

Factors in the family system causing children to live in the streets: a comparative study of parents' and children's perspectives

By

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DECLARATION

I, **HLAZINI MICHAEL MTHOMBENI**, hereby declare that the dissertation for the MSD (Social Work) degree at the University of Pretoria, hereby submitted by me has not been previously submitted at this or any other University and that it is my own work in design and execution. All reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

SIGNATURE:..... **DATE.....**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family
and friends

ABSTRACT

Factors in the family system causing children to live in the streets: a comparative study of parents' and children's perspectives

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The goal of this research was to explore and compare the perspectives of both parents and street children regarding the factors in the family systems that contribute to children leaving home and living on the streets. The study was done within the qualitative research approach and was applied research. It was a comparative study, comparing the perspectives of children and their parents/guardians. A literature review was conducted and formed the basis for a semi-structured interview schedule.

A non-probability sampling method and a purposive technique were used in the selection of participants in this study. They met the following criteria.

- They were boys and girls between ten and eighteen years of age.
- They had been benefiting from the Leratong and Itumeleng shelter services for at least six months and more.
- They had a family that consisted of both parents, either single parent or at least a guardian who would be included as a respondent in the study.
- Their families were located around Pretoria for accessibility.
- They did not have constant contact with their families.

The phenomenological strategy was suitable for this study and aimed to explore and understand the factors contributing to children living and working

on the streets, thus understanding and interpreting the meaning that children living and working in the streets, together with their families, give to their everyday lives.

The researcher found different family factors contributing to the street child phenomenon:

- Poverty;
- Unemployment;
- Lack of effective communication between children and parents,
- Mischievousness by children;
- Step-family relationships;
- Child abuse and ill-treatment by parents/guardians; and
- The majority of the parents/ guardians were of the opinion that the government should provide intervention to solve the problem of street children.

KEY WORDS

- Family
- Factors
- Street children

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of street children is a serious challenge to South Africa and society since children are the key to the future. Waghid (2004:68) confirms that the street children phenomenon is an alarming and escalating worldwide problem, representing one of the more pressing issues in child welfare. “No other global child welfare problem is as significant as the loss of human potential experienced by millions of children who are being reared outside of the institutions of family and education in the often perilous street environment”.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors in the family systems that cause children to opt for street life rather than a safe environment such as a home, family and alternative care, such as places of safety, children’s homes and foster care. Pandey (2003:137) mentions that in South Africa, the family is still regarded as the normal biological and social structure, which should guide the growth and development of a child. Weyers (2007:128) concurs with Pandey that the family provides the basic material goods for the survival, growth and development of the child in order to nurture and provide affection as the child grows.

The family is a powerful socialising agent, shaping the individual’s capacity for personal relationships and preparing him/ her for the complex world. The family provides the individual with a continuity of identity, a network of relations; his/her roots of the past as well as his/her branches for the future (Weyers, 2007:133).

Midgley (2006:144) explains that traditionally, the family is viewed as a social collective unit that provides protection and assists the individual in confronting the sometimes-stressful demands of daily life. Ideally, one’s family should always exist as an oasis, a place that is safe and satisfying, a place where one can seek relief from, and aid in, dealing with the often-stressful demands of the outside world. The researcher is also of the opinion that the family should serve

as a sanctuary for the spiritual growth of its besieged members. Unfortunately this ideal does not seem to be the case with families of street children, hence the present study seeks to investigate the factors in the family system of the children living in the street with a comparative approach of both the parents' and children's perspectives.

The children who will be the focus of this study are those who have families but have run away from their families and are presently living in the streets. They do not have any constant contact with their families. They live and work on the streets for twenty-four hours. They consider the streets as their home, and it is on the streets that they seek shelter, food and a sense of family belonging among their peers.

Research has been conducted on children living and working on the streets but very little has concentrated on a comparative analysis of both children's and their parents' or families' points of view. The researcher is of the opinion that real and concrete factors causing children to live on the street will never be understood until the two perspectives are investigated and compared. This will enable researchers to obtain information on both sides of the phenomenon of street children and to plan and implement the control measures.

The researcher has learned from his experience as a social worker working in a place of safety that life on the street is harsh and difficult. The longer children remain on the street, the more difficult it becomes for them to be reintegrated into their families because they quickly acquire certain habits, which they cannot easily abandon.

Chetty (1997:2) confirms this researcher's statement that life in the street is difficult and that children are essentially alone. He adds that it might happen that the child fails to obtain some food, shelter, clothes, medical services and other relevant basic needs for childcare and well-being. According to the Tshwane Alliance for Street Children (2005), there are about 100 000 street children in South Africa and about 150 million worldwide. They also reveal that the ratio of street boys as compared to girls is 75:25 and that in age, street

children range from three (3) years to eighteen (18) years. “The number is increasing daily and some street educators and researchers believe it could be double within a generation unless some effective actions are taken” (Moser & Kalton, 1997:34). Mashishi (2007), the director of the Leratong Shelter for Boys in Pretoria, confirms that the number of street children is increasing instead of decreasing. He mentions as an example that in 2007, his shelter was taking care of 68 boys but in 2008, the number has almost doubled. At the time of the interview there were 97 boys benefiting from their shelter services, excluding those who benefit from their outreach programmes taking place in different communities. He also confirms the fact that all the boys benefiting from their shelter are black, hence this study will only focus on black family systems and black street children.

