

A SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL STUDY

OF THE IMPACT

OF HIV/AIDS

ON THE ADOLESCENT IN

CHILD-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

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**A SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT
OF HIV/AIDS ON THE ADOLESCENT IN CHILD-
HEADED HOUSEHOLDS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Jyothi Arjun Chabilall, declare that this dissertation is my own. It is being submitted for the Degree of the Master of Education at the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before, for examination at any other University.

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents the late Arjun Khubar Singh and Omila Devi Singh who were both laid to rest on 09 January 1999 and to my late mother-in-law, Mrs R.C. Gangai. The emphasis that they placed upon educational achievement and their unquestionable concern for the underprivileged and those with special needs, act as an unwavering source of inspiration to those of us who love them.

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“Ideally, children would live in a world without AIDS. But our world is not like that. HIV exists in every corner of the planet, and children and young people are its prime targets. Every day, six thousand young people under 24 are infected with HIV. Every day, two thousand infants contract HIV through mother-to-child transmission. Every day, more than six thousand children are left orphans by AIDS, a third of them under 5 years old. And everyday, sixteen hundred children die of AIDS.” (Piot 2002)

ABSTRACT

This is a scientific exploration of the manner in which HIV/AIDS impacts upon the adolescents that are orphaned by AIDS and obliged to live in a child-headed household. What is apparent is that empirical research based on the socio-educational conditions of orphans in child-headed households is a neglected field of study since there is mainly anecdotal evidence of the phenomenon. The central issues of the study are the socio-educational impact of the pandemic upon such children. This study aims to explore, describe and interpret the phenomenon of HIV/AIDS within the context of the participants' (adolescents in child-headed households) perspectives of their life-world. Apart from endeavoring to gain an insight into the way in which the social and educational aspects of the adolescents' lives are affected the study attempts to create an awareness that will assist NGOs and the Departments of Education and Welfare in their effort to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS.

The research abides by a qualitative methodology and an interpretive approach since the children are to be studied in their natural setting of their homes. The researcher employed a face-to-face technique in the form of interviews and observations of the adolescents in their natural environments as well as the *Sack's Sentence Completion Technique* to accumulate data for the investigation. The social epidemiology theory served as a theoretical framework for this study.

Findings of the study have revealed that HIV/AIDS has a definite negative impact on the social and educational lives of orphans in child-headed households. The study has further revealed that poverty, the lack of support and social discrimination experienced by the orphan in child-headed households, impact negatively on their social lives and education. Further, this research has exposed that orphans in child-headed households are vulnerable since they carry the burden of stigma and discrimination. These unfortunate children are forced to abandon their schooling because of financial constraints, and in many cases take care of ailing parents and assume adult responsibilities in their homes. Also, the South African Educational system has not adapted in keeping with current trends and needs to create more flexible learning opportunities that cater for children who will otherwise have to abandon their studies.

KEY WORDS

- HIV/AIDS
- RURAL
- CHILD-HEADED
- INDO-AFRICAN
- ORPHANS
- SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL
- ADOLESCENTS
- PANDEMIC
- POVERTY

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACCESS	Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-retroviral
ASSA	Actuarial Society of South Africa
CINDI	Children in Distress
CSG	Child Support Grant
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVSP	HIV/AIDS/STD Strategic Plan for South Africa 2000-2005
NCF	National Children's Forum
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	National Programme of Action for Children
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
UN	United Nations
UNAID	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization