

THE PLIGHT OF STREET CHILDREN IN MAFIKENG

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out in Mafikeng, the capital city of the North West Province of South Africa. The aim of the study was to investigate the plight of street children in Mafikeng and to come up with recommendations on possible solutions to the problem. The objectives were (i) to describe the plight of street children in Mafikeng., (ii) to determine the causes of the problem of street children in Mafikeng, (iii) to identify possible strategies of dealing with the street children problem in Mafikeng, and finally, (iv) to make recommendations as to how the problem can be dealt with.

Survey methodology was employed and the snowball sampling method was used to obtain a sample of street children for face – to – face interviews. An interview schedule was used to collect the data, which were analysed to give the social – economic profile of the street children.

It was found that the street children in Mafikeng suffer terribly and are in a dire need of help. The major problems these street children are facing are the following:

1. Some members of the general public and the police harass them. The children are assaulted and commonly suffer from stab wounds.
2. The street children do not have a safe place to sleep at and they feel cold at night.
3. The street children do not eat enough food and do not have money to buy the basic necessities of life including blankets, clothes and shoes.
4. The street children do not have access to clean water for drinking and washing. They sometimes bath and wash in the Molopo River.

It has also been found out that poverty is a major cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng. Other causes are domestic violence, child abuse, corporal punishment, restrictions on children's freedom, single parenting, step-parenting, death of parents and peer group pressure. The majority (94%) of the street children in Mafikeng wish to go back home for various reasons including eating good food and sleeping in bed.

According to the results obtained in this study, there must be both a short-term as well as a long-term solution to the problem of street children in Mafikeng. Since the lives of the street children are in danger, considering the fact that they are being beaten, assaulted or harassed by members of the general public and the police, and they do not sleep in safe places, as a short term solution to the problem, they should urgently be institutionalized. Government should build a care centre for them, where their needs will be adequately catered for. The needs should include: enough health food, taking them to school and providing them with other basic needs of life including blankets, clothes and shoes. The children should be institutionalized while suitable families are being sought to adopt them, so that they are brought up in communities just like other ordinary children. Alternatively, the existing day care centers such as Bethlehem and Kagontle, and the Mafikeng Crime Stop Project should be supported financially to look after these street children better.

For the long-term solution, the children should be given financial support while they are still at home (that is, before they are forced to move to the streets) - to address chronic poverty. If the poorest of the poor are supported financially and all children are sent to school, the problem of street children in Mafikeng will be minimized.

In addition to this, for street children who have families, especially those who want to go back home, they should be helped to re-unite with their families. This re-unification should be encouraged but before it is done, the families have to be rehabilitated and they, together with the children, must be counseled. The parents or guardians must be educated on how children should be brought up. For those who do not have a job but are able to work, government should try to create jobs for them. People can be mobilized into community development organizations such as social clubs especially for women and youth organizations. Community development projects such as vegetable gardening, knitting and sewing can also be initiated for them.

The street children rightly so, expect the government to help them. The business community should also come on board by contributing some money towards solving this huge problem.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was three-fold: to explore and describe the plight of street children in Mafikeng, to determine the causes of the problem of street children, and thereafter to come up with possible solutions to the problem. Mafikeng is the capital city of the North West Province, situated about 20 kilometers from the Botswana border. The North West Province is one of the nine provinces of South Africa. It is predominantly rural with a black majority population. A bigger part of the province is a former independent homeland of South Africa, that is, Bophuthatswana. Though the homeland was governed by blacks, it was adversely affected by apartheid, partly because a bigger portion of its budget came from the then South African government. Because of the financial assistance, the laws of Bophuthatswana were formulated in such a way that they were in line with those of apartheid South Africa (World Book Encyclopedia, 2005). The North West Province produces much of South Africa's minerals (for example gold and platinum) and farm products. Farming is practiced on a large scale, though, the northern part of the province is largely a semi-desert where less economic activity is taking place. Today, in South Africa and the North West Province in particular, a relatively large number of people are poor and income is not equitably distributed- the Gini coefficient is 0,59, which is very high by international standards (Deaton, 1998:24).

In the 1990s, South Africa's average annual per capita GNP of approximately US \$3000 placed it in the category of a higher middle-income developing country. However, the country's development challenge was far greater than its average per capita income suggested. This is because labour market discrimination during the apartheid years resulted in the country having one of the highest incidences of income inequality on record in the world, as measured for instance by the Gini-coefficient¹ (Bhorat *et al.*, 1995:1). The incidence of income inequality is most pronounced between population groups, with the average White income estimated to be almost 11 times larger than the average African income (Whiteford *et al.*, 1995: 14).

In addition to inequality between races, there is also a significant spatial or regional dimension to income inequality. In terms of its new constitution, South Africa has nine new provinces. The richest province (Gauteng) had a per capita income that is significantly larger than the poorest province (Northern Province). Table 1 below summarizes the spatial inequalities in South Africa in 1995. The table ranks South Africa's nine new provinces in terms of Gross Geographic Product (GGP) per capita.

¹ According to Moll (1995) the Gini-coefficient during the 1980s has remained constant at 0.51 - although between-race inequality declined and discrimination declined during the 1980s and with the abolishment of apartheid, within-race inequality rose (see Moll, 1995; Knight and McGrath, 1987) . Whiteford *et al.* (1995) find a Gini-coefficient of 0.68 using 1991 Census data.

Table 1: Spatial Inequalities in the New South Africa

Province	GDP per capita, 1995 (Rands)	Gini-coefficient 1993	Human Development Index 1991	Unemployment Rate 1995 (%) Males	Unemployment Rate 1995 (%) Females
Northern Province	2721	0.66	0.47	30	52
Eastern Cape	5078	0.65	0.51	36	47
North West	7019	0.60	0.54	25	44
KwaZulu Natal	7345	0.64	0.60	26	42
Free State	9331	0.67	0.66	19	35
Mpumalanga	11401	0.67	0.69	24	48
Northern Cape	11638	0.57	0.70	18	41
Western Cape	16416	0.58	0.83	14	25
Gauteng	23215	0.61	0.81	17	27

Source: WEFA, 1996: 41-45

The province with the lowest per capita GDP in 1995 was Northern Province (R2721), and the province with the highest per capita GDP was Gauteng Province (R 23215). The degree of spatial inequality is evident: average income in Gauteng is almost 10 times that of Northern Province. Furthermore, indicators of access to education and health, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), were almost twice as high in Gauteng and the Western Cape as in Northern Province. Employment opportunities were relatively more abundant in the Western Cape and Gauteng. Table 1 also gives an indication of inequalities between males and females: in all provinces the unemployment rate for females is more than 15% higher than that for males.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 10 million homeless and abandoned children live on the streets of Africa including Mafikeng. Some of these children are AIDS orphans, or have been physically abused and literally chased away from home. According to the literature (see Gebers, 1990; Connolly and Ennew, 1994; Lockwood, 1997; De Maura, 2002; The World Book of Encyclopedia, Vol.15:727 and Serumaga-Zake, 2006), the largest number of children live on the streets due to extreme poverty in their homes. Street children, mostly boys, migrate from rural areas to the cities hoping to find a better life, yet misery awaits them (Gemada, 2005; Schemer-Hughes and Hoffman 1998:358). Some might have been rejected and betrayed by families and society. Street children face a lot of problems including hunger, being stigmatized, alienated and exploited, violence, drug abuse and even being vulnerable to HIV infection. Children living in child headed households and on the streets are particularly vulnerable because they do not have the care and support of parents or guardians they deserve. They require extra support to meet their various basic needs. These include financial, emotional, psychological, health and educational needs.

Street children leave their families in search of a better life but are instead confronted by emotional disturbance, economic marginality, hunger, stigma, alienation and exploitation, risks of violence, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. The street child tends to suffer the following consequences due to poor living conditions, according to Linda van Rooyen and Hartell (2002: 189): stab wounds, burns, tuberculosis, bronchitis, bronchial and respiratory problems, skin and eye problems, gastric problems, hepatitis B, malaria, measles, swollen glands, cholera, meningitis and worm infection. **Malnutrition** tends to

make children look young and smaller than their chronological age, easily susceptible to infection and diarrhea, anemia, reduced levels of energy, impaired – immune system, susceptible to diseases due to poor health, rapid regression when infected for example, from HIV to AIDS. **Drug abuse** causes them to suffer from runny nose, sore throat, brain damage, bone degeneration, blotches on the face, chapped lips, paleness, tired appearance, enlarged pupils and bloodshot eyes, headaches, weight loss, being susceptible to colds and flu. **Stress** causes the street children to be angry, easily irritable, aggressive, moody, restless, and to have poor sleep patterns, lowered immunity, hyperactivity, depression and a poor memory.

There is no doubt that the cause of poverty in South Africa lies mainly in the long history of segregation and discrimination that left a legacy of inequality and poverty in the country (Everatt and Maphai, 2003) because of the unfair structured political and economic system that discriminated against certain sections of the population for decades. During the apartheid era, black males used to go and work in the mines and spent a whole month or more without going back home to see their families. They were not allowed to live with their families in the hostels that belonged to their employment establishments. This, in some instances, caused marriage breakdowns because the husbands would marry other women in the places of work forgetting all about their wives and children back home. This, in some cases, resulted in many children being brought up poorly by single mothers. Single – parenting is listed in the literature as one of the major causes of the problem of street children. In a previous study that was conducted, it was found that most of the street children are of school going age and can therefore lawfully

not work (Serumaga-Zake, 2006). Poor people including street children walk along the streets of the rich suburbs of Mafikeng such as Golf View and Riviera Park daily opening dustbins to look for food. They sometimes break into other people's houses to steal, while others use glue and dagga and engage in bad sexual activities (i.e. prostitution) to make ends meet. A common feature of street life is begging which some members of the public interpret as harassment. There is a lack of information about street children in Mafikeng - particularly regarding their numbers, place of origin, demographic characteristics and the causes of this problem. This study intends to fill this gap.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a result of increasing poverty and unemployment rates (for example, see Lockwood, 1997 and UNICEF, 2006), the street children problem has similarly increased which causes a great number of children live on the streets in precarious conditions. These children are subjected to a variety of detrimental effects, which include amongst others, unhygienic conditions, unhealthy lifestyle, harassment and other undesirable habits.

This study is about street children in Mafikeng. Using a small-scale survey, the causes of children being in the street are explained and described. Further, the demographic characteristics of these children are described. It is hoped that some understanding of the extent and distribution of the problem will be made. Lastly, this study hopes to make some positive recommendations about how to overcome this problem.

1.3 RATIONALE

This research aims to find ways of dealing with the problem of street children in Mafikeng, which has become a social problem in South Africa. An understanding of the causes of how children end up in the streets is imperative. Such understanding will further enlighten the relationships enjoyed by this social problem and others in society.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is important to society because it will inform the right social policy for solving the street children problem. It will aid the existing social policy on street children in South Africa. As a result, some associated problems like crime will be addressed.

The study will also make a contribution to the body of the theory of social science regarding the street children phenomenon. It will add a small, variation to theoretical schemes that explain the problem of street children. Further, it will deepen the methodological understanding of the social problem of street children.

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 AIM

To investigate the plight of street children in Mafikeng.

1.5.2 OBJECTIVES

- To determine the causes of the problem of street children in Mafikeng.
- To describe the problem faced by street children in Mafikeng.

- To identify possible strategies in dealing with the street children problem in Mafikeng.
- To recommend some possible solutions to the problems of street children.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The type of research design that was used in this study is a survey, which involved in-depth interviews using an interview schedule. **Snowball** sampling, a non-probability sampling method was employed. This is the appropriate sampling method because the researcher did not have a list of all the children living on the streets of Mafikeng and where they could be located.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the street children based in Mafikeng; therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all street children in the whole of the North West Province and South Africa in general.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to literature, one of the major causes of the street children problem is poverty. Hence, most of the theories discussed in this chapter focus on poverty - due to the fact that there are no theories that deal specifically with street children.

2.2 POVERTY THEORY

Simmel (1971) defines poverty in terms of a social relationship where street children are helped by other people. Simmel (1971) argues that there is a set of rights and obligations that defines the relationship between the needy and the givers, such that, the needy have the right to receive aid. This right makes receiving less painful. Conversely the giver has the obligation to give to the needy. He further argues that the aid to the poor by society helps to create harmony because there will not be any tendency of the poor to become dangerous enemies of the society. This can also make the poor more productive instead of being useless. Therefore, helping the poor benefits the whole society not only the poor themselves. The state can play a big role in this process (Simmel, 1971).

According to Simmel (1971), there are two types of poverty, that is, absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is a situation where a people cannot afford the basic needs of life including food, clothes, shelter and education, whereas relative poverty means relative deprivation. This is a situation where people are not necessarily absolutely poor but are not as rich as or less rich than others. Simmel's theory of poverty is relevant

to this study since poverty is one of the major factors that drive children from their homes to go and live on the streets. If street children are not helped by society and government to reduce their plight, they will not be useful citizens of the country and they might even turn to be criminals.

2.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION THEORY

Social stratification theory is associated with Karl Marx (see Brym & Lie, 2005). It states that a social stratum is made up of families or individuals at the same level of income, wealth, power, prestige, among others (Gibney, 1987; Broom, 1990). Social stratification influences an individual's life chances for education, health and happiness and it also contributes to social conflict or harmony. In society, everyone wants to maximize his/her income, which in turn would maximize his/her happiness but in reality, the majority of people like in South Africa are poor. This inequality breeds misery and may even force some people into crime. Inequality can be defined as the extent to which some groups or individuals in a society receive different amounts of income, wealth, prestige or power. Resources or income is determined by sex, age, ethnicity, skill, party membership, religion, inheritance or other criteria that are culturally valued (Lensik, 1966). For example, according to the literature, men are normally richer than women. Inequality causes poverty among people, which in turn causes misery and conflicts within societies or families. Children in poor families tend to suffer and this may contribute to their being driven from their homes to the streets. In South Africa, the majority of households are poor as a result of the legacy of apartheid and hence, the predominance of black children on the streets of South African cities including Mafikeng.

