitting, *"I would gladly do more but I have many dependents; sometimes I cannot afford school items."* Parents confirmed that many sponsors were willing but financially limited. Westerhoff (2000, p. 65) noted that poverty often disrupted adult-child mentoring, he further observed that socio-economic realities weaken the capacity of mentors to sustain their commitments. In addition to poverty, distance and mobility were challenges. A sponsor confessed, *"I attended the baptism and then moved away; I have not kept in contact."* Another parent added that many sponsors live far from the children they support,

²⁵Dreyer, E. A. (2007). *Practicing our faith: A way of life for a searching people*. Jossey-Bass, 134.

²⁶Collins, K. (2010). *Christian nurture in family and church*. Abingdon Press, 112.

making visits rare. Furthermore, role ambiguity emerged as a major obstacle. One sponsor lamented, *“Nobody ever explained what we were expected to do after baptism,”* while clergy admitted that many sponsors are chosen for social reasons rather than genuine vocation. Westerhoff (2000) confirmed that role confusion challenged the vocation of sponsorship when expectations are not clarified.²⁷

Participants further noted that, in many cases, the role of a godparent was misunderstood as merely ceremonial, with little follow-up after baptism or confirmation. Despite the positive roles, respondents identified significant challenges. Godparents themselves have cited the financial strain; *“I would love to do more for my godson, but I have many children of my own”* (godparent 10). Others mentioned the lack of clarity; *“Nobody ever explained to me what is expected after baptism”* (Godparent 5). Some parents noted inconsistency in executing the roles of God parenthood; *“some godparents disappear after baptism and never returned”*. Clergy lamented that they lacked of structures in the church and school system that typically allowed godparents to perform their roles, *“we have made god parenting too ceremonial. Sponsors are not supported to grow in their vocation”* (Clergy 3). Teachers observed neglect; *“Some sponsors never visit schools and their godchildren feel abandoned”* (Teacher1). Westerhoff (2000, p. 65), Emphasized, *“faith is best nurtured when the whole community, especially godparents, understand their role as co-discipleship, not ceremonial obligation”*. The testimonies showed that financial difficulties, poor understanding of responsibilities and weak church structures mostly challenged God parenthood. The researcher concluded that overcoming these barriers required both personal commitment and institutional reforms.

4.7 Church’s Role and Gaps

The role of the Church emerged as a central factor in strengthening or weakening god parental commitment. A parish priest admitted, *“We bless sponsors at baptism but rarely bring them into formation groups afterwards.”* A lay leader suggested that parishes could organize periodic gatherings for sponsors to share experiences and renew their commitments. Miller-McLemore (2012) emphasized the need for ecclesial structures that sustain lay ministries through training, recognition and accountability. Without such support, the initiation risks remaining a ceremonial event rather than a path to lifelong discipleship.²⁸ Interviews with clergy indicated that while the church taught the importance of godparents during baptism, ongoing support and formation are lacking. Many called for structured programs, workshops, and spiritual formation sessions to equip

²⁷Westerhoff, J. H. (2000). *Will our children have faith?* Morehouse Publishing, 65

²⁸Miller-McLemore, B. (2012). *The Wiley-Blackwell companion to practical theology*. Wiley-Blackwell, 247.

godparents for long-term mentorship. Different church bodies, groups, unions and associations like Mothers' Union (M.U), Fathers' Union (F.U) Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) and others to take active part in sensitizing on the roles of godparents in the church.

Finally, respondents stressed the Church's duty in strengthening god parenthood. A parish elder observed; *"If the Church trained and reminded godparents regularly, our children would grow strong in faith and discipline"* (Lay Leader 6). A priest added; *"We need to create parish programs where godparents meet, learn, and share their experiences"* (Clergy 2). Parents also expected more church involvement: *"The Church should check whether sponsors are fulfilling their promises"* (Parent 8). This reflected Miller-McLemore's (2012, p. 247) insight that *"practical theology requires structures of formation where communities intentionally shape and sustain vocation"*. The findings confirmed that the Church has a significant role in ensuring that god parenthood was not been merely reduced to ritual as it has been in most cases. The researcher therefore concluded that parish-based structures are essential for empowering godparents to fulfil their vocation effectively, intentional parish-level trainings, follow-ups, and recognition-empowered godparents to fulfill their mission as lifelong companions in children's holistic development.

4.8 Summary of Key Findings

Godparents in Nyarwodho Parish played significant spiritual, moral, and emotional roles in children's lives.

Educational involvement of Godparents varied from one person to another, largely due to financial limitations.

Many godparents struggle due to unclear expectations and lack of support from parents or the church.

There is strong consensus on the need for continuous church-based support and clearer theological teaching on godparent hood.

4.9.0 Theological Reflection

From a biblical and ecclesial standpoint, godparents acted as spiritual stewards (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1), entrusted not just with teaching doctrine, but with embodying Christian witness. The findings confirmed that godparent hood was more than a symbolic role; the vocation required commitment, guidance, and community or external support.