Sejake (2007), the social worker at the Leratong shelter, attributes the increase in children living in the streets to HIV and Aids. He mentions that the number of people infected with HIV and Aids is increasing on a daily basis despite all the programmes and campaigns put into fighting the disease. He indicates that the number of people dying from HIV and Aids is also increasing. “It leaves most of the children parentless (orphaned) and as a result most of the children are forced to go to the street to fend for themselves due to lack of extended family networks”, he explains.

The researcher believes that it is important to conduct this study because more and more children, particularly teenagers, are leaving their homes and families and are absconding from shelters and residential care facilities, to live in the streets. Some children are being born directly into the streets and they will never know any other home, family or community.

The findings of this research may provide a small contribution to both the government and non-government organisations to understand the situation and eventually formulate policies and procedures that will effectively deal with the problem of children living in the harsh and dangerous environment of the streets. Children need to live in a safe and conducive environment such as stable families, places of safety, and foster care, where they will be guided and

supervised and their basic needs such as schooling, food, medical care, love, and care will be met. Children cannot have these needs fulfilled in the streets.

According to Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996: 13), all South African children are supposed to have the right to a name, surname and nationality from birth. They also have the right to family care, parental care or appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. They have the right to basic nutrition; shelter, health care and social services; to be protected from exploitative labour practices, not be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that are inappropriate for a person of their age or that would place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development.

Ennew (2005:19) states that the reality is that the large numbers of South African children, particularly black children, do not have family or parental care. They live and work on the streets, where there is no protection, basic nutrition, shelter, health care or social services. Ennew (2005:21) continues to assert that the large majority of children living on the streets are black and male and that a common set of socio-educational forces appears to be at work. Among these forces are poverty, poor relationships with the head of the household, little or no schooling, and working parent or parents who have little time or opportunity to channel interests and discipline their children. Many are victims of forced removals, which even after the dismissal of apartheid, have contributed to the fragmentation of the extended family and other community support structures (Agraval, 2002:29).

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Stolberg (2002: 143) mentions that the reasons for children taking to the streets or being forced out of their homes are multiple. This simply means that no single factor is responsible for the homelessness of children. In addition, Stolberg (2002:144) adds that broader global and societal factors filter down to affect communities, families, and ultimately children. "The immediate familial and community upheavals combine with inner motivations, culminating in the

alienation of children from family and community supports, so much so that running away is viewed as the best or only alternative”.

Agraval (2002:29) mentions that an in-depth study of the literature reveals a host of contributory factors, the most commonly cited being political factors, poverty, urbanisation, unemployment, family disintegration and disruption, violence and conflicts, abuse, in the sense of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and alcoholism. These and other factors will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (the literature review) of the study.

Desmond (2001:54) adds that, although South Africans frequently believe a lack of education to be the cause for the problems experienced by street children, they also see poverty, child abuse, neglect and youth with behavioural problems as reasons for them becoming runaways. Finkelstein (2005:41) mentions that although there are well-publicised causes contributing to the street child phenomenon, one must recognise that thousands of black children live in circumstances, which could possibly push them out into the streets. Cooper (2003:48) also adds that, given the history of racial oppression in South Africa, the black family's ability to provide its children with some space within which to develop has become all but impossible.

The former policy of apartheid led to a society discriminated against along racial lines. Living conditions, employment and schooling were all controlled by policies that actively ensured the suppression of black South Africans. Consequently, an alarming number of black children either have chosen or been forced through circumstances, to take responsibility for their own lives on the streets (Barrette, 2004:42). According to Agraval (2002:36) forty thousand children in South Africa die from malnutrition and disease, including acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (Aids), from lack of clean water and inadequate sanitation and from effects of drug - related problems annually.

Alexandra (2003:18) emphasises the issue of economic hardship that contributes to the crisis within the family. This in turn pushes children into the streets and into hunger, diseases, violence and fear. Jayes (2004:53), who

states that inadequate accommodation leads indirectly to runaway behaviour, echoes this. In her study she found that some of the mothers of the street children moved frequently and consequently the task of childcare fell to whomever the child happened to be with at that particular time.

According to Starks (2003:142), the needs of children and families must be a priority in any society. Families remain at this point the most accessible and the most successful units for providing childcare and they should thus be supported in all their diverse forms. The family is traditionally perceived as providing the ideal environment within which child development can take place. It is believed to be pre-eminently suited to satisfy not only children's most basic physiological needs but also their emotional, cognitive and various other higher order needs (Duncan, 2000:2).