Structural theories of poverty (such as Social Stratification Theory) state that poverty is caused by the structure of the larger socio-economic order. It is the macro structure of society that produces inequality and consequently poverty. A key phrase that has become very popular in recent years is “social exclusion” (Friedman, 1996). Social exclusion means that some sections of the society are marginalized and as a result are denied easy access to educational and job opportunities. They do not have adequate basic needs of life such as electricity, sanitation and water. They are not included in the mainstream of the society. Gore (1995) argues that the process of exclusion that occurs through the institutions of market, state and civil society can be understood in terms of the following phenomena:

1. Rapid globalization of the economy, modernization of society and the decreasing role of the nation state.
2. The change in the supply and distribution of economic, political and cultural assets in the context of unpredictable economic change.
3. The social and political structures through which power is exercised and relationships among groups and individuals are defined.
4. The nature of the state and its role in the process of allocation and accumulation

The advantages of the social exclusion approach of explaining the impoverishing of certain sections of the population are obvious. Haan (1998) argues that the social exclusion approach has many advantages over other related terms. It gives us a broader view of deprivation focusing upon societal mechanisms, institutions and strategic actors causing it. Thus the term can be used to link up macro and micro processes. Rodgers

(1996) states that the term social exclusion offers a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary view of poverty. It allows us to view poverty as a process. The impact of exclusion can be seen at various levels. It can highlight the relationship between structure and agency. This perspective allows for the development of a sociologically grounded analysis of poverty. It makes it possible to look into the causes, processes and consequences of poverty as well as the way the discourse of poverty is constructed and deprived people react in a variety of ways to the existing situation of their life.

2.4 SOCIAL CLASS THEORY

According to Horton (1984), social class theory which is also associated with Karl Marx states that social classes arise from the consequences of a division of labour. A social class is made up of people of a similar social status who regard one another as social equals. In society, there is a high class (the richest and dominant), a middle class (the workers) and a low class (the poor). Each class is a subculture, with a set of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavioural norms which differ from those of other classes. Social class is based on total social and economic position in the community including wealth and income, occupation, education, self-identification, hereditary prestige, group participation and recognition by others. Class subcultures prepare children to retain the status of their parents. Social class determines one's life opportunities and colours personality development. Personal happiness does not depend on the wealth of the society but is associated with being among the more affluent members of one's society. According to literature, street children tend to come from the low class families, who do not have enough resources for a happy life. This theory predicts that these children tend

to have the same attitudes, beliefs, norms and values as their parents – the same subculture. In addition, and in line with this theory, a basic assumption is that street children retain the status of their parents of being poor. This relates to the chronic poverty concept because according to the literature poverty is passed on from one generation to another which is a characteristic of developing countries including South Africa.

According to Marx (in Ritzer, 1996), the major social classes of the modern era are owners of capital (the bourgeoisie) and those who work for wages (the proletariat). Ritzer (1996) says that Marx viewed social classes as structures that are external to, and coercive of, people. Social classes are formed out of the production process. These classes have a life of their own that restricts people (Ritzer, 1996). Some own land, others are tenant farmers. Some work for wages and others are employers or self-employed. In South Africa, historically, the disadvantaged people, those who were socially and economically deprived were blacks. On average, blacks did not have land. Hence, most of the street children in South African cities including Mafikeng are blacks. Ritzer (1996) asserts that, an examination of a social structure of production can disclose who depends on whom, who dominates whom, who controls what resources, the group interests that arise and the potentialities for action based on common concerns.

2.5 CONFLICT THEORY

The conflict theory is also associated with Karl Marx. It states that power is one of the most important rewards attached to social positions (Martindale, 1981; Collins, 1975;

Lopreato and Lewis, 1963). The greater the power and authority held by individuals or groups, the greater the ability to make sure they continue receiving such rewards no matter what function they serve for society (Kerbo, 1983). According to the modern conflict theory, classes exist when categories of people share objective interests in a social stratification system, and these interests are likely to be related to the exploitation rooted in control or ownership of productive forces (Wright, 1985). Ritzer (1996) argues that in today's capitalist societies, opportunities for accumulating wealth at the expense of others are more varied than the ownership-nonownership division suggested by Marx. The three types of assets (capital, organisation and skill) create four social classes in current capitalist societies: capitalists, managers, workers and the petty bourgeoisie (Ritzer (1996). The capitalists own an unequal share of wealth and control of the means of production. This is the upper class. Capitalists hire managers to make policy decisions and control the workers to maximize profit (Wright, 1985). Managers are organisation exploiters but are also exploited by the capitalists. These simultaneous exploiting/exploited positions correspond to today's so called middle class. Workers sell their labour to capitalists. The working class is exploited by both the capitalists and managers. Petty bourgeoisie are the self-employed. These employ few workers. The last group of people is the unemployed and underemployed. The unemployed are those people who want to work but are unable to find jobs.

According to Neo-Marxian thought, the capitalist's mode of production keeps an industrial reserve army of unemployed, sporadically employed, and part-time workers for seasonal needs and times of prosperity (Braverman, 1974). This is another theory of

poverty which explains the South African society well. In the past, there was the white dominant group of people, who possessed most of the country's wealth. With the new dispensation, this small privileged group is in a way being replaced by a small black elite, especially those benefiting from black empowerment. It seems that these people are becoming richer and richer while the majority of South Africans are becoming poorer and poorer. In the process, a reserve army of the unemployed is being created from which part-time workers and temporary workers can be drawn by the elite anytime. Though, according to literature, jobs are being created in the economy of South Africa, the rate of job creation is not matching the demand for jobs. Unemployment is increasing poverty which in turn is making the problem of street children grow unabated.

2.6 THE CULTURE OF POVERTY THEORY

The theory of the culture of poverty was developed by Oscar Lewis, an anthropologist in 1959. According to Lewis (in Horton, 1984), a specific syndrome that grows up in some situations requires an economic setting of cash economy, a high rate of unemployment and underemployment, low wages and people with low skills. In the absence of voluntary or state support and stable family, the low-income population tends to develop the culture of poverty against the dominant ideology of accumulation of the middle class. The poor realize that they have a marginal position within a highly stratified and individualistic capitalistic society, which does not offer them any prospect for progressing. In order to survive, the poor have to develop their own institutions and agencies because the larger society tends to ignore and bypass them. Thus the poor come to form a common set of values, norms and pattern of behaviour, which are different from the general culture as

such. The poor has a way of life – a specific type of life (that is, a subculture). Lewis found 70 traits that underlay this subculture. He classified these traits into four types.

- *Relationships between the subculture and the larger society*

People either withdraw or keep a distance from the larger society. They do not belong to labour unions or political parties, go to banks or hospitals or enjoy leisure facilities of the city. They have a high mistrust of the dominant institutions of society.

- *Nature of the slum community*

The slum community is characterized by poor housing and overcrowding and a minimum of organisational structure beyond the space of family. These institutions grow up mainly to meet their minimum needs. The slum economy is inward looking. It is embedded in pawning of personal goods, informal credit and use of second hand goods.

- *Nature of the family: Bilateral kinship system, unstable marriage, matrifocal family.*

- *Attitudes, values and personality of the individual*

The individual has “a strong feeling of fatalism, helplessness, dependence and inferiority”; a weak ego tuned to the gratification in the present and a strong preoccupation with masculinity.

Once the subculture is formed it tends to be perpetuated. It is transmitted from one generation to another through socialization. The theory of culture of poverty has been

greatly misunderstood and misused. Lewis saw it as an extreme form of adaptation that the poor are forced to make under certain circumstances and in certain places. The poor rejects the dominant culture and its institutions because they do not serve them. Their own subculture grows out of despair and protest. This theory was found particularly influential in the study of the low class people (see Myrdal, 1962). According to Myrdal (1962), the low class became an increasingly important section of people in the west living off welfare or crime in the past. Murray (1984) argues that welfare dependency leads to the breakdown of the nuclear family and formation of a counter culture that encourages dependency and criminality.

The theory of culture of poverty suggests that the norms and values of the poor can be distinguished as a subculture of a larger society and characterized by a distinct way of life, including a usual worldview and low aspirations (Lewis, 1968; Moynihan, 1965). The poor form a subculture in which, as a result of their common experiences, develop certain attitudes and behaviour patterns, which are transmitted from parents to the child. These include extended families, the casual resort to physical aggression, an inability to plan for the future, a seeking of immediate gratification, weak impulse control and fatalistic attitude toward the future. This culture is said to perpetuate itself from generation to generation. The culture of poverty concept has been supported by many social scientists that see it as realistic (see Karbo, 1980). The theory is criticized for being too deterministic, blaming the victim, and diverting attention away from the structural causes of poverty (Gursslin, 1967, Glazer and Moynihan, 1971). They say that the theory does not apply equally to all ethnic groups, and the behaviour patterns may not be so

much norms or ideals as simply an adaptation to what appear to be unavoidable circumstances (see Emassy 1975, 604).

This theory can be applied to the South African situation because a lot of South Africans were denied socio-economic opportunities including education and land through apartheid. By denying the black people educational opportunities, blacks were destined for failure in life, especially those in rural areas. After South Africa had become a democratic country, many slums mushroomed in cities as poor people migrated from rural areas to urban areas to look for a better life. This increased the problem of street children particularly in instances where their parents could not secure wage employment. According to this theory, the children behave in the same way as their parents. Sumner (in Martindale, 1981) states that the poor are poor because they do not work hard; that they do not have ambition, they squander money, drinking, among others. According to Serumaga-Zake (2006), people in relatively many poor households in Mafikeng misuse child grant money by drinking liquor and do not have jobs. This is supported by this theory. The theory warns about welfare dependency. Some of these people perpetually depend on social welfare and are lazy to find work or create their own work as self-employed. In line with Sumner's views, a basic assumption is that street children, because most of them come from poor families, tend not to struggle in life to find work in order to make ends meet. They tend to depend on other people by begging for food and money for a living.

2.7 SITUATIONAL THEORY OF POVERTY

According to Kerbo (1996), the situational theory of poverty holds that the poor behave differently because they do not have the resources and opportunities for adopting the middle class life styles. Young people have few opportunities to go to college and so they drop out. Women prefer a matrifocal family because it allows them to have a greater claim upon their children.

2.8 PEER GROUP THEORY

Peer group pressure plays a very important role in the child's life as far as social development is concerned because it provides experiences of friendship and relationships, with opportunities to exercise some forms of independence. Children continue to learn to appreciate the numerous and varied points of view that are represented in their peer groups and this experience serves to diminish the rigidly egocentric outlook that was the characteristic of an earlier stage. The peer group offers children opportunities for learning positive social skills such as negotiation, assertiveness and competitiveness. Excessive conformity and attachment to peer group can lead to undesirable activities and behaviour such as living on the streets, experimentation with drugs or sex. Peer pressure usually becomes a strong motivational factor for the 12 year old and older children (Ansell, 2005).

This theory teaches us that as parents, we must know whom our children play with. If their friends are deviants or delinquents they may be influenced into similar forms of behaviour, and might end up on the streets, but not necessarily because of poverty but

because of bad behaviour and deviance. Peer-group influence can lead to wasted lives and violence. Children can join gangs and engage in petty criminal activities. According to Tischler (1990), peer groups provide valuable social support for adolescents who are moving toward independence from their parents. Tischler (1990) also says that peer groups are most effective in molding the behaviour of adolescents whose parents do not provide consistent standards, a principled moral code, guidance and emotional support (see also Baumrind, 1975; Elder, 1975). Of relevance to this study is that peer pressure can influence children to run away from their homes into the streets.

2.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, some of the theories associated with street children have been discussed. Apart from the theory of peer group pressure, all these theories were based on poverty because poverty is one of the major factors that drive children away from their homes to the streets. The highlights of the discussion were that, society and government have an important role to play in solving the problem of street children (for example, Simmel's Poverty Theory) and that the poor create their own sub-culture, a set of moral values - a way of behaviour, and have a low aspiration, which is passed on from parents to children (that is, The Culture of Poverty theory). Chapter 3 will present the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Partly, as a result of the industrial revolution, large numbers of people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries left the rural homes and moved to urban areas to look for jobs. According to Ritzer (2000), this caused many problems for the people who had to adjust to urban life. In addition, the expansion of the cities produced exacerbated the situation with problems including overcrowding and the problem of street children. This chapter looks at the literature on street children worldwide.

3.2 STREET CHILDREN IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Anyuru (1996: 268) asserts that the problem of street children is not new as it can be traced back many decades ago. The phenomenon existed in most urban centres in developing countries since the beginning of the postcolonial era. Some street children lived and worked in the streets with the purpose of making a living for themselves and their families. There has been reports that as many as 100 million children lived on the streets worldwide and this alerted international Non Government Organisations (NGOs) to the problem. In East Africa, about 3066 street children were noticed in Nairobi in the year 1969. They were estimated to be 16300 in the whole of Kenya. In Kampala, Uganda, street children became noticeable in 1972 when Idi Amin Dada took power and today, there are over 1500 children living in the streets of Kampala (Africa insight 1996:268). The causes of children's problems in Uganda include armed conflicts, HIV/AIDS

pandemic, lack of education, inadequate services and chronic poverty. Evans (2004) states that in Tanzania street children rapidly increased in the 1980s and 1990s.

Street children are regarded as abandoned children and the blame is cast on their families because they do not have any visible adult supervision. Parents are perceived as uncaring – with too many children, drunkards, and mothers are regarded as people who are raising children without fathers and having multiple casual sexual partners (De Mauro, 2002). Studies conducted in Maputo, Mozambique, Asuncion and Paraguay reveal that street children were not drawn disproportionately from one-parent families (Boyden, 1991). According to Rizzini and Lusk (1995), economic marginality is one of the major factors of the street children phenomenon. Peer pressure is another (Young, 2004).

While street children's families are viewed as negligent, children themselves are depicted as both victim and deviant. The literature on street children tends to focus on things like lack of shelter, food, education and health care (De Maura 2002). Street children are regarded as deviants, with unbecoming behaviours such as engaging themselves in drug use, sexual promiscuity, prostitution and crime. They are seen as untamed and not fully responsible for their own behaviour (De Maura 2002), inevitably psychologically damaged and destined for failure as adults (Ennew 1994).

Street children face a lot of serious difficulties in their daily lives. For example, in Brazil, a sixteen year old killed another in disagreement over a measure of dagga (Swart, 1995). According to De Moura (2002), children on the street are those who work on the street

but usually sleep at home, whereas children of the street are those who live on the street without family support. Working on the streets does not inevitably lead to sleeping on the streets (Rosenberg and Andrade 1999). Again, children move easily between the different categories (Godoy, 1999). In Rio de Janeiro, for instance, many children from the surrounding slums work on the streets and avoid expensive commuting by sometimes staying in vacant buildings, shelters, doorways or pavements (Rizzini and Husk 1995). Connolly and Ennew (1996) argue that children are attracted to city centres partly by income-generating activities such as selling newspapers, shinning shoes and guiding tourists. These children tend to know the urban environment so well and know places where they can perform daily activities including as work, leisure, washing, eating and sleeping (Young 2004). Many of these children experience health problems, particularly skin diseases, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites and injuries (Ennew, 1994). Some street children take drugs or inhale glue to avoid feeling hungry, escape from anxieties and to fall asleep. Others engage in unprotected sex for survival or pleasure. That is, they risk their lives to get something to eat (Ansell, 2005).