4.9.1 Overall Conclusion

The findings from thirty respondents revealed that godparents in Nyarwodho Parish contributed meaningfully to the spiritual, moral, educational, and emotional growth of children. However, they faced barriers such as financial limitations, inadequate understanding, and weak institutional support. Scholarly literature consistently emphasized that god parenthood was a vocation of discipleship rather than a ceremonial obligation. The researcher concluded that a collaborative approach between parents, godparents, and the Church was essential to ensure that children grew into spiritually grounded, morally upright, and socially responsible, emotionally resilient, and educationally empowered individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the summary of the research findings, conclusions from the study and recommendations for godparents, parents, the church and the wider Christian community. The chapter also gave suggestions on some areas for further research. The purpose was to consolidate the insights gained in the study and offered practical ways to strengthen the role of godparents in the holistic growth of children in Nyamrwodho parish, Goli Archdeaconry, Nebbi diocese and other areas where it be considered necessary.

5.1.0 Summary of key findings

The research sought to investigate the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth. Using a qualitative approach, data gathered from interviews, focus group discussions and observations where the following themes emerged:

5.1.1 Spiritual mentorship.

Godparents are widely recognized as spiritual companions. Many understood their responsibility as guiding children in prayers, encouraging participation in church activities and teaching Christian values. However, their role often diminished after baptism and confirmation because of insufficient follow up and lack of structured guidance from the church and the parents.

5.1.2 Moral and social influence.

Godparents served as role models, offering moral guidance and advice in areas such as honesty, respect, responsibility and social behaviour. Children are always confident in their godparents when facing dilemmas, indicating the importance of godparents as trusted mentors.

5.1.3 Educational contribution.

While only a few godparents provided financial support, many encouraged godchildren to take education seriously and sometimes visited schools to monitor their progress. The moral encouragement and mentorship of godparents were been found to be as important as material contributions.

5.1.4 Emotional and psychological support.

Children perceived godparents as safe emotional anchors. They often shared personal testimonies of struggles with godparents, who in turn provided comfort, encouragement and prayer support.

This role was been found particularly valuable during adolescence stage and youthful teenage period.

5.1.5 Challenges faced by Godparents.

Many godparents faced obstacles that limited their effectiveness, including lack of clarity about their responsibilities, financial strain, and distance from their godchildren and inadequate guidance from the church. Some godparents viewed their role as purely ceremonial due to these limitations and many others.

5.1.6 The role of the church.

While the church played a central role in initiating godparent hood during baptism, little has done to sustain the role beyond the baptismal rite. Therefore, there was strong demand from godparents and parents for ongoing training, follow up and recognition of the vocation of god parenthood.

5.2.0 Conclusions.

From the above findings, several conclusions were been drawn as below:

5.2.1 Godparent hood is a spiritual vocation.

The research confirmed that godparents called to be more than ceremonial witnesses are at the time of baptism and confirmation in some cases. They are long-life companions in the child's spiritual journey, entrusted with nurturing the child in Christian faith and values for up-righteousness.

5.2.2 Holistic growth is multidimensional.

Godparents' contribution was not only to the child's spiritual formation but also to moral, social, educational and emotional development. Their role complements, rather than substitutes, the role of parents.

5.2.3 The church is central but under-involved.

While the church introduced god parenthood, it did not provide systematic training or structures to sustain it to its fullest function. Without pastoral follow-up, many godparents are been left uncertain about their roles and responsibilities.

5.2.4 Children value godparents.

Evidence from the study suggested that children looked up to godparents as mentors, confidants and role models. This confirmed the Biblical principle of discipleship and stewardship as in (Deuteronomy6:6-7, Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 28:19-20).

5.2.5 Contextual challenges weaken god parenthood.

Poverty, migration and weakening family relationships, even divorce made it difficult for godparents to remain consistently involved. These contextual realities demanded creative and pastoral solutions from church, government and the communities.

5.3.0 Recommendations

5.3.1 to Godparents

Embrace god parenthood as a lifelong spiritual vocation rather than a one-day commitment at baptism or confirmation ceremony.

Foster regular contact with godchildren through prayer, mentorship and visits.

Serve as role models in both faith and daily life, ensuring that godchildren learn not only through example rather involved in practical productive activities to earn a living.

Integrate support for children's education, emotional well-being and social growth into their god parental responsibilities.

5.3.2 to Parents

Select godparents based on spiritual maturity and commitment rather than social ties, financial status, or other factors that might not make them fulfill their roles as expected.

Collaborate actively with godparents in nurturing their children's holistic growth and development.

Encourage children to respect and maintain a close relationship with their godparents.

5.3.3 To the Church (clergy and parish leadership)

Establish structured formation programs for godparents, both before and after baptism, to clarify their roles.

Provide ongoing spiritual formation through workshops, trainings, retreats and pastoral counselling.