Desmond (2001:15) states that many of the children are the products of broken homes. Others simply find street life more exciting than life in the poverty-stricken rural, informal settlements. Some children have little choice, their parents have died, or have simply disappeared, and their homes have been destroyed.

Where families are under tremendous pressure simply to survive the traumas of unemployment and poverty, little energy is channelled into building sound relationships with their children (Staker, 2005:142). Children are often perceived as being "naughty, uncontrollable or lazy", and, if their behaviour leads to distress on the part of the parent or community, the assumption is that the actions were intentional and directed at the latter personally.

Gordon (2001:61) mentions that in other cases, the family unit is still strong spiritually but the parents are sometimes unable to feed their large families. This leads to the older children sent out to fend for themselves so that their siblings will have enough to eat.

The researcher is of the opinion that industrial growth and urbanisation in South Africa is increasingly placing limitations on the possible range of interactions

between family members. Child rearing, which used to be a community affair has now become a “husband and wife” affair. The pressure of urban living has led to the absence of kin support in essential parental functions.

The street child phenomenon represents a complex issue resulting from a wide variety of integrating factors (Desmond, 2001:68). It would follow then that intervention strategies and programmes, whatever their nature, need to be preceded by scientifically based research. The problem to be addressed through this research study is thus formulated as family factors in the family system causing children to live on the street. It is also the researcher’s opinion that a thorough investigation of the needs of both the children living in the streets and their families, both as an aggregate and as individuals, needs to be carried out in order to establish the extent and nature of the particular crisis phenomena that affect their lives.

It is also imperative that attention be devoted to intensive action programmes, extensive ecological intervention, compensatory education, community development and the national socio-political reforms that are currently taking place in South Africa, to promote respect for the human right to a suitable environment as a safe educational milieu for the black child in South Africa.

The researcher is of the opinion that the effects of parental or family abuse, neglect and deprivation are far reaching and the effects of street life on children are brutalising. The cost to society is incalculable and the responsibility to understand and help is that of the whole country because the chain of causality does not merely end with children turning to the streets. The many children displaced and alienated through factors beyond their control, in turn engage in a host of anti-social and criminal activities. They are prematurely catapulted into adulthood, deprived of nurture, protection and care. The problem is thus regarded as the lack of knowledge about the factors contributing to children living on the streets, especially as seen by both the parents and the children who choose to live in the streets. Shelters and programmes for street children can attend to the needs of the children but the problem will not disappear if no attention is given to the situation at home. This study thus focuses on the

perspectives of both parties in order to address the problem by including more systems.

1.3 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.3.1 Purpose and goal

The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1992:777) defines purpose as an object to be attained or a thing intended. Barker (1996:100) suggests three general purposes of any research project. When a researcher addresses largely uncharted areas, its purpose is to explore. When a project seeks to detail evidence so that a clearer picture can be gained, its purpose is to describe, and when a project sets to test some specific idea to see under what conditions a phenomenon will increase or decrease, whether it will matter more or matter less, the purpose of research is to explain.

It is a well-known fact that children may not just volunteer to go and live in the streets. There must be some push or pull factors that somehow compel them to opt for street life.

The purpose of this research is to explore a less researched area, namely the family environments of the children living on the street. To date, many research studies have been conducted on general factors causing children to live and work on the streets in South Africa, such as those conducted by Burrette (1995), Chetty (1999), Sihlangu (1999), and Veeran (1999) but the researcher could not find a study that concentrated specifically on a comparative analysis of parents and children's perspectives. The general purpose of this study therefore is to identify and understand the family factors in the family system causing children to live and work on the street, and to come up with recommendations that could help in trying to resolve the problem of the children living and working in the streets.

The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1992:397) defines a goal as a destination or the object of a person's ambition / effort.

Struwig and Stead (2001:35) mention that a goal is also referred to as the primary objective, primary problem or aim. This objective or aim delineates or describes the scope of the research effort and specifies information needs to be addressed by the research process.

The goal of this research is therefore to explore and compare the perspectives of both parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family systems that contribute to the children leaving home and living in the streets.

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1992:656) defines an objective as something external to the mind or dealing with outward things on exhibiting facts uncoloured by either feelings or opinions. Fouché and De Vos (2005:104) explain that objectives are the steps one has to take, one by one, realistically to grass roots level, within a certain timespan, in order to attain the dream. The objectives of this study are the following:

- to explore the phenomenon of street children;
- to explore the family factors in the family system contributing to the disorganisation of the family;
- to do an empirical investigation into the perspectives of both the parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family system which contribute to children leaving home; and
- to draw conclusions and make recommendations to be used by social and childcare workers involved with street children.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

Fouché and Delport (2002 (a) 87) advise that, if the researcher decides to conduct a qualitative study, it is important to formulate a research question carefully. Delport (2002:101) also mentions that it is essential for the research question to have more than one acceptable answer for it to be researchable. Fouché (2002:104) explains that the question asked will largely control the way in which the rest of the research process is conducted. This research is

exploratory and as such, it needs to answer a “what” question in order to gain insight into the street child phenomenon.