According to Ennew (1994), in some respect, street children differ little from other poor children. Despite engaging in petty crime, most of them have the same attitudes as other ordinary poor children. There is no clear evidence that living on the street damages cognitive functioning and most street children function well emotionally (Aptekar, 1989). HIV/AIDS now affects street children and the number of affected children is dramatically increasing particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where adult HIV – prevalence rate exceeds 30 percent in several countries. Children, in general, are affected not only by the death of

their parents, but also by the suffering that HIV/AIDS imposes on their families (Foster and Williamson, 2000: 210).

Alta van Dyk (1999) states that sexual imitation for some children may occur at a very early age especially in poor communities where sexual abuse and rape are relatively common. For example, it was found in Zambia that more than 25 percent of children aged 10 had already had sex (Alta van Dyk, 1999: 46). This figure rose to 60 percent among 14 years olds. According to Alta van Dyk (1999), in South Africa, 10 percent of the interviewed street children (in six provinces) had started having sex at the age of 11 or younger. The South African Department of Health used this study as a basis to recommend that sex education should be introduced to children at around the age of 12. It was thought that this might benefit children before many of them become sexually active.

Research (see, for example, Felsman, 1981) has shown that the portrayal of street children as homeless and abandoned is not true for most of them. For example, in Columbia, Felsman (1981: 35) found that 61 percent of the street children had close contacts with their families and were returning home everyday. In Latin America, 80-90 percent of street children have contacts with their families (Veale, et. al., 2000:135). In a study done in Ethiopian towns, Veale and Adefrisew (1993:69) found that fewer than 20 percent of children regularly slept on the streets. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Muchini and Nyandiy-Bundy (1991:69) estimated that 85 percent of street youth sometimes lived in a family.

3.3 STREET CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, like in other parts of the world, Donald and Swart-Kruger (1994) and Mufune (2000:236) claim that about 90 percent of the young people working on the streets return to their homes at night.

In Johannesburg, according to Swart (1995), when street children smoke dagga, they do all sorts of dangerous things. For example, a boy picked up a broken bottle in the street and stabbed another in the stomach. In one instance, gang members comprising former street children took protection money from street children and either stabbed them or demanded sex if the children could not let go. Street children are normally subjected to public violence. This includes pouring inflammable material such as petrol over the cardboard coverings which street children use as blankets and setting them alight. A street child being hit by a motorcar in cities is also not uncommon. Some adults often regard street children a nuisance and treat them with cruelty. Traditional practices such as muti (medicine) murders of street children have also been reported.

Street children are vulnerable to sexual exploitation by adults. It is reported that in Johannesburg, young street children sometimes remain awake at night and sleep during the day because of fears associated with darkness. If arrested or taken into a care centre, maltreatment often follows such as the use of fists, batons, hosepipes, leather straps, belts, boots and electric shocks, among others. Hence, street children are frequently subjected to emotional, physical and sexual abuse from the public. Ennew (1994) argues that state provision for street children with few exceptions aims to cleanse the streets of

their presence rather than to address their best interests. He further states that street children often come from abusive and neglectful homes and then experience abuse and neglect on streets. According to Ennew (1994), rehabilitation programmes in childcare institutions are under-resourced and are left to the initiative of non-governmental organisations.

The children who reside on the streets are denied the right to justice. According to the literature, agencies responsible for protecting street children are often a main source of violence against them (Ennew, 1994). The author recommends that there should be independent child protection agencies, with powers to inspect institutions. Street children do not appear to receive the attention they deserve during crime prevention operations but are instead a major problem to the public (Williams, 1996: 221). Like some other researchers, Williams (1996) states that, historically, street children have been considered as violent and threatening and the term street children and violence tend to imply that the children themselves are perpetrators of violence. Le Roux (1993:227) found that in Pretoria, the average age of the respondents (that is, street children) was between 13 and 14 years of age (see also Cockburn, 1991: 155). Ritcher (1991: 295) found that street children in South Africa are between 7 and 18 years of age, with the majority being between 13 and 16. Ritcher (1991: 295) and Zingaro (2001: 234) further found that the ages of street children in poor third world countries between 11 and 16 years differ significantly from those in rich first world countries who are older than 16 years. All the street children in this study were of African origin and all were boys.

According to Ross (1991:70), the street child phenomenon in South Africa is due to apartheid that existed since 1948 (until 1993). He author states that there are no white street children in South Africa. However she found that there are 10,000 white children in 160 state registered and subsidized children homes, but that, in contrast, there are no state-administered children homes for African children; only 700 were harbored there during 1991 (Le Roux, 1993). Ross (1991) argues that no wonder there are so many black street children; white children in need of social care in South Africa have been adequately provided for by the community and by the state. Swart (in Ross, 1991: 340) noted: "Street children in Johannesburg are almost exclusively black children; a few are coloured. This is because, despite the fact that blacks outnumber whites by 5:1 in South Africa, racially segregated institutional care facilities for children are disproportionately provided at a ratio of 9:200".

Gebbers (1990:11-14) argues that the main reason why South African street children are predominantly males is because the girls are required to stay at home to take care of smaller children. Gebbers (1990:11) found that street children are 81.1 percent male and only 18.9 percent female, while Scharf (1988:32) found that 10 percent of street children in Cape Town are female. Many street children do not have a clear memory of time; they often do not know how old they are or how long they have been on the street (Gebbers, 1990). Gebbers (1990:11) states that, of the street children interviewed, 59.6 percent had not been in an institution or shelter. while 27.2 percent of the total group had been on the street for more than three years. "It would appear that the longer children are exposed to

street life, the more difficult it is for possible rehabilitation resources and thus become absorbed into the street life culture” (Gebers, 1990).

Many of these children come from structurally disadvantaged homes where poor living conditions result in many difficulties such as parental loss through death or abandonment and/or family conflict. Shortage of housing may also force children onto the streets. In many cases, the move to street life is an adaptive response to the stress and severe oppression experienced by families living in a society of conflict. Thus, the move to the streets often represents a desire to take control of one’s life and replace old cultural values and conditions with new ones (Hickson and Gaydon, 1989).

Serumaga-Zake (2006) found that a large number of children move to the streets of Mafikeng to beg for food, have good time and even sometimes to engage in minor crimes such as stealing from the rich households in the suburbs of the city. It was found that unemployment, divorce or abandonment and death of parents make life unbearable at home and then force them to move to the streets, where they beg for money and some smoke glue and dagga. According to the caretaker at Bethlehem Shelter, there are street children who get involved in bad sexual activities and because of their lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS, some of them get infected with the disease and other sexually transmitted diseases. She said that it is difficult to control the children at the centre. It was established that the major factor that drives children away from their homes to the streets of Mafikeng is poverty while the other factor is domestic violence.

Regarding preventative strategies, according to the Mafikeng Mail of March 17, 2007, at a “parent and child development function” in Lonely Park, Mr. I Tawana, a tribal leader, urged parents to bring up their children according to cultural law and order, to teach the children to live in the traditional way that would bring them face to face with life’s challenges and keep them off the streets. The guest speaker, Mrs. Sophy Dondlolo-Thipe, said that, although the children have their rights, they should have self-discipline, respect their homes and the people around them. He continued to say that “home school and church are the proper places for children to grow well, mentally, physically and spiritually because such places will teach them to stay away from crime, drugs and illnesses such as HIV/AIDS”.

3.4 THE MAJOR FACTORS THAT DRIVE CHILDREN FROM HOME TO THE STREETS

3.4.1 Chronic Poverty

According to Lockwood (1997), a large number of children live on the streets due to chronic poverty. Chronic poverty is caused by economic pressures and greater conflicts of interest accompanied by social marginalization (Lockwood, 1997). The households of the poor are likely to be more unstable than those of the rich and it is clear that poverty severely constrains the family’s ability to provide for their children and places great pressure on adult – child relationships within the family. This may result in some young people leaving home for the street to try to support the extended family. It also illustrates children’s urgency in constructing their social lives. The World Book Encyclopedia (Vol.15: 727) states that the poor suffer from lack of many things they need in life. For

example, adequate medical care or the foods they need to stay healthy. Unlike others, they suffer from diseases, become more seriously ill and die at a younger age than others. Many low-income families live in crowded settlements or squatter camps. The literature shows that large numbers of children born into low-income families remain poor all their lives. Many of these children tend to acquire the same feelings of helplessness and hopelessness that their parents have developed as well as malnutrition. This is particularly during the first three years of life, which may stunt a child's growth or cause permanent damage to the brain. Many underprivileged children do not receive good education and as a result have few opportunities to get a good job (World book encyclopedia).

According to the global poverty research group, between 300 and 420 million people globally are trapped in chronic poverty, experiencing deprivation over many years and will often pass their poverty to their children. Street children are ill-treated, malnourished, abused, exposed to elements of nature, socially deprived and abandoned and denied affection, education and assistance (Levenstein, 1995; Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999:326; Boukhari, 1997:9).

According to UNICEF (2006), social forces, unemployment, divorce, widowed mothers, low standard of education, gender inequalities and changes in labour requirements and inflation are the major factors that contribute to poverty - which also have a major effect on the well being of children. A UNICEF sponsored report found that in the 1990s, over one billion children suffered severe effects of poverty in the world (UNICEF. 2006: 27).

Poverty was measured not only in terms of income but also in terms of deprivation of basic human rights such as shelter, food, water, sanitation, health, education and information. Nearly 20 percent of the world's children do not have access to safe water sources or have more than a 15 m walk to water and over 15 percent of children under five in the developing countries are severely malnourished (UNICEF, 2006). In Southern Asia alone more than 90 million children go hungry everyday. It was also found that 134 million children in the world between the ages of 7 to 18 have never been to school and that girls are more likely to be denied schooling than boys (UNICEF, 2006:45). For example, in the Middle East and North Africa, girls are three times more likely than boys to have never attended school. Poverty imposition on children can mean a lifetime of suffering and want and a legacy of poverty for the next generation. This cycle constrains the overall economic and social development of a nation (<http://www.unicef.org/medis/media-15082.html> (2006)).

The meaning of poverty to children and how the relative lack of income influences children's day-to-day lives

According to Belany (in UNICEF, 2005), it is through inadequate nutrition, fewer learning experiences, instability of residence, lower quality of schools, exposure to environmental toxins, family violence, homelessness, dangerous streets or less access to friends and services to name but a few that children find themselves in trouble. Belany argues that addressing poverty means ensuring that children have access to safe water, adequate sanitation and environments that are healthy and free of diseases; all girls and boys must be able to attend and achieve in school, and be protected from injury - with

time and space to play, to explore and to learn. Too often, poverty deprives children the necessary foundations for their future. Belany warns that no effort to reduce global poverty can succeed without first tackling its impact on children. UNICEF (2005) believes that nurturing children is the cornerstone of human progress.

Poverty can increase children's exposure to a wide range of problems including inferior housing, insufficient food and poor quality diets, deficient health care, inadequate parenting and poor quality childcare. All these can result in delayed physical, cognitive and social emotional growth. Poor children suffer higher incidents of adverse health, development and other outcomes than non-poor children and youth. Other outcomes include: physical health, cognitive ability (intelligence, verbal ability and achievement test scores), school achievement, emotional and behavioral outcomes and teenage out of wedlock childbearing (see Price, 2000; ENCARTA encyclopedia, 1996; Whiteside and Sunter, 2000; Alta van Dyk, 1999; Children First document, 2001; Cockburn, 2003). Poverty and HIV/AIDS are regarded as the major and worst causes of violation of children's rights. UNAIDS indicates that South Africa has an HIV prevalence rate of 20.1 percent in adults aged 15-49 (Cockburn 2003:51).

3.4.2 Corporal Punishment (Physical Abuse)

Adults' use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline has been identified as a key issue that drives away children from home to the street. Many studies on education in Tanzania draw attention to the wide spread use of corporal punishment for disciplining children in school (UNICEF, 2001). Mbinyi (1995) suggests that corporal punishment is

enshrined in African culture and traditions - forming part of the cultural construction of childhood. Harsh punishments from parents are the first reason children leave home for the streets in Tanzania.

3.4.3 Domestic Violence

Violence and frequent drinking liquor problem of adults are commonly mentioned by street children as reasons why children leave their homes for streets (Williams1994).

3.4.4 Restrictions on their Freedom

In African societies, children are seen as an important resource for the family and are expected to assist in a variety of productive and reproductive activities at the household level (Koda, 2000). However, tensions around time-use between parents and children begin to surface as soon as children express a preference for recreation (playing) rather than performing jobs assigned to them by the adults.

3.4.5 Single Parenting

Single parent households, most of which are female-headed face difficulties of one adult having to combine income - earning with household management and childcare. This results in the parent's taking on only part-time, informal jobs with low earnings (Omari, 1995). Household income may not be enough to cater for all the basic needs at home for a child who may see moving to the street as an alternative.

3.4.6 Step-parenting

In view of female – headed households' vulnerability to poverty and instability due to their lack of independent access to land and property, many women find another partner to live with. However because of the notion that children belong to their fathers, stepfathers are not expected to care for older children from their previous marriages. Stepmothers also neglect and exploit their step children (Bridge, 2001).

3.4.7 Disability

Violence against disabled children has been reported in research. Consistently these children are more often falling victims of abuse within families. They end up living on the streets. Disabled children usually have little future other than begging. Children may also become disabled while living on the streets, through traffic accidents, violence and drug abuse (Bridge, 2001).

3.4.8 Polygamy

The rights of the child can be understood fully only in the context of the status of the child's mother (Omari and Mbinyi, 1997). Bledsoe (1995) argues that, for polygamous men, there is a tendency to rank wives and hence children by wives' status (Lockwood, 1997). Consequently, children of high status wives may receive special attention, while those of uneducated and low status wives may be marginalized. According to Lockwood (1997), this relates to long observed approach to paternity in African societies. The dissatisfied child tends to look for alternative residences for freedom and better life including the streets.

3.4.9 Death of Parents

In some cases, when the parents die, the children are left without a caretaker. They then live in extreme poverty, which tends to drive them into the streets for survival (Omari, 1995).

Other Causes

Homeless children in African cities are increasingly becoming a serious problem (UNICEF and Save the Children Fund, 2005). The number of these children is about one million (Wax, 2005: 16). Though Africa boasts of its traditional system of extended family which helps orphaned and needy children, over the past 25 years a variety of problems including drought, war, HIV/AIDS and economic collapse have broken families apart and left thousands of children to survive on their own. Another problem that forces children into the streets is the *inability to pay school fees* because education is not free in most African countries. Urbanization across Africa aggravates the problem. Nassin Dafallea el Yousf (in Wax, 2005: 16), a program officer of Save the Children-Sweden Khartoum said that “when children leave home, they intend to make an honest living by working, but they end up in trouble, addicted to glue, and sometimes sexually abused or exploited by adults”.