Create platforms that foster collaboration between parents and godparents in child upbringing.

Recognize and affirm godparents during parish events to encourage commitment and responsibility.

5.3.4 To the community

Strengthen cultural values that uphold inter-generational mentorship and responsibility.

Encourage community partnerships between schools, families and godparents to support children's holistic growth.

Provide safe communal spaces where godparents and children interact and strengthen their relationships.

5.3.4 To the Future Researchers

Conduct similar studies in other parishes, dioceses and other areas to compare practices and challenges in god parenthood.

Include children's direct perspectives to deepen understanding of how godparents influences their lives.

Explore strategies for sustaining god parenthood in contexts of poverty, urban migration, divorce and modern social change.

5.4 Final remarks

This research has demonstrated that godparents in Nyamrwodho parish played important roles in the holistic development of children. Their involvement extended beyond spiritual mentorship to moral, educational and emotional lines of guidance. However, the role was often been undermined by lack of clarity, resources and institutional support from the church.

For god parenthood to realize its full potential, it must have be reclaimed as a vocation of discipleship and stewardship. The church, parents and the wider community have a collective responsibility to empower and support godparents in achieving this mission. When taken seriously, god parenthood becomes a channel through which the church participates in raising children who are spiritually grounded, morally upright, socially responsible, emotionally resilient and educationally empowered and productive.

Thus, holistic child growth is not the work of parents alone, but a shared calling, with godparents standing as companions in the journey of faith and life.

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6.2 APPENDICES

6.2.1 Appendix I: CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this research project titled "the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth and development in Nyarwodho parish, Goli central archdeaconry, Nebbi diocese", conducted by EGATI ERIC who has discussed the research project with me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this research and I have received satisfactory answers. I understand the general purposes, risks and methods of this research.

I consent to participate in the research project and the following has been explained to me:

- i. The research may not be of direct benefit to me.
- ii. My participation is voluntary.
- iii. My right to withdraw from the study at any time without any implications to me.
- iv. I am able to request a copy of the research findings and reports.
- v. Security and confidentiality of my personal information. In addition, I consent to:
 - I) Audio-visual recording of any part of or all research activities (if applicable)
 - II) Publication of results from this study on the condition that my identity be not revealed.

Participant name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher name:

Signature:

Date:

6.2.2 Appendix II: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC “THE ROLE OF GODPARENTS IN EDUCATING CHILDREN FOR HOLISTIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NYARWODHO PARISH, GOLI CENTRAL ARCHDEACONRY, NEBBI DIOCESE” BY ERIC EGATI AS REQUIREMENT BY UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY.

(To be administered to godparents, parents, teachers, and church leaders in Nyarwodho Parish)

Section A: Statistic Information

(Please tick or fill in where appropriate)

Age:

Below 20 years

21-30 years

31-40 years

41-50 years

Above 50 years

Gender:

Male

Female

Marital Status:

Single

Married

Widowed

Divorced/Separated

Role in relation to child:

Godparent

Parent

Teacher

Church leader/clergy

Level of Education:

No formal education

Primary

Secondary

Tertiary/University

Section B: Role of Godparents in Spiritual Growth

As a godparent (or from observation), how often do you/they guide children in prayer?

Very often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Godparents encourage children to attend church regularly.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Godparents teach children Christian values and catechism.

Yes

No

Not sure

In your view, how important are godparents in the spiritual growth of children?

Very important

Important

Less important

Not important at all

Section C: Role of Godparents in Moral and Social Development

Godparents act as role models in moral behavior for children.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Children confide in godparents when faced with challenges.

Yes

No

Sometimes

How often do godparents guide children on issues of discipline, respect, and social behavior?

Very often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Section D: Role of Godparents in Education

Godparents encourage their godchildren to study hard and perform well in school.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Do godparents provide financial or material support for the education of their godchildren?

Yes

No

Sometimes

How often do godparents visit schools or check children's academic progress?

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

Section E: Emotional and Psychological Support

Godparents provide emotional support and encouragement to their godchildren.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

In times of family problems or crises, godparents are available to counsel and comfort children.

Yes

No

Sometimes

Children feel free to share personal problems with their godparents.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Section F: Challenges Facing Godparents

Godparents understand clearly what their responsibilities are.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Godparents face financial challenges that limit their support to children.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Lack of church guidance makes godparents less effective.

Yes

No

Not sure

Section G: Role of the Church

The Church provides adequate preparation for godparents before baptism.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

The Church provides ongoing support and training for godparents after baptism.

Yes

No

Not sure

In your view, what more can the Church do to strengthen the role of godparents?

Section H: Open-ended Questions

In your opinion, what is the most important role of a godparent in the holistic growth of a child?

.....

What challenges do godparents face in your parish?

.....

What recommendations would you make to strengthen the role of godparents in educating children for holistic growth?


.....


Thank you for the time.

Every blessings in Christ.

Eric Egati

EE19

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