The main question for this study is as follows:

What are the perspectives of parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family system that contribute to the children leaving home?

This question helped the researcher to explore different factors that contribute to children living and working in the streets instead of staying at home, attending school and living as children, as indicated in section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 Act 108 Of 1996.

1.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

Fouchè and Delport (2002:79) mention that at present, there are only two well-known and recognised approaches to research and these are the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Struwing and Stead (2001:11) conclude that qualitative research can be viewed as interdisciplinary, multi-paradigmatic and multi-method.

Fouchè and Delport (2002:81) also mention some of the differences between the two approaches as follows: namely that the quantitative approach is based on positivism, which takes scientific explanation to be nomothetic, and its main aims are to measure the social world objectively, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behaviour. In contrast, the qualitative approach is from an anti positivistic and interpretative approach. It is ideographic and thus holistic in nature and aims mainly to explore and understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life.

The approach of this study is purely qualitative since the study is aiming to explore and understand the factors that contribute to children leaving home to live and work in the streets from the personal perspectives of the parents and children. The researcher strongly believes that children do not just volunteer to go and live in the streets, but that some contributory factors force them to do so.

Those contributory factors are unknown to the researcher and the study is aiming at exploring and understanding these social factors.

1.6 TYPE OF RESEARCH

The type of research most suitable to this study is applied research. In contrast to basic research, applied research seeks to induce some change in a troublesome situation while the main goals of basic research are to develop theory and to expand the knowledge base (Struwig & Stead, 2001:28). Hoyle, Harris and Judd (2002:332) add that applied research is any social scientific research designed to answer practical questions. Ultimately, then, applied researchers in the social sciences are interested in speaking to a somewhat different audience than are researchers who conduct more basic research which focuses on the development and testing of theories about social behaviour.

This researcher's study befits applied research because its main aim was to explore and understand the factors contributing to children living and working in the streets. The study sought to induce change in a troubled situation by formulating recommendations on dealing with the contributory factors in order to solve the problem. The outcome of this research will be useful in affecting, implementing or changing interventions in terms of children living and working on the streets (street children) and their families for the better.

1.7 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Conducting research is an ethical enterprise. Schward (1991:119) refers to ethics as a system of morals and rules of behaviour. Research ethics provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines regarding how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. In conducting this study, the researcher made sure that the ethical issues discussed below were considered.

1.7.1 Informed consent

Strydom (2002a:65) defines informed consent as giving complete and accurate information to the potential participants regarding the goal of the study, the procedures that will be followed during the study, and the possible advantages, disadvantages and dangers to which they may be exposed, for them to fully comprehend the investigation. This enables research participants to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation in the study. Struwig and Stead (2001:67) explain that informed consent also means that the researcher should ensure that the participants voluntarily agree to take part in the research before the research is conducted.

In the study, the researcher has made it clear that all the necessary information concerning the study as mentioned by Strydom (2002a:65) above, and the participants were given a chance to ask questions concerning their involvement in the study before the study commenced to ensure an informed decision if they decided to participate in the study. The management of the specific shelters were requested to grant permission for the researcher to conduct the research on their premises with their children. Both children and their families were requested to participate in the study as participants. The parents/guardians signed a letter of informed consent and the children gave assent to participate in the study. They were informed that they were free to decline to take part and could withdraw at any point in the research process.

1.7.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality implies that only the researcher and possibly a few members of his or her staff should be aware of the identity of participants, and that the latter should also have made a commitment with regard to confidentiality (Strydom, 2002b:68). Confidentiality was discussed in the letter of informed consent.

As a way of respecting the confidentiality (privacy) of the participants, the researcher ensured that they (children and their family members/guardians) did not use their true names in the research. The researcher did not use any hidden

apparatus such as video cameras in order to make sure that each participant's identity was kept confidential. All the details of the research process were discussed with the participants before the start of the research process in order to ensure that total confidentiality was maintained.

1.7.3 Harm to participants

Shurink (1998:25) states that participants should be informed beforehand about the potential impact of the investigation. An example would be that questions might evoke some feelings and emotions, which the participants have suppressed due to the nature of their painful experiences. The researcher was, during the course of this research, aware of, and avoided at all costs, any potential risks, both physical and emotional that could have influenced the participants. The researcher has experience in social work practice and also the knowledge and skills to handle catharsis where necessary. Referrals for counselling would be made to Mr. Sejake, the social worker at the Leratong shelter on behalf of those participants who might have suffered from any kind of emotional harm due to the research process.

1.7.4 Actions and competence of the researcher

The researcher is ethically obliged to ensure that he/she is competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Strydom, 2002:63). A poor research design is an ethical issue because it can lead to invalid results and unnecessary waste of resources and participants' time. The competence of the researcher undertaking the study is also an important component of this ethical element. The researcher is an experienced social worker, completed the theoretical requirements for the degree and is skilled in facilitating interviews.