A Three Talk - Show Programme by Noeleen Maholwana - Sangqu

In a Noeleen’s Three Talk – Show programme on 27/9/2006 at 17:40 on “Life on the Streets”, one 14 year old street child from “Streetwise” shelter explained that, when his father passed away, his mother left him. He did not have anywhere to go and he moved to

the streets in Johannesburg. One of the officials of the shelter said that they are trying to take street children into care but before they do, they firstly build a good relationship with them to win their trust. He also revealed that one could hardly find girls on the streets because they can easily find accommodation, as girl friends or prostitutes. A social worker said that it is difficult for boys to find accommodation in the community because they are not easily trusted, that for them, they look for places like parking spaces to sleep in.

One street child said that he makes between R100 and R300 a day by directing cars to park and looking after them. This encourages street children to stay on the street. While on the streets, they use drugs and, according to them, they feel good. When the social worker was asked what causes children to move to the streets, he said that there are push factors as well as pull factors. Push factors cause a discomfort in the family. For example, when the mother has a partner and the child does not approve of him, the child feels uncomfortable and one way out of this problem is to run away from home. Another problem is poverty. An example of a pull factor is when children in a residential area interact with friends who happen to live or work on the street (that is peer pressure). Children living on the street tell their friends living with their families about “good” life on the streets and can, during the process, persuade them to join them.

One street child from “Kids haven” shelter said that she hated her parents for a good reason. When she was living with her grandfather, she used to admire her friends at school because their parents usually bought them beautiful things. Her parents could not

afford them. One time, she was raped. When she told some of her family members about it, they did not believe her but other people including her friends did and sympathized with her. She then started confiding in her friends rather than her family members.

The social worker was asked what should be done to prevent the problem of street children. He said that we have to exercise “UBUNTU” like in the past. According to UBUNTU, a child belongs to the community. He said that, in the olden days, a child was raised by the community, the whole village. If a child was found anywhere by an adult misbehaving, he/she would be reprimanded and a child would not fail to have food to eat. If there were no food at his/her home, he/she would go to the nearest house to ask for food and food would be given to him/her to eat. Nowadays, the situation is different people are individualistic and the number of child-headed households is not only high but is also increasing.

An official of a childcare centre said that the way in which street children regard themselves is not good, as they believe that they are worthless. He said that street children face terrible things such as bad weather, prostitution and drugs, among others. A street child said that, because he was destitute, he turned to drugs, and when he tried to talk to the parents to sort things out, they simply hit him. The social worker stated that nowadays, parents do not know how to treat children properly. One street child said that the worst thing that had ever happened to him was as follows. One time, they were smoking dagga in a corridor somewhere in Johannesburg. Suddenly, a friend ran out into the street and was run over by a car. Another time, when they were fighting over food,

one of them drew out a knife and stabbed another. The official advised that good parenting and a good relationship between parent and child can go along way in preventing the problem of street children. He added that parents should learn to listen to their children.

3.5 THE PLACE OF THE CHILD IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Children have a claim on their parents. They have a right to receive support from their families and communities, regardless of their economic value. Normally, families want to provide this support and will do so if at all possible. When parents cannot provide for their children (that is, when they are poor), society must acknowledge the responsibility of helping them. According to Kent (1995), at the earliest age, the child is highly dependent on his/her parents. As time goes on, he/she becomes more and more independent and more and more active participant citizen in society. The obligation of the family is to promote its children's development, this is to empower or increase self-reliance in them. The task is to help and increase the children's capacity to define, analyze and be able to solve their own problems until they can become independent, full participants in the civil Society (Kent, 1995: 3). Most parents devote enormous resources to serving the interests of their children. In many cases however, that bond is broken or is never created. This is, for example, when fathers or mothers disappear. For example, some children are abandoned in hospitals as soon as they are born.

Some children live on the streets by choice. As children mature, the first priority for parents is to help them become responsible for themselves. Kent (1995) argues that,

before children are mature, they need to be nurtured by their parents, failing which, they ought to get it from their local governments, the national governments or from the international community. According to Kent (1995), the responsibility hierarchy should be: (1) Child, (2) Family, (3) Community, (4) Local government, (5) State Government, (6) National Government, (7) International Government Organisation.

Kent (1995) continues to say that this can be pictured as a set of nested circles, with the child in the centre of the nest, surrounded, supported and nurtured by family, community, government and ultimately international organisations such as UNICEF, the food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations, The World Health organisation, and the United Nations committee on Human Rights. That, just inside that ring is another one - representing International Nongovernmental Organisation (INGOS). The international bodies' task is not to deliver services directly to the child but to try as much as possible to empower agencies in the inner rings.

3.6 STRATEGIES DESIGNED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF STREET CHILDREN

Government intervention

In South Africa, according to the current government policy, there are no orphanages. There are community - based multi purpose centers. The Department of Social Development is implementing a family and community - based approach to take care of orphaned children and other vulnerable children such as those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. These are structures where comprehensive services, focusing on children and

vulnerable groups within the communities are rendered - to encourage traditional community life. Vulnerable children include: orphans (both AIDS and Non-AIDS orphans); chronically and/or terminally ill children; physically, sexually and emotionally abused children; neglected children; children with disabilities; children involved in child labour, children living and working on the street and children abusing alcohol and drugs.

In Mafikeng, there are community centres where poor and vulnerable children go for financial assistance and are fed. Some of these centres belong to government and some to Non Government Organisations. Some churches in Mafikeng also feed some of these children. Some of these centres are daycare centers; others are referred to as "sleep in", where children do not go back home for the night. Examples of daycare centres are: Legae Le Bana, Bethlehem, Kagontle Childcare Centre and Boikagong Youth and Childcare Centre. The majority of vulnerable children live at Dibate, Lonely Park and Signal Hill (Serumaga-Zake, 2006). At Boikagong Youth and Childcare Centre, like other government childcare centres, is where children who have been raped or brutally assaulted or sodomized are kept in safe custody while the culprits are still at large, awaiting court trials. Government childcare centers cater for the rights of children.

According to the social worker at Boikagong Youth and Childcare Centre, these children are taken away from their homes and are kept in such centres (called 'places of safety') because it had been found that usually such children could be murdered to destroy evidence. These children are under strict observation by social workers, security guards and government. Vulnerable children, fall into three basic categories, namely, (1) those

children with developmental needs and therapeutic needs, (2) those that need foster care and (3) those that just sleep and are fed in a childcare centre. Those who sleep at a childcare centre are allowed to visit their homes say at weekends and during public holidays.

According to the Department of Social Development's Home/Community-Based Care and Support manual, one of the general roles of the department in mitigating the social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS on poor households and children is to focus on "the protection of children who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and the need to develop and implement national policies and strategies to: build and strengthen governmental, family and community capacities to provide a supportive environment for orphans and girls and boys infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. This includes providing appropriate counseling and psycho-social support; ensuring their enrolment in school and access to shelter, good nutrition, health and social services on an equal basis with other children; to protect orphans and vulnerable children from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking and loss of inheritance".

Governments' responsibility for children has led states to worry about the division of labour - where parents, particularly mothers (especially working-class mothers) take enough responsibility for children (Mayall, 2002: 18). The concern, since the mid-nineteenth century, has focused on child mortality, child health, child labour, street children, the education of the lower classes, maternal neglect and ignorance, children as victims and threats (see Hurt, 1979; Davin, 1990; Cunningham 1991; Hendrick 1994).

The researchers argue that children should be sent to school in order to reduce their dangerous presence on the streets. There are arguments about the division of responsibility between parents and the state.

According to Dr Zola Skweyiya, the Minister of Social Services, society has a duty to make South Africa a better place for children to stay. He said that relatively many children in South Africa have endured suffering and abuse without comprehensive legislation to protect them for too long. According to Cockburn (2003), street children are considered to be among the most damaged, deprived and marginalized of all South African children. Cockburn (2003) says that although up to now services have more or less kept up with the number of children on the street, reliable statistics are impossible to obtain because of the nature of these children, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic will certainly lead to increased numbers of street children.

In South Africa, intervention strategies aimed at solving the problem of street children are emerging. The strategies acknowledge the many stages a child passes through to become a street child and the slow and painful process of reconstructing a shattered life. The work of the interministerial committee on children and youth at risk paved the way for the street children's needs including financial, emotional, psychological and education, among others. A Bill for children's protection was put in place though Cockburn (2003) suggests that there is still more work to do on it urgently. He argues that some of the issues in the Bill are not benefiting the well being of street children. She states that the Bill has been criticized by health workers and social workers thinking that municipalities

in South Africa are merely interested in getting rid of street children and clearing streets but not necessarily in the best interest of the children, and that government and business often shared the same view that street children need to be punished, controlled and removed (Cockburn, 2003). It is suggested that comprehensive social schemes should be incorporated into the children's Bill to support families living in poverty and thereby reducing the need for children to leave home for the streets. Issues such as support to children's services and families whose children have left home to live on streets, and the necessity for more financial resources to be allocated to primary prevention are critical issues (Cockburn, 2003).

The right to food is entrenched in three different provisions in the South African constitution. Section 27.1 (b), the principle provision, entrenches everyone's right to have access to sufficient food. The right to food is also entrenched in section 28 (1) (c) of the constitution, which gives children a right to basic nutrition. The Bill marks the culmination of a comprehensive and in-depth process into the plight of South Africa children. According to Cockburn (2003), the Bill has the potential to take children of South Africa into a new era. The health ministry launched the National Programme of Action for children organisation strategy for the needs of South African children in May 2000. It emphasizes the commitment of the government towards the environment and well being of children in South Africa. South Africa, has adapted the world summit goals for the year 2000 to meet the needs of its children by endorsing the United Nations convention on the rights of the child in a 1995 parliamentary session and accepting the 1990 world summit for children's goals for survival, protection, development and

environmental protection. At the same time, provinces are also encouraged to implement plans of action for children, taking into consideration the inter – sector nature of the challenge. Having a specific integrated programme to ensure the survival, protection and development of South African children is therefore a vital element in building an economically dynamic and healthy nation. Children can take the lead to addressing the poverty problem in the country, reinforcing human rights, accelerating growth and development. Such a programme will also alleviate the urgent plight of children (Cockburn, 2003).

In 1994, an article in the *Fordham Law Review* gave details of the many ways in which street children had been humiliated and abused in South Africa. In his first State of the Nation address on the 24 April 1994, President Nelson Mandela accepted in principle the “First call for children”. He argued that street children couldn’t be overlooked in the proposed Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). On the 16 June 1994, in commemorating the Sharpeville massacre, he repeatedly expressed his concern that the problems of children should be addressed constructively. He established a presidential trust fund to assist street children and children in prison (Swart –Kruger 1996: 233).

Removing children from the streets to a place of safety is not necessarily in their best interests. Almost ten years ago, a specialist in child development found that children in need of care in South Africa were forced to fit into the childcare system rather than having treatment programmes fitted to their needs. In South Africa today, as in the past, a child’s place in society is in his or her family home. This perspective was clearly

recognized in 1983 when the South African children Act was renamed the Childcare Act. The new title was chosen in order to reflect the general principle that the family is the normal social and biological structure the child must grow and develop in (Swart-Kruger, 1996).

Education

According to Ansell (2005: 153), nonformal education can be used to teach street children. Nonformal education is regarded as a way of educating children who cannot be sent to school - including children in remote locations and those whose life styles are not easily accommodated to the routines of conventional schools (such as shepherds, street children and nomads). Nonformal education takes a variety of forms - from occasional meetings of small groups of young people with a teacher or a facilitator and workshops to something closely resembling a formal school. This form of education does not need a national curriculum, rather, it needs material, which is relevant to the learners. Instructors are usually not required to have formal teaching qualification and may be drawn from the local community. Education and information are fundamental human rights and children and young people should, for example, not be denied the basic information, education and skills that they need to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS.

Pretoria project (see Pérez and Salazar, 2004 for details)

A project was initiated in Pretoria to teach street children how to respect their lives. It aims to liberate them through education, sport, music, art and culture in order to stimulate their mind, body and soul. The programme seeks, among others, to encourage street

children to develop themselves, to develop their own coping strategies and appreciate the implication of their choices for issues that affect their lives. They are taught to cope with stress, eat healthy diet and exercise, safe sexual relationships, and the effects of smoking, alcohol and drugs. According to Pérez and Salazar (2004), the project is also important in encouraging the awareness of the environmental issues that affect South Africa by developing a sense of individual responsibility, helping children understand value, close cultural and economic links between themselves and other people as well as in recognizing the extent of their interdependence. It enables the children to develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and the confidence required to participate fully in a changing society and to work for greater justice locally and nationally. The children are also taught sex education to promote an understanding and responsible attitudes towards sexual relationships, HIV/AIDS, contraception, abortion and personal hygiene (Pérez and Salazar, 2004).

Mafikeng Crime Stop project

This project belongs to a new NGO that started operating in Mafikeng in 2006. The NGO's objective is to stop social crime through alleviating the problem of street children in Mafikeng. The organisation caters for children from the age of 6 years to the age of 17 years. The workers of the organisation first build a trust relationship with the children before interviewing them to make their profiles. They make home visits (where possible) to meet with the parents of the street children and ask them whether they know where their children are. They also assess the situation at the children's homes. When the researcher interviewed these workers, they said that in most cases, parents do not know

where their children are or went. Some parents do not even care about the issue because by the time their children run away from home, the child – parent relationship is very bad.

According to the manager of the NGO, in most cases, it is because of a conflict between the parent and a child why the child decides to move to the street. The organisation found out that big boys push the small ones into theft. They use the small boys to steal from people's homes by pushing them through windows. The NGO is trying to rehabilitate the children at their homes in the community. The main goal is to take away all the children from the streets of Mafikeng back home. The children are trained to play soccer, and also taught to love themselves and to have competency, critical understanding and comfort zone because if they have critical understanding, they will talk to somebody. They are also advised to learn to consult whenever they have a problem and to learn to communicate with people. The organisation has community home units where they teach parents in the rural areas how to relate and bring up children nicely. They work hand in hand with social workers, the police, orphanages, mainstream schools, the Department of Correctional Services and the business sector. The problem is that the NGO does not have donors.

3.7 FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION WITH STREET CHILDREN

Before the re-unification of a street child with the family, health workers, social workers or psychologists must firstly find the causes of his/her running away from his/her home and take precautionary measures or action to prevent a recurrence. They must also

provide counseling to both the child and the family before and after re-unification. According to Zastron (2004), this clause was unfortunately removed from the final departmental draft of the children's Bill. This is a step backwards since the need to supervise the return of a street child to his/her home is central to the whole process. Family reunification requires not only material support in the form of food, school uniforms and fees but counseling and support to rebuild relationships that have in many cases, permanently broken down. Children who are returned to dysfunctional families and without proper support will leave again. Children must be in a clean, well-ventilated space. There has to be, among others, provision for programmes that provide education, recreation, social work services and permanency planning (Zastron, 2004).