1.7.5 Plagiarism

Struwig and Stead (2001:70) say that plagiarism means using other people's work without proper acknowledgement of their contribution. The researcher ensured proper acknowledgement of all resources used.

1.7.6 Deception

Struwig and Stead (2001:69) define deception as misleading participants in a way that if they had been aware of the nature of the study, they might have declined to participate in it. Deception takes place when the researcher intentionally misleads subjects by way of written or verbal instructions. The researcher discussed the aim of the study and discussed all experiences that the subjects could go through. The researcher therefore ensured that deception was avoided in all costs. Participants received truthful information from the beginning of the research process to its end.

1.7.7 Release of findings

Williams *et al.*(1995:316) state that a research report is the manner in which a completed study is described to other people, whether they are colleagues at work or a worldwide audience. Derbyshire (1997:26) defines a research report as “a written document produced as a result of procedure undertaken to reveal information”. A research report can be viewed as a final product of a research process that has now been completed. In this study, they will be released in a form of a mini-dissertation that was compiled and submitted to the University of Pretoria’s Department of Social Work and Criminology for degree purposes.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Street children

Lewis (1998:17) defines a street child as someone younger than eighteen, who has decided to leave home to care for himself/herself on the streets, unassisted by an adult.

“Street children are those who have abandoned or have been abandoned by their families, schools and immediate communities, before they are eighteen years of age, and drifted into a nomadic street life” (Chetty, 1997:22).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines street children as people who are eighteen years and under, who find themselves living in the street due to different factors that influenced them to do so.

1.8.2 Family

The White Paper for Social Welfare (notice 1108 of 1997:93) defines family as individuals who either by contract or agreement chooses to live together intimately and function as a unit in a social and economic system. The family is the primary social unit, which ideally provides care, nurturing and socialisation for its members, particularly children, and it seeks to provide them with physical, economic, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual security.

Kammeyer *et al.* (1994:367) differentiate between two family types, nuclear and extended family types. A nuclear family consists of a husband, wife and children living in the same household, while an extended type of a family consists of three or more generations living in the same household or very close together. For the purpose of this study, a family will be any adult people, either biological parents, stepparents, guardians or significant others, who have any form of responsibility and authority towards a certain child.

18.3 Factors

Factors are circumstances contributing to a result. (The South African Pocket Dictionary of Current English, 2000:329). Factors can also be defined as situations that cause something to happen or not to happen (Kammeyer *et al.*, 1994:147). For the purpose of this study, factors will mean the environmental and social influences that contribute to children living and working on the streets.

1.9 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Fouchè and Delport (2002:89) state that writing the research report is a very important aspect of the research. It is the only way in which the whole project

will be communicated to other role players. The content of the researcher's research report will be summarised as follows.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

This chapter is the first chapter of the research report, and deals with the introduction and orientation of the study.

Chapter 2: The phenomenon of street children

This chapter is the main chapter of the study. It focuses on street children as a social phenomenon, and the possible factors contributing to children leaving their homes to live in the streets, thus factors contributing to the disorganisation of families.

Chapter 3: intervention with street children

This chapter examines the different types of programmes available to help the children working and living on the streets and includes programmes on the micro level, Macro level and long-term programmes.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodological procedures and techniques used in the study.

Chapter 5: Presentation and analysis of empirical research findings

This chapter is the presentation and analysis of the empirical research findings.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study

This chapter focuses on the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the number of respondents interviewed, 10 children and 10 (ten) parents/guardians of the children sampled around Gauteng province (Pretoria and Johannesburg), the generalisability of the study has been affected in such a

way that the findings of the study will only be generalised around Gauteng province.

1.11 SUMMARY

- 1.11.1 The issue of street children is a serious challenge to South Africa and societies since children are the key to the future. The street children phenomenon is an alarming and escalating worldwide problem, representing one of the more pressing issues in child welfare.
- 1.11.2. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors in the family systems that cause children to opt for street life rather than a safe environment such as a home, family and alternative care, such as places of safety, children's homes and foster care.
- 1.11.3 The problem was regarded as the lack of knowledge about the factors contributing to children living on the streets, especially as seen by both the parents and the children who choose to live in the streets. Shelters and programmes for street children can attend to the needs of the children, but the problem will not disappear if no attention is given to the situation at home. This study thus focused on the perspectives of both parties in order to address the problem by including more systems.
- 1.11.4 The goal of this research was to explore and compare the perspectives of both parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family systems that contribute to the children leaving home and living in the streets. The goal informed the formulation of the research question.
- 1.11.5 The approach for this study was qualitative since the study aimed to explore and understand the factors that contribute to children leaving home to live and work on the streets from the personal perspectives of the parents and children. The type of research was applied research.
- 1.11.6 The following ethical aspects were adhered to.
 - Informed consent was obtained from both parents and children.
 - All biographical information was kept confidential
 - No harm was done to participants.

- The researcher was competent to do the research and did the study under close supervision of a research supervisor.
- All sources were duly acknowledged to prevent plagiarism.
- No deception of participants took place.
- Research findings will be released in a form of a mini-dissertation that was compiled and submitted to the University of Pretoria's Department of Social Work and Criminology for degree purposes.

1.11.7 The study was done on a small scale and research results cannot be generalised.

CHAPTER 2

THE PHENOMENON OF STREET CHILDREN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

To date, a number of South African studies have been conducted on factors that cause children to live in the streets, such as those conducted by Schurink (1993), Le Roux (1990), Chetty (2001), and Barnet (2004) to name a few but there has been little satisfactory research into the family backgrounds of street children. Most of the studies rely only on poorly structured interviews with children and do not attempt to compare the samples with groups of people who raise children such as parents, relatives or family members. Ribeiro and Ciampone (2001:48) found that the street children in their study had a history of rejection or maternal absence and of paternal ill treatment since early childhood, and violence was always present in their personal relations with their families, peers, police or other adults.

According to chetty (2001: 24), the concept of homelessness or street children among African people is new because in the traditional cultures a child was perceived as everybody's child. Thus if a child were to lose his/her parents there would be someone to take care of that child. Each child was designated a guardian within the nuclear family and, if for some reasons there was no one within the nuclear family to take up this responsibility, members of the extended family became involved. It is from this practice that the belief that "there is no orphan in the African family" originated.

Ennew (2004:28) states that disintegration of family life affects the well-being of family members and leads to moral decay in families, which negatively affects the fibre of society as a whole. The family is regarded as a potentially powerful agent for political, economic, cultural and social development of its members.

When families are able to take care of their members, it reduces the burden on the state in terms of long-term costs incurred by social problems that may result

from the failure of families to perform their normative roles. It is then in the interest of communities and the state to ensure that,families have sufficient resources to provide for their basic needs.

This chapter examines the literature dealing with the phenomenon of the street child and discusses the street child phenomenon; experiences of street children in the streets, attributes concerning street children; street children and human development according to Meyer *et al.* (1997:437), Maslow's theory; the street child phenomenon as perceived by different stake holders such as policy makers, the general public and people working with street children; and family disorganisation.

2.2 THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON: CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Definitions of street children are many and varied, depending on the orientation of the definer. Chetty (2001:13) refers to the difficulties in defining street children. The term is applicable to a large number of children, all of whom spend a significant part of their day in the streets, without necessarily sharing any other common characteristics.

The literature depicts numerous attempts at defining the street child phenomenon, hence the following definitions emanated from the literature.

- Schurink (1993:5) defines street children as any boy or girl between the age of 0 to 18 years who live on the street permanently or temporarily. These children spend most of their time unsupervised by an adult and therefore develop a tendency to depend upon each other.
- Barnette (2004:5) defines street children as “Children who spend a considerable amount of their time in the streets of urban centres to fend for themselves and their families and are inadequately protected, supervised and cared for by a responsible adult person”.
- “Street children are those who have abandoned or have been abandoned by their families, schools and immediate communities before they are eighteen years of age, and drifted into a nomadic street life” (Chetty, 2001:22).

Essentially, many of the definitions are similar, having three main elements in common, which are listed below.

- i) These children live or spend a significant amount of their time on the streets.
- ii) The street has become their source of livelihood.
- iii) Overall, they are inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of Schurink (1993:5) will be used:

A street child is a boy or girl who is under the age of eighteen and who left his/her home environment part time or permanently because of problems at home and or in school, or to try to alleviate those problems, and who spend most of his/her time unsupervised on the street as part of a subculture of children who live an important communal life and who depend on themselves and each other and not on an adult, for the provision of physical and emotional needs such as food, clothing, nurturance, direction and socialisation.

2.3 TERMINOLOGY APPLIED TO STREET CHILDREN

All over the world, street children are exploited, victimised and are social reprobates whom society loves to hate. They seem to hover on the periphery of other people's lives. Because of this, society tends to see them in an insubstantial way. In South Africa the Afrikaans generic term "skadukinders" (children of the shadows) and the English term "twilight children" serve to support this contention (Ennew, 2004:26).

Street children are traditionally regarded as being a nuisance, mischievous at best and criminal at worst. These perceptions are supported by the number of names given to street children throughout the world. In Peru they are called 'pajaro frutere' meaning fruit bird; in the Cameroons they are called 'monstiques', meaning mosquitoes; in French they are called 'Gamin', which means a neglected boy/girl or the one left to run about the street; in Spanish, particularly in South America, they are called 'Trombadinha' which means

juvenile thief. Other names include 'hopeless', 'ruffians', 'thieves', 'parasites', 'hooligans', and 'bad influences' (Schurink & Tiba, 1993:15).