3.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the relevant literature on the topic of street children has been discussed. This included the plight of street children and the causes of the problem of street children. It has been highlighted that the children endure a lot of physical and emotional suffering on the street from the adults. It was also found that poverty is a major cause of the problem. The following chapter presents the research methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provided the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 highlighted aspects concerning street children including the causes of the problem of street children and the problems and challenges the children face in the cities of the world including Mafikeng. Also, suggestions as to how the problem can be dealt with were discussed. In other words, Chapters 2 and 3 provided the research context or environment in which this research was undertaken.

In this chapter, the research design including the sampling technique, data collection method and data analysis technique is presented.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The type of research design that was used in this study is a survey, which involved in-depth interviews using an interview schedule. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The advantage of using a survey is to provide a speedy and economical means for determining facts about our knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, expectations and behaviours. Surveys provide an important source of basic scientific knowledge. The survey's intent is not to describe particular individuals who by chance are part of the sample but to obtain a composite profile of the whole population – in this particular case, all the street children in Mafikeng.

Surveys can be conducted in many ways – including over the telephone, by mail or in person (that is, face-to-face). However, all surveys do have certain characteristics in common. Using the face-to-face survey has advantages in that, the presence of an interviewer can increase cooperation rates and make it possible for respondents to get immediate clarifications. Mail surveys can be relatively low in cost. It however has a problem in insufficient attention given to getting high levels of cooperation. Telephone interview is an efficient method of collecting some types of data and is recommended where timeliness is a factor and the length of the survey is limited. Normally, person interviews are more expensive than mail or telephone surveys. They are sometimes necessary however, especially when complex information is to be collected. Some researchers combine various methods, for example, a survey worker may use the telephone to screen or locate eligible respondents and then make appointments for an in-person interview. The advantages and disadvantages of the personal interviewing method will be discussed in detail later.

How large is the sample size partly depends on the scientific quality needed for survey findings – which in turn relates to how the results will be used. Much depends on the professional and financial resources available. The size of sample also depends on the purpose of the study. In bona fide survey, the sample is not selected haphazardly or only from persons who volunteer to participate. If it is scientifically chosen so that each person has a measurable chance of selection, the results can be reliably projected to the larger population. Information must be collected by means of a standardized procedure so that every individual is asked the same question in more or less the same way.

All researchers should address ethic and confidentiality concerns. For example, by using only number codes to link the respondent to a questionnaire and storing the name –to-code linkage information separately from the questionnaire, and refusing to give the names of respondents to anyone outside the research project. Individual respondents should never be identified in reporting survey findings; completely anonymous summaries, for example, in terms of tables and charts should be given. Respondents must be asked for their consent to participate in the survey. Their privacy and rights must be observed.

4.2.1 Method of Data Collection

To collect data from the selected sample, several methods are available to researchers. The methods of data collection can be divided into two approaches according to Cooper & Schindler (2001:295). Cooper & Schindler (2001) say that one can observe conditions, behaviour, events, people or processes (that is, behaviour approach) or one can communicate with people about various topics (that is, the communication approach). The observation and communication approaches are discussed in details below.

Cooper & Schindler (2001: 370) state that the *observation approach* of research qualifies as a scientific enquiry when it is conducted specifically to answer a research question. It is systematically planned and executed, uses proper controls and provides a reliable and valid account of what happened. Cooper and Schindler (2001) argue that many academics have a limited view of observation, relegating it to a minor technique of field data collection, thereby ignoring its potential for forging decisions and denying it's historic

stature as a creative means of obtaining primary data. Besides collecting data usually observation involves listening, reading, smelling and touching.

According to Saunders et al. (2000:218) observation involves a systematic observation, recording descriptions, analysis, and interpretation of people's behaviour. Cooper and Schindler (2001) advise that if research questions and objectives are concerned with what people do, an obvious way in which to discover about a phenomenon is to watch them do it.

The *communication approach* involves questioning or surveying people and recording their responses for analysis. The great strength of questioning as a primary data collecting technique is that it does not require the visual or other objective perception of the information sought by the researcher. Abstract information of all types can be gathered by questioning another. Cooper & Schindler (2001:295) argue that there is not much that can be learnt about opinion, attitudes, intentions and expectations of others except by questioning. They argue that questioning is more economical and efficient than observation. A few well-chosen questions can yield information that would take much more time and effort to gather by observation. The communication approach has its weaknesses too (Cooper and Schindler, 2001:295). The quality and quantity of information secured depend on the ability and willingness of respondents to co-operate. This unwillingness to co-operate may be due to people failing to see any value in participation. They may fear the interview as being potentially embarrassing or intrusive. Even if the respondents do participate, they may not have the knowledge sought or even

have an opinion on the topic of concern. However, too often, they feel obliged to express some opinion even if they do not have one. In such cases it is difficult for the researcher to know how true or reliable the answers are. The respondent may intentionally mislead the researcher by giving false information, which is difficult for the researcher to identify.

For this study, the communication approach was used since the research objectives require gathering of information about opinions, attitudes and expectations of the members of the target population, which are street children of Mafikeng. This information would have been difficult or even impossible to obtain through the observation approach.

The common types of data collection methods include personal interviews, mail interviews and telephone interviews and observation. In this study the face-to-face interview method was used. This method is discussed below.

Personal Interviewing

According to Cooper and Schindler (1998), this is a two-way conversation initiated by an interviewer to obtain information from a respondent. The respondent is asked to provide information and has little of receiving any immediate or direct benefit from this cooperation. But this technique has its advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed below (see Cooper and Schindler, 1998).

Advantages are:

- The greatest value of the personal interview method lies in the depth of information and detail that can be secured. It, for example, exceeds the information obtained from telephone and self-administered studies.
- The interviewer can also do more things to improve the quality of information received than with the other methods.
- Interviewers can note the conditions of the interview, probe with additional questions, and gather supplemental information through observation.
- Interviewers also have more control with this type of interviewing than with other kinds of interrogation. They can make sure that the correct respondent is replying and they can set up and control interviewing conditions.
- Interviewers can also adjust to the language of the interviewee because they can observe the problems and effects the interview is having on the respondent.

Disadvantages are:

- Costs are particularly high if the study covers a wide geographical area or has sampling requirements, which are not easy to get.
- Many people have become reluctant to talk with strangers or permit visits in their homes.
- Interviewers are reluctant to visit unfamiliar neighbourhoods alone, especially for evening interviewing.
- Lastly, interviewers who alter questions asked or in other ways bias the results can

affect the results of personal interviewing adversely.

This method of data collection helped to ensure that relevant data were obtained that enabled the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study. All interviews were carried out by the researcher but assisted by local people who could speak Setswana fluently.

Sampling

Snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was applied to interview the street children. This was the appropriate sampling method because the researcher did not know all the street children in Mafikeng and where they could be located. The street children were scattered all over the place but they knew each other. Other sampling methods such as simple random sampling (a probability sampling method) and quota sampling method (another non-probability sampling method) were not used because the researcher could not get a list of all street children, and she did not know how many street children are there in Mafikeng. As some of the street children were fed at the youth and childcare centres, street children were interviewed both on the streets and at these centres.

The researcher approached one street child in Mafikeng. She firstly introduced herself to street child that she was a student at North West University, and that she was undertaking a research survey for her degree course. She did not promise anything good to come out of the study but hinted that the research might be of some assistance to government in terms of formulating the right policies intended to solve some of the problems street children are facing in Mafikeng. She however, told the street child that it was his right to either agree or refuse to participate in the survey. She assured him that if he refused to

participate in the survey nothing bad would happen to him. The researcher requested nicely for his consent. After interviewing the first street child, the child led her to the other street children, who also led her to the third one, and so on and so forth. For collecting valid and reliable data, the researcher tried not to disrupt the normal daily activities of the street children in the city of Mafikeng, and tactfully won their friendship and trust, that she was not in any way, say, an informer of the police.

4.2.2 Data Analysis

A brief summary of the collected survey data was done. Detailed findings are presented in chapter 5 in the form of univariate tables and charts followed by relevant interpretations and discussions. This was the most appropriate data analysis technique for this study since the interview schedule consisted of questions of a descriptive nature. A computer-aided data analysis was done. The SPSS programme was used in this regard to compute the results of the study. Frequencies, percentages and average values were calculated in terms of arithmetic mean or mode. The results in this dissertation entail frequency distributions or tables (depending on the nature of the data and outcome of the study) as described below.

Frequency Distribution or Frequency Table

A frequency distribution or frequency table is a summary table in which the data are arranged into conveniently established numerically ordered class groupings or categories (Berenson & Levine, 1996: 62). Frequencies are generally obtained for nominal variables

(such as colour of the skin of a person) and demographic variables (such as age, years of service, education and others).

In other words, a frequency table or frequency distribution is an arrangement of data by classes or categories together with the corresponding class frequencies. The classes are a sequence of intervals defined by lower and upper limits. The class frequency is the number of observations whose values lie between the lower and upper limits; the class limits may be included. The problem with a frequency table is that by grouping the data like this, much of the original detail is lost. The advantage of the frequency table is that one obtains a clear “overall” picture of the data by summarising discrete or continuous data into class intervals each with corresponding frequencies. For the purposes of this study, the frequencies of the respondents’ biographical data are depicted in a summary table.

4.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design used in this study was explained. The survey approach was employed. The snowball sampling method and the face – to – face data collection method with an interview schedule were used to collect the data. Descriptive Analysis was done. The following chapter, 5 presents the results.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 discussed the research approach and the method that was used to collect the data for the study. This chapter presents and interprets the results that were generated from the data analysis. The results are presented mainly in the form of frequency tables. All the street children that were obtained in the sample of size 50 were boys. It appears that there are no female street children who live on the street in Mafikeng. However, there are female street children who work on the street but go back home for family support and sleeping at home every day.

5.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION

In order to find the right policies and strategies of dealing with the problem of street children one must have demographic information and some other personal information about the children.

Orphaned Children and Relatives

In the literature, it was found out that some street children are orphans, homeless or were just rejected by their families. Table 2 shows the percentage of orphaned children living on the streets of Mafikeng.

Table 2: Orphans

Orphan	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	70
No	15	30
Total	50	100

The table demonstrates that 70 percent of the street children in Mafikeng are orphans. An orphan is a child who has lost either one or both parents. This then means that the majority of children interviewed come from broken families. Sociological problems therefore are a likely cause of the social problem.

Table 3 indicates the percentage of street children who have relatives in Mafikeng or who know the whereabouts of their relatives.

Table 3: Relatives

Relatives	Frequency	Percent
Yes	44	88
No	6	12
Total	50	100

Table 3 indicates that 88 percent of the respondents had relatives in Mafikeng. It is sad to note that the remaining children did not have relatives or did not know the whereabouts of their relatives including their parents. The interpretation of this result is that 12 percent

of the street children do not have relatives in Mafikeng. The explanation for this needs a further study.

Age, Literacy, Schooling and Educational Qualification

Table 4: Age Distribution of Street Children (in percentages)

Age	Frequency	Percent
12	4	9
13	6	12
14	8	15
15	4	9
16	8	15
17	8	15
18	12	24
Total	50	99

According to Table 4, the minimum age of the street children in Mafikeng is 12 years and the maximum age is 18 years. Their average age is 15 years. This implies that children who are younger than 12 years of age, are not likely to be found on the streets. The reason for this might be because they are too small to stand the hardships encountered on the streets therefore they would rather stay at home (to suffer at home) rather than living on the street and face the consequences. Table 5 demonstrates the literacy situation of the street children.

Table 5: Literacy

Literacy	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	58
No	21	42
Total	50	100

According to the table, 42 percent of the respondents were illiterate and 58 percent were literate. The percentage of illiteracy is large. In some cases, parents are to blame. Partly, circumstances such as poverty cause it. This means that parents may value the importance of education but due to poverty children are forced to drop out of or do not go to schools. This is indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Schooling

Schooling	Frequency	Percent
Yes	35	70
No	15	30
Total	50	100

The table shows that 30 percent of the respondents did not go to school. Poverty is one of the possible reasons for this. This implies that 70 percent of the street children in Mafikeng went to school. When you relate this information with the previous results, you come to realize that some of the children who went to school did not stay in school long enough to know how to read and write.

Table 7 shows the education levels of the street children in Mafikeng. According to the literature, one of the causes of the street children problem is low education.

Table 7: Education level of Street Children

Grade	Frequency	Percent
No schooling	15	30
1	2	4
2	7	14
3	3	6
4	5	10
5	5	10
6	2	4
7	2	4
8	2	4
9	2	4
10	2	4
11	3	6
Total	50	100

The table indicates that about 78 percent of the street children in Mafikeng do not go beyond primary schooling. In general, the education the street children acquired is up to grade 4.

Wish to go to School

Table 8 shows the percentage of respondents who wish to go to school. Street children, like other children wish to be highly educated for high paid jobs in order to buy beautiful

cars, build good houses, among others, but because of lack of money, they drop out of school prematurely.

Table 8: Percentage of Street Children who wish to go to School

Do you want to go to school	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Total	50	100

The table indicates that 94 percent of the street children in Mafikeng wish to go to school. It is interesting to note that contrary to what the theory of culture of poverty suggests, the street children wish to be different from their parents. This also implies that living on the street does not mean that a child is destined to failure but rather, he/she can still become a useful citizen of this country in future. Table 9 gives the reasons why the children do not go to school.

Table 9: Reasons why Street Children are prevented from going to School

What prevents you from going to school	Frequency	Percent
Not enough money	49	98
Distance from school	0	0
Responsibilities towards family	1	2
Other	0	0
Total	50	100

According to Table 9, poverty prevents the majority (97 percent) of the street children in Mafikeng from going to school.

Where Street Children come from

The researcher wanted to know where the street children in Mafikeng come from. Table 10 provides the answer.

Table 10: Former Residences of Street Children

Residence	Frequency	Percent
Lomanyaneng	9	18
Lonely Park	11	22
Magogwe	9	18
Majemantsho	11	22
Moramusadi	2	4
Setlopo	2	4
Top Village	3	6
Mophine	3	6
Total	50	100

The table demonstrates that most of the street children in Mafikeng come from Lomanyaneng (18 percent), Lonely Park (22 percent), Magogwe (18 percent) and Majemantsho (22 percent). This indicates that children from these areas are badly affected by poverty and that families found in these areas are extremely poor. This is a big problem that forces children to live on the street and beg for a living.