Kilbourne (2004:19) states that under the legal system inherited by many third world countries from the colonial period, the punishable offence of vagrancy is often broadly interpreted to include street children. The perception of the street child as bad and incorrigible is an exaggerated form of the nuisance notion. In South Africa, the currently accepted conception of "street children" is both phallocentric and adult-centred (Lewis, 2003:31). The term 'street children' is one coined by outsiders. Those, to whom this term is applied, have devised their own names. In Johannesburg and Durban they call themselves the 'malunde,' meaning those of the street or the 'malala pipe', meaning those who sleep in the pipes, whereas in Cape Town they are the 'strollers'.

Ennew (2004:28) continues to point out that the expression "street children", was totally rejected by all the children she worked with. "The children refused to be pointed at and considered as different from other children. However, because no alternative word seems to exist yet to describe their reality, the expression 'street children' was retained".

While it may seem to be "pure semantics" to discuss terminology, if one reflect on what has been said so far, it should be clear that, unless the basic human dignity of street children is rejected, it will be very difficult for them to establish a meaningful relationship with anyone, and vice versa. Thus, the terminology used for street children may indeed have been an influence on the approach used in dealing with them. However, most of the people prefer to call them "street children" because these children have homes and parents somewhere in the community but they happen to find themselves living and working on the streets due to different reasons.

2.4 STREET CHILD CATEGORIES

Hecht (2000:33) points out that, although street children are sometimes presented as a unified category, there are in fact different types of street

children with different backgrounds, who are characterised by different activities. She identified three categories of street children and these are discussed below.

2.4.1 Children with families working on the streets

The majority of street children belong to this category. They are children with family connections, who are working on the streets. Examples of the work on the streets include shining shoes, and selling newspapers and cigarettes. They return home at the end of the working day and often give their income to their mothers, thus helping them support an often-fatherless family with many young siblings. Many of these children do attend school. It is obvious that the children in this category do not have family disorganisation problems such as abuse or violence, but may experience living in poverty and growing up in a single-parent household. Many working children's households often largely or entirely depend on them to survive. This responsibility may also have negative associations for children, contributing to anxiety and vulnerability to harsh working conditions (Plummer, Kudrati & El Hag Yousif, 2007:1532).

Schurink (1993:5) and Barnette (1995:16-17) also identify a category of children who work on the streets and define them as *children on the street*. These are primarily children who still have family connections of a more or less regular nature. Their focus in life is still home, many attend school, most return home at the end of each working day and most have a sense of belonging in the community in which their home is situated. Those who attend school only go to the streets on weekends to make money to buy some food at school since they do not get any lunch boxes at home.

Part-time working children are school-going children who go to the streets in the afternoon, after school, over the weekends and during holidays. The main purpose of going to the streets is to make some pocket money or to help their families financially. They stay with their families and usually sleep at home. Fulltime working children are children who have left school and work fulltime on the streets. Some start as parttimers and eventually become fulltimers. They

decide to leave school altogether, and then some start sleeping on the streets and have irregular contact with their families.

According to Plummer *et al.* (2007:153), many working children, particularly boys, are pleased and proud to work, because it enables them to support themselves and their families. The positive draw of street life seemed to contribute to the self-esteem of some of the boys, as well as their pleasure in their free time. The boys report being drawn to the relative freedom and independence of the streets, and value this very highly once on the streets.

2.4.2 Children with weak family ties who live in the streets

According to Hecht (2003:28), this is a more complex group of children who, although they might still have some family ties, have escaped or life in the family has become intolerable for them due to various kinds of abuse or for reasons such as rejection by a new stepfather. These children see the street as their home and they seek shelter and a sense of belonging among other street children. *Children of the streets* are a smaller but more complex group. Children in this group see the streets as their home and it is there that they seek shelter, food and sense of family among their companions. Family ties exist but are more remote and their former home is visited infrequently (Schurink, 1993:5; Barnette, 1995:16-17).

This would be the category of street children included in this study. They have their homes and/or families but they regard the streets as their homes, away from their homes. They regard the streets as being safer, friendlier and more conducive than their actual homes. They seek shelter and a sense of belonging among other street children rather than among their own parents, relatives, guardians or family members.

This situation clearly indicates that all is not well in the family circumstances of the child. Ideally, every child should enjoy the comfort, affection, care and protected environment of their families, as stipulated in section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 108 of 1996).

2.4.3 Abandoned children

These children are alone and many are deeply psychologically affected because of the emotional trauma they endured before they were abandoned. They are the most vulnerable and serious cases. Many of them have lost all hope and turn to violence, drugs or prostitution as consolation and as a way of survival. In their need to belong, these children may submit to any organised violence that gives them a feeling of belonging and identity. Abandoned and neglected children, according to Schurink (1993:5) and Barnette (1995:16-17), are children born out of wedlock who have become unmanageable, children who are raised by their grandparents and who fend for themselves on the streets. They often join a group of runaway children and are completely at the mercy of the group to which they belong. At times, they will move to another group if life becomes too difficult for them.