General Health

It was established in the literature that street children have a lot of difficulties including falling sick and being abused, exploited and indecently assaulted. The researcher was interested in knowing the kind of difficulties the street children in Mafikeng are facing. The respondents' general health is outlined in Table 11. The researcher, as a trained nurse, judged the health condition of a street child during the survey.

Table 11: General Health

Health	Frequency	Percent
Good	21	42
Average	11	22
Poor	18	36
Very Poor	0	0
Total	50	100

Table 11 shows that 18 (36 percent) out of 50 respondents in the sample were of poor health. Illnesses are outlined in Table 12.

Table 12: Illnesses of Street Children

Illness	Frequency	Percent
Beaten & Stab wound	16	32
Fever	10	20
Stomachache & diarrhea	5	10
Chest pains	2	4
Cough	5	10
Flu & headache	10	20
Skin disease	1	2
Hit by a car and sped off	1	2
Total	50	100

Table 12 shows the number of street children in the sample that had visited Bophelong Community Hospital in the previous month (before the survey interviews) for various health problems or illnesses. They mostly went to the hospital for treatment after they had been beaten and/or stabbed (32 percent), when they had a fever (20 percent) and when they had flu and a headache (20 percent). It is not surprising that these children catch flu easily because many of them sleep in the cold, that is, without covering themselves with blankets, and sometimes in abandoned buildings of which floors become wet whenever it rains or in a box outside - near a shop.

Family Type and Relationship to Head of Household

Extended families is a characteristic of African culture and according to the theory of culture of poverty, poor people tend to be associated with unstable families. The researcher wanted to know the kind of background the street children have in the context

of the relevant literature and theories. Table 13 illustrates the family types the respondents were associated with before they moved to the streets.

Table 13: Family Type

Family Type	Frequency	Percent
Extended family	30	60
Nuclear family	19	38
Single unit family	1	2
Total	50	100

The table indicates that 60 percent of the street children come from extended families, headed by grandmothers, brothers, and uncles, among others. In Africa, extended family is a major characteristic of households, and this might be one of the factors that impoverish people due to having a large dependency ratio.

Table 14 illustrates the respondents' relationships with the heads of household they belonged to before they moved to the streets.

Table 14: Relationship with Head of Household

Relationship to the Head of household	Frequency	Percent
Son/stepchild/adopted child	23	46
Blood related	27	54
Non-related person	0	0
Total	50	100

Table 14 demonstrates that 54 percent of the street children are blood relatives to the heads of households (or come from extended families, which are largely headed by grandmothers). Grandmothers use the old age pension money of about 400 Rands per month to feed their grandchildren and cater for all other financial needs of the families.

Child Care Centres or Shelters

The respondents were asked whether they had ever been in a shelter before and if, yes, to tell which shelter they had ever been in. Table 15 shows the percentage of the respondents who gave a positive answer.

Table 15: Percentage of Street Children who have ever been in a Shelter

Have you ever been in a shelter?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	76
No	12	24
Total	50	100

Of the 50 respondents, 76 percent had ever been in a shelter (Table 15). It was found out that the street children had ever been in a shelter for years ranging from months to six years. Children live on the streets for up to seven years. The average time period is about three years. Table 16 gives the names of the shelters the respondents had ever been in.

Table 16: The Shelters Street Children have ever been in

Which Shelter have you ever been in?	Frequency	Percent
Bethlehem	19	38
Kagontle	16	32
Katlong	3	6
None	12	24
Total	50	100

The most popular shelter is Bethlehem (38 percent) shelter (possibly because it is closer to the city centre than others) and Kagontle shelter (32 percent) according to Table 16.

Table 17 indicates the percentage of street children who wish to be institutionalized.

Table 17: Percentage of Street Children who wish to be in an Institution

Do you wish to be in an institution/shelter?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	76
No	12	24
Total	50	100

The table demonstrates that the majority (76 percent) of the street children in Mafikeng wish to be institutionalized. Children are sure that the government and the community will be able to give them the care they need, such as education. They also think that they cannot survive at home, as there is nothing for them to live for. This relates well to the theory of poverty by Simmel (1971) where he states that if such children are not helped

by the society and government to reduce their misery, they will not be useful citizens of the country and may even be a danger to the society. Table 18 gives the results about the wish of the respondents to return home.

Table 18: Percentage of Street Children who wish to return Home

Do you wish to return home?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Total	50	100

Almost all the street children (94 percent) wish to return home (Table 18). Shelters and institutions have good intentions with regards to street children but as it was reported in the literature, they tend to be under-resourced. The other problem with keeping children at childcare centres is that the centers tend to develop children artificially and they are not brought up according to their culture like other children in order to acquire cultural values and norms. They also lose out on the opportunity of developing both psychologically and socially, which would make them better citizens of the country. For example, they will not be well equipped with “UBUNTU”, which they should learn while they are living within their traditional communities. As it was shown in the literature review (chapter 3), the government of South Africa through the Department of Social Development wants to bring up all children including destitute children within the traditional community environment. So, if street children want to go back to their homes, this is a good thing. The only problem is how this can be done for a smooth family re-unification. Before the

child is taken back to his/her family, there must be some family rehabilitation and counseling by a social worker and a psychologist.

Reasons why Street Children would wish to go back Home and Household Size

The respondents were asked to give their reasons why they wished to go back home, and the answers are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Reasons why Street Children in Mafikeng wish to go back Home

Why do you wish to go back home?	Frequency	Percent
To sleep in a bed at home		
Yes	14	28
No	36	72
Total	50	100
To be with my mother, father, grandmother/family		
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100
To go back to school		
Yes	5	10
No	45	90
Total	50	100
To have good, hot food.		
Yes	4	8
No	46	92
Total	50	100
To wash		
Yes	2	4
No	49	96
Total	50	100

Some respondents (6 percent according to Table 18) said that they did not wish to go back home, and that, they wanted to continue living on the street to make money. One

respondent said, “I would wish to go back home but when I think of my stepfather, I decide not to”. Of those who wished to go back home, most wished to go back home in order to be with their families (52 percent), and to sleep in a bed (28 percent) according to Table 19. Although 94 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to go back home, the vast majority showed very little motive for this wish, which is an anomaly. Table 19 does not give an indication of what actually attracts or forces them to move to the streets from their homes. The results however imply that most street children in Mafikeng do not hate their parents or relatives as such but circumstances (for example poverty) force them to move away from their homes to the streets of the city. Apart from poverty, other problems, namely, domestic violence, broken families and bad parenting might be driving them away (from their homes). Table 8 shows that 94 percent wished to go back to school, which is in conflict with what Table 19 indicates. The reason for this is that for Table 19, the answer was given as a motive for going back home whereas in table 8 the question was whether the child wished to go back to school or not - regardless of who takes him/her to school. For example, some children hoped that government could take them back to school straight from the streets, not parents. Table 20 illustrates household sizes.

Table 20: Number of People who live at the Homes of Street Children

How many people lived in your home?	Frequency	Percent
2	5	9
3	12	24
4	12	24
5	6	12
Over 5	15	30
Total	50	100

Of the 50 respondents, 15 (30 percent) said that there were over five people living in their home (Table 20). The average number of people (the mean) in the households of the street children is 5, but mostly (the mode) 3 or 4 people. Table 21 shows the numbers of siblings of the respondents.

Table 21: Number of Siblings

Siblings	Frequency	Percent
0	3	6
1	9	18
2	21	42
3	8	16
4	3	6
5	3	6
6	3	6
Total	50	100

Table 21 indicates that relatively a large number of street children (42 percent) have 2 siblings, the minimum number is 0 and the maximum number is 6. One of the factors of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is large household sizes and dependency. These findings imply that the household sizes associated with the street children in Mafikeng are not so large and this might not be an issue as far as poverty is concerned. The issue might be dependency ratio, which is influenced by unemployment. In a previous study, it was found that the unemployment rate in Mafikeng is higher than the national average of about 26 percent (Serumaga-Zake, 2006))

Hunger

Table 22 demonstrates the numerical strength of the evidence of the children's hunger.

Table 22: Hunger

Have you ever gone hungry because there was not enough money to buy food?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Total	50	100

The table shows that almost all the street children (98 percent) in Mafikeng have ever gone hungry. Table 23 illustrates the number of days in a week for which the respondents went hungry.

Table 23: Number of Days in a Week when going hungry

No. of days in a week when going hungry without enough money to buy food	Frequency	Percent
1	3	6
2	12	24
3	18	36
4	9	18
5	4	8
Over 5	4	8
Total	50	100

The table demonstrates that the days for which street children go hungry range from one to seven days a week. Mostly, children go hungry without enough money to buy food for three days (which is the mode).

The researcher wanted to know whether the respondents benefit from any feeding scheme. The answers are given in Table 24.

Table 24: Benefiting from a feeding scheme

Do you benefit from any feeding scheme?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100

Sixty – four percent of the street children benefit from a feeding scheme. Those who are benefiting from a feeding scheme (at Bethlehem childcare centre) do not go there to eat food every day, but most of them do only go on Sundays. Some go there to eat on one or two days in a week.

Parents' Occupations and Educational Qualifications

According to the literature and theories of poverty, poverty is passed on from generation to generation. The researcher wanted to know how far true this one is by finding out the socio – economic status of the parents of the respondents. It was not easy to know the income levels of the parents, so occupation and education were used to give an indication of the socio – economic status. Education qualifications of the respondents were compared with those of their parents. The findings are compatible with the culture of poverty theory discussed in chapter 3, which talks about chronic poverty. Poverty is passed on from parents to children in Mafikeng. The street children are poor and suffering because their parents were/are poor. Table 25 shows the occupations of the fathers.

Table 25: Fathers' Occupations

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Gardener	2	4
Working in a tuck-shop	2	4
Labourer	4	8
Mechanic	2	4
Piece jobs	6	12
Policeman	2	4
No work	11	22
Don't Know	21	42
Total	50	100

The table indicates the jobs the fathers of the sampled street children did (if they are dead) /do. Only a few fathers such as the 4 percent (policeman) and another 4 percent (mechanic) possibly received a reasonable and regular income, whereas the majority (92 percent) received a meager or no income at all. This is an indication of poverty and hardship. Table 26 indicates the occupations of the mothers.

Table 26: Mothers' Occupations

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Domestic worker	13	26
Street Seller	2	4
No work	16	32
Don't Know	19	38
Total	50	100

The table indicates that 32 percent of the mothers of the sampled street children did not work (if they were dead at the time of the survey) or are not working. Most of those who worked were domestic workers (26 percent). Thirty – two percent of the mothers need to work as this may be the only income for the family or the only earnings to augment a meager family income with the low wages paid to the domestic workers. This further proves low income and possibly poverty. Table 27 gives the educational qualifications of the fathers.

Table 27: Fathers' Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
No Education	14	28
Primary	8	16
Middle School	0	0
Secondary	6	12
Don't Know	22	44
Total	50	100

The table shows that 28 percent of the fathers did not go to school. Only 21 percent went as far as secondary schooling. One point that is clear is that the majority of the known fathers had no or little education. Some children (44 percent) had no knowledge about their fathers who had either abandoned the households or showed no interest in their children. Both these matters indicate reasons for the apparent poverty and unstable households. Table 28 shows the educational qualifications of the mothers.

Table 28: Mothers' Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
No Education	12	24
Primary	8	16
Middle School	1	2
Secondary	6	12
Don't Know	23	46
Total	50	100

Forty – six percent of the respondents did not know the education levels of their mothers. The table indicates that 24 percent of the mothers did not go school. The low education levels might explain the cause of the parents' doing of low-paying jobs.

5.3 FAMILIARIALITIES OF STREET CHILDREN WITH HIV/AIDS INFECTED PERSONS

In the introduction of this study, it was said that street children are exposed to abuse and exploitation. One way this is done is by forcing or asking them to engage in sexual activities for money - even if they are still at a young age. Some of these children are not aware of the dangers they would be subjected to, including getting HIV/AIDS. The respondents were therefore asked questions to know whether they were aware of HIV/AIDS. This helped the researcher to know whether there is a need for helping these children and to find out how they could be helped in this regard. The respondents were asked whether they were familiar with HIV/AIDS infected persons. The following tables

illustrate the familiarities of the respondents with HIV/AIDS. Table 29 gives the percentage of street children who have heard about HIV/AIDS.

Table 29: Percentage of Street Children who have heard about HIV/AIDS

Hove you heard about HIV/AIDS?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100

The table shows that 64 percent of the respondents said that they had heard about HIV/AIDS. This implies that the majority of the street children in Mafikeng have heard about HIV/AIDS.

Table 30 indicates the percentage of street children who know an HIV/AIDS infected person.

Table 30: Percentage of Street Children who know an HIV/AIDS infected Person

Do you know any HIV/AIDS infected person?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	22
No	39	78
Total	50	100.0

The table indicates that only 22 percent of the street children know an HIV/AIDS infected person. This might mean that many street children do not realize the seriousness of the disease.

Table 31 shows the percentage of street children who have shared a meal with HIV/AIDS suspected person.

Table 31: Percentage of Street Children who have shared a Meal with HIV/AIDS suspected Person

Have you ever shared a meal with HIV/AIDS suspected person?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	20
No	40	80
Total	50	100

The table shows that only 20 percent of the street children had shared a meal with HIV/AIDS suspected person. This question was asked to know the degree of HIV/AIDS awareness of the children and whether they knew how the virus is transmitted from one person to another.

Table 32 shows the percentage of respondents who said that they were serious about the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Table 32: Percentage of Street Children who are serious about the prevention of HIV/AIDS

Are you serious about the prevention of HIV/AIDS?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	72
No	14	28
Total	50	100

The table demonstrates that 72 percent of the street children in Mafikeng are serious about preventing getting HIV/AIDS. These results imply that although the majority of the street children in Mafikeng have heard about HIV/AIDS, they do not have first hand information as far as the seriousness of the disease is concerned. In other words, the children are generally not familiar with information about HIV/AIDS.

5.4 ATTITUDE OF STREET CHILDREN TOWARDS HIV/AIDS

The following tables illustrate the attitude of respondents towards HIV/AIDS. Table 33 indicates the percentage of street children who would be willing to care for a friend sick with HIV/AIDS.

Table 33: Percentage of Street Children who would be willing to care for a Friend with HIV/AIDS

Would you be willing to care for a friend with HIV/AIDS?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	62
No	19	38
Total	50	100

When the respondents were asked, 31 (62 percent) out of 50 said “yes”, they would. This means that the majority of the street children in Mafikeng would be willing to care for a friend with HIV/AIDS, which is a good attitude towards HIV/AIDS.

Table 34: Percentage of Street Children who would buy Food from a Shopkeeper who has HIV/AIDS

Would you buy food from a shopkeeper who has HIV/AIDS?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	42
No	29	58
Total	50	100

According to Table 34, 42 percent of the street children in Mafikeng would buy food from a shopkeeper who has HIV/AIDS.

Table 35: Percentage of Street Children who, if they had HIV/AIDS, would like to keep it confidential

If you had HIV/AIDS, would you like to keep it confidential?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	22	44
No	28	56
Total	50	100

Table 35 indicates that 44 percent of street children would keep it confidential if they had HIV/AIDS.

5.5 STREET CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS TRANSMISSION

Table 36 illustrates the respondents' knowledge of prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission.

Table 36: Percentage of Street Children who know how to prevent getting HIV/AIDS

How does one prevent getting HIV/AIDS?	Frequency	Percent
By having one faithful partner		
Yes	31	62
No	19	38
Total	50	100
Using a condom every time	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100
Abstaining from sex	Frequency	Percent
Yes	27	54
No	23	46
Total	50	100

Table 36 demonstrates that 62 percent, 64 percent and 54 percent of the street children in Mafikeng would prevent HIV/AIDS transmission by having one faithful partner, by using a condom and by abstaining from sex respectively. Most respondents said that they are scared of the disease. Whether they are actually doing something to prevent its transmission is another matter. A boy said, "I use a condom whenever I do not trust my girl friend. I look at her skin". One said that he just doesn't want a condom and another

said that he does not want it because it is too big. These results imply that a good number of street children in Mafikeng are either not serious about preventing the transmission of HIV or are ignorant about how HIV is transmitted. Table 37 shows the percentage of respondents who were sexually active.

Table 37: Percentage of Street Children who are sexually active

Are you sexually active?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100

It is shown that 32 (64 percent) out of 50 respondents answered “yes” when they were asked whether they were sexually active or not. This implies that 64 percent of the street children in Mafikeng are sexually active.

5.6 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD ABUSE

The researcher wanted to know whether domestic violence and child abuse are major factors of the problem of street children in Mafikeng. The following tables give the numerical strength of the answers to the questions asked in this regard.

Table 38: Percentage of Street Children who have ever been abused at Home

Have you ever been abused at home?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	78
No	11	22
Total	50	100

Table 38 shows that, of the 50 respondents, 39 (78 percent) reported that their fathers, stepfathers, mothers, uncles, brothers or other relatives had ever abused them at home. Those who said that they were abused at home were again asked how they were abused. The following were their answers.

Table 39: Percentages of Street Children who were abused at Home according to how they were abused

How were you abused at home?	Frequency	Percent
Stabbed		
Yes	6	12
No	44	88
Total	50	100
Beat, assault		
Yes	39	78
No	11	22
Total	50	100
Other, e.g. scolding, shouting		
Yes	6	12
No	44	88
Total	50	100

According to Table 39, the majority (78 percent) (of the street children in Mafikeng who were abused at home) were abused by being beaten and assaulted. These results imply that about half of the street children in Mafikeng were abused at home according to the respondents. A respondent said that his father and mother drank and fought a lot and that his father used to hit him (for no good reason) after drinking liquor. The sampled street children were asked about their experiences while they were still at home before they moved to the streets. The following were the results.

Table 40: Percentage of Street Children who spent most of the Time with the Family

Did you most of the time spend the time with the family?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	76
No	12	24
Total	50	100

Table 40 demonstrates that the majority (76 percent) of the street children in Mafikeng spent most of the time with their families before moving to the streets.

Table 41: Percentage of Street Children who had enough Time to do the things they wanted to do and Space to do them

Did you have enough time to do the things you wanted to do and space to do them?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	72
No	14	28
Total	50	100

Table 41 indicates that, while at home, 72 percent had enough time to do the things they wanted to do and had space to do them.

Table 42: Reasons for not having enough Time to do whatever Street Children wanted to do at Home

Reason	Number	Percent
Working all the time		
Yes	35	70
No	15	30
Total	50	100
Other, e.g. begging for the home		
Yes	15	30
No	35	70
Total	50	100

The reasons for not having enough time to do whatever street children wanted to at home are given in Table 42. The table shows that the majority (70 percent) of the respondents in the sample did not have enough time at home to do whatever they wanted to do because they were working all the time. It is interesting to note that 30 percent spent most of their time begging on the streets of Mafikeng for their families.

The researcher also wanted to know what the children used to do at their homes after school – that is, before they moved to the street (if at all they went to school). The results indicate that after school, the children used to perform the normal duties at home such as washing the dishes, fetching water, cleaning, sweeping and cooking. After working at home, the children would go to play with their friends, sometimes on the road. There were rules at home just like in any other ordinary home such as “Don’t steal”, “Don’t

move at night”, “You must work”, “You must be back home by 6 PM”, “Don’t come back home late” and “You must respect people”. Surprisingly, some children were forced to go to the street to beg for the family. Table 43 shows the percentage of respondents who had ever been contacted by parents.

Table 43: Percentage of Street Children who have ever been contacted by Parents

While on the street, have your parents ever contacted you?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	72
No	14	28
Total	50	100.0

The table indicates that 72 percent of the street children in Mafikeng have ever been contacted by their parents. This indicates that parents have great concern on the well being of their children. Seemingly, it is poverty that makes the children live on the street.

5.7 CONTACTS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER

According to the Simmel’s poverty theory, the street children should be helped by society and the state. The children have this right - not only for their own benefit but also for the society as well for obvious reasons. One reason is: if these children become criminals, they will not be useful both to themselves as well as the society but will rather be a danger to the society. Table 44 shows the percentage of the respondents who had ever been contacted by a social worker.

Table 44: Percentage of Street Children who have ever been contacted by a Social Worker

Has any Social Worker ever contacted you?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100.0

Table 44 indicates that about a half of the street children in Mafikeng have ever been contacted by a social worker. The majority of the respondents reported that social workers promised to help and take them away from the streets or/and take them to school but they never fulfilled their promises. This is an indication that government is not doing enough to care for the street children.

5.8 WHY CHILDREN LEAVE THEIR HOMES FOR THE STREETS

Table 45 illustrates the reasons why children leave their homes for the streets. The respondents were asked the question, “Why did you leave your home, to come and live on the streets?” This was an open-ended question. The children gave their answers without any limitation as to how and for how long they should answer it. The researcher then categorized the answers to make the table. In Mafikeng, relatively a large number of poor children are looked after by their grandfathers partly due to “broken homes” – hence a grandfather’s attitude towards children played a role.

Table 45: Reasons why Street Children leave their Homes

Why did you leave your home?	Frequency	Percent
No food and money		
Yes	44	88
No	6	12
Total	50	100
Grandfather does not like me		
Yes	1	2
No	49	98
Total	50	100
Suffering from abuse, etc		
Yes	2	4
No	48	96
Total	50	100
To find a job/work		
Yes	3	6
No	47	94
Total	50	100

The overwhelming majority (88 percent) of the sampled street children said that they left their homes for the streets because of poverty, that is, because there was not enough money at home to buy food (Table 45). Another respondent said “when my father left,

my friends persuaded me to join them at the street”. This implies that poverty and peer pressure are some of the major causes of the problem of street children in Mafikeng.

5.9 PROBLEMS FACED BY STREET CHILDREN IN MAFIKENG

A member of one “Crime Stop” non-government organisation (NGO) - based at Mafikeng Police Station, which is currently monitoring street children in Mafikeng, told the researcher that the street children are suffering a lot. She reported that for example, the older children sodomize the younger ones at night, and some of the big boys engage in criminal activities such as breaking into shops at night. She also said that some members of the general public take advantage of the children, they are exploiting them because they are desperate and that the children are subjected to all sorts of funny and cruel things. One respondent said that, “I find it difficult to wake up in the morning because of the harassment I am getting from people and the Police”.

Table 46 shows the percentage of respondents who said that the police was abusing them.

Table 46: Police Abuse

Have you ever been abused by the Police?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100.0

Fifty-two percent of the respondents said that the police, according to Table 46, had ever abused them. Some respondents said that policemen were harassing and/or beating them for nothing, telling them to go back home. Some said that when the big boys broke into shops at night, the police would beat and harass every street child indiscriminately. It might be true that street children harass the public (for money) and this may be one of the reasons why the public and the police do not treat them kindly. In this study, the researcher reports what the respondents said and at a lesser degree what she observed during the survey. According to Simmel's poverty theory, street children should be helped by government and society at large otherwise the children can be a danger to the society. We cannot then put all the blame to the children when they commit crimes. We have to do something to help street children to overcome their problems in order to make them good and useful future citizens of South Africa and prevent some of these crimes.

An open – ended question was asked to the respondents to tell what their problems were - on the street. The researcher summarized the answers by categorizing them according to their similarities. The problems street children are facing on the streets of Mafikeng are given in Table 47.

Table 47: Problems of Street Children in Mafikeng

Problem	Frequency	Percent
No food and money to buy clothes, shoes, etc. Some times the children eat (rotten food) from dustbins		
Yes	28	56
No	22	44
Total	50	100
Security and no safe place to sleep in. The children sleep in abandoned buildings, sometimes with leaking roofs or in a box near a shop. They do not have blankets and they feel cold.		
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Total	50	100
People and the police beat or assault them and some people steal their money, i.e., community harassment. They harass and chase them away from the city to go back home. They also call them names, e.g. crazy. Stabbing them is not uncommon		
Yes	41	82
No	19	18
Total	50	100
They do not have clean water to drink and wash. They bath and wash in Molopo River		
Yes	15	30
No	35	70
Total	50	100

According to the table, the biggest problem the street children in Mafikeng face is “being beaten and stabbed or assaulted and harassed” by some members of the general public and/or the police (82 percent). This is a security problem. Relatively a large number of street children were stabbed. One time, a street child was stabbed in the palm when someone was trying to rob him of his money. Next, was “not to have a place to sleep in” (64 percent). Some street children sleep in abandoned buildings with leaking roofs and without proper doors – subjecting their lives to great danger. Some sleep in boxes outside, near shops. They sleep without covering themselves with blankets and feel cold. The third is “not to eat enough food and go hungry for days” (56 percent). It is very rare for these children to drink hot tea or coffee or to eat hot food. Some older street children do piece jobs to make ends meet. The children are very dirty; they sometimes wash and bath in the Molopo River. The street children in Mafikeng earn from one Rand to 40 Rands a day by begging. The average is about 20 Rands a day.

The researcher saw a street child who looked sick and weak, very skinny with a running nose. The child also had a skin disease, and he was very miserable. He definitely needed help. Many respondents (about 65 percent) said that they did not use drugs but seemingly, they lied. The researcher observed that there were children (both males and females) who worked on the streets during the day and went back home in the evening every day. She personally saw a street child eating rotten food from a dustbin. This was very sad.

The respondents told a lot of sad stories. For example, when one street child was walking at around 8.30PM, someone broke a bottle and stabbed him in the chest. When the child

was interviewed, he was still having chest pains. Another one lost his right hand eye when someone stabbed him in the eye.

5.10 WISHES OF THE STREET CHILDREN

The respondents were asked to tell their wishes, which were (Table 48):

Table 48: Wishes of Street Children in Mafikeng

Wishes	Number	Percent
To get work, To have a business, e.g. a car wash business	12	24
To help our families, To take us back home to be with my people, To sleep at home, To eat good food	12	24
To give us money and food, To have clothes, shoes, etc	12	24
To take us to school, To be a lawyer, a doctor, a policeman, an engineer, a soldier, a pilot, a driver, a magistrate, a social worker, a president.	38	76
To see my mother	1	2
To have a house, a wife, a car	12	24

According to the table, the most common wish for the street children in Mafikeng is to take them to school in order to have a good future life (76 percent). This proves that they are not content with their present lifestyle and wish to live a normal life. There is also a

unique wish of “seeing a mother”, who disappeared when the child had just been born. People were telling him that they saw his mother in Garankuwa.

5.11 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STREET CHILDREN

Table 49 shows the recommendations of how the problem of street children in Mafikeng could be solved according to the street children themselves.

Table 49: Recommendations by Street Children

Recommendation	Number	Percent
Government should give us food and money, to get clothes, shoes, blankets, etc, Or give us something to do, e.g. give us an office to wash cars, or a job to get money so that we stop stealing from the shops	20	40
Government should take us to school	29	58
Government should help our families and take us back home	5	10
Government should build us a centre, home and give us food	20	40
Government should look for my mother	1	2

A point came through that the street children rightly expect the government to help them, which is compatible with Simmel’s poverty theory. One respondent said that the government is doing nothing to help them. The street children in Mafikeng suggest that government should take them to school to learn or train for certain skills (58 percent), after which they will be able to either get a job or start their own small businesses; that government should give them food and money (40 percent) to buy the basic necessities of life such as clothes, shoes and blankets, and that government should build them a home

or shelter (40 percent) where they will be well looked after. Building a shelter for these children is a brilliant idea but then what about learning about their culture. The best way should be to bring up children within their communities so that they learn about their cultural values and norms just like other ordinary children.

5.12 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the results of the study have been presented - in the form of frequency tables. They basically concerned personal information or the profile of the street children in Mafikeng, causes of the problem of street children in Mafikeng, and the problems and wishes of the street children in Mafikeng.

5.12.1 Identification Characteristics

All the street children that were interviewed were boys; it appeared that there are no female street children who live on the streets of Mafikeng. There are however, female children who work on the streets during the day and go back home in the evening. Their ages range between 12 and 18 years, with very little education; 42 percent are illiterate.

5.12.2 Reasons why children go to the streets

It has been found that poverty is a major cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng. Other causes are domestic violence, child abuse, corporal punishment, restrictions on children's freedom, single parenting, step parenting, death of parents and peer group pressure. These findings are supported by the literature and some theories (such as the theory of Peer Group Pressure) as discussed in chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

Poverty and inequality

Inequalities and poverty in the South African society brought about by the legacy of apartheid are reflected by the fact that all the street children in Mafikeng are blacks. The majority of the fathers of the street children, who work, are earning very little. Many are not working (at least 22 percent). Those fathers who worked/are working were/are for example, doing piece jobs (22 percent), gardeners (6 percent) and labourers (12 percent). Fifty – three percent of the mothers of the street children did not (if they are dead)/are not working. Most of those who work are domestic workers (42 percent) with low wages. Half of the fathers did not go to school, while 44 percent of the mothers did not go to school.

Domestic Abuse

Though one would see it as “normal” for children to do some work at home after school, to some of the street children this was not so, it was beyond their expectations. The duties they performed at home were: washing dishes, fetching water, cleaning, sweeping and cooking. After that, the children would go to play with their friends - but sometimes on the road.

The majority (70 percent) of the respondents in the sample (who said that they did not have enough time and space to do whatever they wanted to do) gave the reason of “working all the time” for not having enough time to do whatever they wanted to do. They regarded this as child abuse. Ironically, some children (30 percent) spent most of their time begging on the streets for their families. Interestingly, despite of all these

problems according to the street children, the majority (94%) wishes to go back home for various reasons including the love of their parents, eating hot food and sleeping in a bed.

5.12.3 The Problems the Children experience on the Streets

It has been found that the street children in Mafikeng suffer a lot and they need urgent attention. The older children sodomize the younger ones at night, and some members of the general public take advantage of the children and abuse them. The members of the police force, instead of helping these children, sometimes harass them especially when some of the bigger boys break into the shops and steal goods at night.

The problems the street children in Mafikeng are facing include:

1. Some people beat and assault them. People steal money from them. The police harass and chase them away from the city to go back home. Stabbing them is not uncommon. The street children suffer emotionally too; they are humiliated in the public. They also call them names, for example crazy. They are regarded as useless and spoiled children with no bright future.
2. The street children in Mafikeng do not have a safe place to sleep in. The children sleep in abandoned buildings. The roofs of some of these buildings leak when it rains. Some street children sleep in boxes near shops. They, in most cases, feel cold at night because they do not have blankets to cover themselves.
3. The street children in Mafikeng do not eat enough food and do not have money to buy the necessities of life including clothes, shoes, among others. Sometimes, the

children eat (rotten food) from dustbins. They go hungry for days ranging from one to seven days a week. It is very rare for them to eat hot food and drink hot tea or coffee. A respondent said that he had not drunk hot tea for months.

4. The street children of Mafikeng do not have clean water to drink and wash. They sometimes bath and wash in the Molopo River.

Some street children illegally do piece jobs to make ends meet. The children have many sad stories and are miserable. For example, a street child was stabbed in the palm when someone was trying to rob him of his money because he used his palm as a shield to fight off the thief. A street child was hit by a car and it sped off, another was stabbed with a broken bottle in the chest; the street child was still having chest pains when he was interviewed. There is a street child who lost his right hand eye when someone stabbed him in the eye.

The children are filthy and are unpleasant to look at. One respondent said, "People regard us as useless people as if we are not human beings". The money they get amounting to between R20 and R50 a day is not worthy of the humiliation, hardships, harassment and suffering. The researcher saw a street child who looked sick and weak, very skinny with a running nose. The child also had a skin disease and needed urgent medical attention. She also physically saw a street child eating rotten food from a dustbin. Most of the respondents seemingly were using drugs but lied about it.

Knowledge about HIV/AIDS

Most of the street children have heard about HIV/AIDS and are serious about the prevention of its transmission (72 percent). One wonders though whether they are actually taking precautionary measures to avoid catching the disease when engaging in sex. The attitude towards HIV/AIDS is not alarming. About 63 percent of the street children are willing to care for a friend with HIV/AIDS, which is a good attitude towards HIV/AIDS, and 41 percent of the street children in Mafikeng would buy food from a shopkeeper who has HIV/AIDS and 45 percent would keep it confidential if they had HIV/AIDS.

The majority of the street children (over 60 percent) fears the disease and knows how HIV is transmitted such as not using a condom. The problem is, because most of the children use drugs, the drugs can easily make them disregard the precautionary measures for preventing the transmission of the disease. A large number of them (about 63 percent) are sexually active.

5.12.4 The Wishes of the Street Children with regard to going home, schooling, etc.

The biggest wish of the street children in Mafikeng is to take them to school in order to have a good future life. Others are getting work, taking them back home, giving them money and food, among others.

5.12.5 Community Efforts to assist Street Children

About a half of the respondents had been seen by a social worker. The majority of those who a social worker had talked to, reported that social workers give them empty promises. They never help them. This indicates that government must do far much more to assist these children.

5.12.6 Conclusions

The suffering of the street children in Mafikeng regarding the way they are being treated by the general public and their living conditions is totally unacceptable. Something must be done to decrease their plight. In chapter 6, conclusions and recommendations for solving the problem of street children in Mafikeng are given.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 presented and interpreted the results that were obtained from the survey data analysis. In this chapter, the results are discussed in the context of the literature review discussed in chapter 2, the theoretical perspective provided in chapter 3 and the objectives that were listed at the outset of the research study. The discussion is given in section 6.2, summary in section 6.3 and policy implications and recommendations are presented in the last section 6.4.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

6.2.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to investigate the plight of street children in Mafikeng and to come up with recommendations on possible solutions to the problem. The objectives were (i) to describe the plight of street children in Mafikeng, (ii) to determine the causes of the problem of street children in Mafikeng, (iii) to identify possible strategies of dealing with the street children problem in Mafikeng and finally to suggest possible solutions to the problem.

Survey methodology was applied. The Snowball sampling method was used to obtain a sample of street children for face – to – face interviews, with an interview schedule to

collect data. Descriptive analysis was done in the data analysis. A sample size of 50 was used.

6.2.2 Results

It has been found that the street children in Mafikeng suffer terribly and they are needy.

The major problems the street children are facing include:

1. Some members of the general public and the police harass them. The children are assaulted.
2. The street children do not have a safe place to sleep in and they feel cold at night. They do not have blankets to cover themselves at night.
3. The street children do not eat enough food and do not have money to buy the necessities of life, such as clothes and shoes.
4. The street children do not have clean water to drink and wash. They sometimes bath and wash in the Molopo River.

It has also been found that poverty is a major cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng. Other causes are domestic violence, child abuse, corporal punishment, restrictions on children's freedom, single parenting, step parenting, death of parents and peer group pressure.

The majority (94%) of the street children in Mafikeng wish to go back home for various reasons including eating good food and sleeping in bed. For example, one of the

respondents said that he is looking for his mother. Family re-unification should be encouraged and it is in agreement with the government's view on how a child should be brought up – within his/her community. In general, childcare centers are doing a noble job, but children should not be institutionalized permanently because they will develop artificially. They will not practice their culture and this is not good. There are good cultural values and norms which should be promoted and which should be taught to our children. This can only be done when children grow up in their traditional community environment. It is commonly mentioned in the media that our nation is culturally and socially deteriorating simply because people are no longer practicing “UBUNTU”. Street children who still have a family should be taken back home and re-united with their family. This will help the children to grow up and develop properly into good and useful citizens of South Africa.

6.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results obtained in this study, there must be both a short-term as well as long-term solutions to the problem of street children in Mafikeng.

Since the lives of the street children are in danger and urgent attention is warranted (considering the fact that they are being beaten, assaulted or harassed by the members of the general public and the police, and they do not sleep in safe places), as a short-term solution to the problem, the children should be institutionalized; government should build a care centre for them, where their needs will be adequately catered for. Their needs should include: giving them enough healthy food, taking them to school and providing

them with other basic needs of life, such as blankets, clothes and shoes. Institutionalising the street children would also help them not to be exposed to the danger of catching the HIV/AIDS disease as it has been found that they are not sufficiently familiar with the disease. Alternatively, the existing day care centers such as Bethelehem and Kagontle and other organisations like Mafikeng Crime Stop should be supported financially to look after these street children better. Children sleep in some of these childcare centres while the officials are looking for families in the communities that can adopt the children. As soon as a suitable home is found for them, the child is handed over to that family.

For the long-term solution, the children should be supported while they are still at home (before they are forced to move to the streets). It has been identified that the root cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng is chronic poverty. So, if the poorest of the poor in Mafikeng can be supported financially and all children are sent to school, the problem of street children in Mafikeng will be minimised.

In addition to this, for street children who have families, especially those who want to go back home, they should be helped to re-unite with their families. This re-unification should be encouraged but before it is done, the families have to be rehabilitated and they, together with the children, must be counseled. The parents or guardians must be educated on how children should be brought up. For those who do not have a job but are able to work, government should try to create jobs for them. People can be mobilised into community development organisations such as social clubs especially for women and

youth organisations. Community development projects such as vegetable gardening, knitting and sewing can also be initiated for them.

The street children rightly expect the government to help them (which is compatible with the poverty theory). The business community should also come on board by contributing some money towards solving this problem.

Conclusions

It has been found that the street children in Mafikeng suffer terribly and they need urgent attention. Their major problems the street children are facing include: being indecently assaulted, not having a safe place to sleep in, not having access to safe water and not having enough food and money. It has been found that poverty is a major cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng. Other causes are domestic violence, child abuse, corporal punishment, restrictions on children's freedom, single parenting, step parenting, death of parents and peer group pressure. The majority of the street children wish to go back home.

According to the results obtained in this study, there must be both a short-term as well as a long-term solution to the problem of street children in Mafikeng.

As a short-term solution, the children should be institutionalized to cater for their needs. For a long-term solution, households in absolute poverty should be given financial

support and all children should be sent to school. Chronic poverty should be addressed. The business community should also contribute towards solving this problem.

For the long-term solution, the children should be supported while they are still at home (before they are forced to move to the streets). It has been identified that the root cause of the problem of street children in Mafikeng is chronic poverty. So, if the poorest of the poor households in Mafikeng can be supported financially and all children are sent to school to alleviate poverty, the problem of street children in Mafikeng will be minimised. In addition, for street children who have homes, they should be helped to re-unite with their families. This re-unification should be promoted but before it is done, the families have to be rehabilitated and they, together with the children, must be counseled. People can be mobilised into community development organisations such as social clubs especially for women and youth organisations. Community development projects can also be initiated for them.

The street children rightly expect the government to help them (which is compatible with the poverty theory). The business community should also come on board by contributing some money towards solving this problem.

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APPENDIX

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule
Confidential information to be used for research purposes only

THE PLIGHT OF STREET CHILDREN IN MAFIKENG

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY (MAFIKENG CAMPUS)

Respondent No....

....

Date of interview ...

Personal Information (Write or circle the number of the answer)

1 Gender	1 M 2 F
2 Are you an orphan?	1 Yes 2 No
3 Do you have relatives?	1 Yes 2 No
4 How old are you?.....	
5 Can you read and write a letter?	1Yes 2 No
6 Have you ever been to school?	1Yes 2 No
6.1 If yes up to what level?
7 Do you wish to go to school or to train for a skill?	1Yes 2 No
8 What prevents you from schooling or training? 1 = Not enough money 2 = Distance from school/college, etc. 3 = Responsibilities towards family 4 = Other (specify)	1 2 3 4
9 What is your permanent residential area?	
10 Nationality (State)	

Use of drugs

11 Do you use drugs? 1. Yes 2. No

General Health

12 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HEALTH? 1 = Good 2 = Average 3 = Poor 4 = None of the above	1 2 3 4
13 Did you consult any of the following, during the past month as a result of illness or injury? If yes , state number of times 1 = Nurse/Doctor/Medical specialist/Dentist/etc..... 2 = Pharmacist/chemist..... 3 = Spiritual healer (church related) 4 = Traditional healer (Sangoma/Inyanga)	1Yes 2 No 1 2 3 4
14 Did you pay for this service/medicine?	1Yes 2.No
14.1 If not who paid for the service ?
15 What type of illness were you suffering from?

Home Background Information

- 16 Family type: 1. Traditional, multi-unit extended family 2. Nuclear family
 3 Single-unit family

17 Relationship with the head/acting head of household.	
1. Son/daughter/stepchild/adopted child	1
2. Blood related	2
3. Non-related person	3

Reasons why the child left home

- 18 Why did you leave your home?.....

 19. For how long have you been living on the street?YearsMonths.....
 20. Have you ever been in an institution/shelter? 1 Yes 2 No;
 20.1 If yes, when? Name of shelter
 21. Would you wish to be in an institution or shelter? 1 Yes 2 No
 22. Do you ever wish to return home? 1. Yes 2, No

Dependency

23. How many people lived in your home?
 24. How many siblings do you have?

Economic condition at home

25. 1. Poor 2. Not poor
 26. Have you ever gone hungry because there was not enough money to buy food? 1. Yes 2. No
 26.1 If yes, for how many days in a week?
 27. Do you benefit from any feeding scheme? 1Yes 2No

Parents' Occupation and Education

28. What is or was (in case he is late) your father's occupation? (Specify) ...	
29. What is or was (in case he is late) your father's highest educational level? ...	
30. What is or was (in case she is late) your mother's occupation? (Specify) ...	
31. What is or was (in case she is late) your mother's highest educational level? ...	

HIV/AIDS Education and awareness

32. Have you heard about HIV/AIDS? 1. Yes 2.No
 33. Do you know any HIV/AIDS infected person? 1 Yes 2.No
 34. Have you ever shared a meal with HIV/AIDS suspected person? 1. Yes 2.No
 35. Are you serious about the prevention of HIV/AIDS? 1. Yes 2.No
 35.1 If yes ,elaborate.....

Attitude of children towards HIV/AIDS

- 36 Would you be willing to care for a friend with HIV/AIDS? 1. Yes 2. No
 37 Would buy food from a shopkeeper who has HIV/AIDS? 1. Yes 2. No
 38 If you had HIV/AIDS, would you like to keep it confidential? 1. Yes 2. No

Children's knowledge on prevention of HIV transmission

- 39 How does one prevent getting HIV/AIDS?
 39.1 By having one faithful partner. 1. Yes 2. No
 39.2 Using a condom every time 1. Yes 2. No
 39.3 Abstaining from sex 1. Yes 2. No

39.4 Other, specify

40 Are you sexually active? 1. Yes 2. No

40.1 If yes, do you use any contraceptives? (only for children over 13 years of age)	1 Yes 2 No
40.2 If no, Explain	
40.3 If yes, do you use a condom (only for men)?	1 Yes 2 No
40.4 If no, Explain	

41 Do you engage in prostitution? 1. Yes 2. No

41.1 If Yes, how much money do you make every day? R.....

Abusive Relationship and Domestic Violence

42 Have you ever been abused? 1. Yes 2. No

42.1 If yes? Explain

Relations with parents (before living on the street)

43 If you went to school, what did you do, after school?

43.1 With whom?

43.2 Did you most of the time spend the time with the family? 1. Yes 2. No

43.2.1 If no, state the reason?.....

43.3 Did you have enough time to do the things you wanted to do and space to do them?

43.4 Were there rules at your home? 1. Yes 2. No

43.4.1 If yes, what are they? Elaborate.....

43.5 While on the street, have your parents ever contacted you? 1. Yes 2. No

43.6 What problems do you experience on the street?

43.7 Would you like to go back home? 1 Yes 2 No

Give reason for your response.....

43.8 Do you have any wish?1. Yes 2. No

43.8.1 If yes, what is it? (For e.g. Would you like to continue staying on the street or not, and why?)

44 Have you ever been abused by the police/community or otherwise? 1. Yes 2. No

44.1 If yes, what happened?

44.2 What are your recommendations on how to solve the problem of street children?

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45 Has any Social Worker ever contacted you ? 1 Yes 2 No

45.1 If yes, what were their recommendations on how to solve the problem?

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