The difference between this group and the group of children with weak family ties, who live in the streets, is that their parents or families have abandoned them. The reasons for the group of street children who purposefully leave their families are not exactly clear and necessitate further research.

2.4.4 Runaway children

These are children who have decided to leave home and school, and go to make a living on the streets. Their reasons for leaving home may vary. They eat and sleep on the streets. Their parents do not know where they are and the children try to take on a new identity. Depending on their age, they will normally join a group for protection and survival (Schurink, 1993:5; Barnette, 1995:16-17).

2.4.5 Young delinquents

This group of street children often regard the street as the best place to be. This is where they are able to get up to mischief and involve other children in

shoplifting, stealing, housebreaking, and many other delinquent acts. They do not always live in the streets but tend to have contact with their homes.

2.5. PERCEPTIONS OF THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON

In an attempt to understand the street child phenomenon, various studies were conducted in order to determine the perceptions and views of different stakeholders. Schurink (1994:92-136) reports the results of three studies that investigated the street child phenomenon as perceived by the public, policy makers in the welfare/social development field and the people working with street children on a daily basis. The findings of the studies are presented below.

2.5.1 The street child phenomenon as perceived by the public

The sample involved 421 African and 421 white residents living in the Vaal triangle, Cape Peninsula, Port Elizabeth and Durban. The respondents' perceptions will be discussed with regard to the following: attitudes towards street children; causes of the street children problem; and possible solutions to the problem.

2.5.1.1 Attitudes of respondents towards street children

The majority felt compassion for the children, but more Africans (62.8%) tended to be very compassionate as compared to the white respondents (34.3%). Less than one in ten of the white respondents showed feelings of resentment towards the children while one in sixteen of the African respondents felt very resentful. Africans tended to feel guiltier about street children than whites did (17.4% as compared to 0.8%), while whites tended to feel more neutral towards them. As many as 83.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that street children would become criminals when they grow up. More than a quarter (29.3%) of the African sample was of the opinion that street children would become adult vagrants, outcasts and would not be able to conform to the norms and values of the society.

2.5.1.2 Causes of the problem (children living in the streets)

Overall, the white respondents identified two main sources of the problem, namely poverty or unemployment in 42.6% of the cases and family dysfunction in 43% of the cases. The latter consists of abuse and neglect by parents, including abandonment by parents (21.1%), broken families (12.5%) and lack of good education facilities (9.4%).

Africans on the other hand were of the opinion that the root of the problem could be traced back to dysfunctional African family life. More than 60% of this group were of the opinion that parental abuse and neglect (48%.6%), including abandonment by parents, broken families and family disintegration (11.8%) and a lack of informal educational facilities (10.9%), were the main reasons for the children being on the streets. Only 18.6% were of the opinion that poverty or unemployment was the reason why children turned to the street. A small minority of the respondents (5.5% of Africans and only 2% of whites) were of the opinion that the main reasons for children to leave their parental homes to the streets were naughtiness, juvenile delinquency or peer group pressure. Less than 1.5% of Africans and 4.3% of whites were of the opinion that political circumstances were to blame for the street children phenomenon.

2.5.1.3 Possible solution to the problem

More than a half (52.3%) of the African respondents regarded substitute care, closed institutional settings such as children's homes (40%) and substitute parenting such as foster care and adoption, as the best solutions to the problem. Nearly a fifth of the white respondents (19.6%) thought that better services such as health care and education provided to the children on the streets could solve the problem. Ten percent felt that the children should be sent back to their parents, while 18.1% of the whites as compared to only 3% of the Africans did not know how street children could be dealt with.

Just more than a fifth (21.2%) of the African respondents was of the opinion that better services and improved working conditions provided to children on the street could solve the problem. Only a small minority of both the African and white group felt that the income of the street children's families should be supplemented (5.9% Africans as compared to 7.3% whites), or that legislation prohibiting child labour should be changed (2.5% Africans and 2% whites).

Ennew (2004:18) believes there are a number of reasons for the public's exaggerated hostility towards street children. He comments on the fact that the individual differences amongst street children are ignored. Besides this, the public information comes mainly from the press, which is inclined to sensationalise and highlight the children's most extreme behaviours, making it more likely for the public to treat them badly. Many people draw their views about street children from their personal encounters with them in highly visible but anonymous places such as when they are asked for money at traffic lights or while shopping. Once again, this leads to the children's antisocial and minor delinquent behaviour perceived in the extreme.

2.5.2 The street child phenomenon as perceived by policy makers in the welfare social development field

The sample in this group entailed 24 institutions, which were involved with welfare social development policy, also experienced, and had knowledge of the street child epidemic. The departments of Local Government and National Housing, Correctional Services, Education and Training, National Health Services, Social Development, the then Transvaal Provincial Administration, the then Natal Provincial Administration, the then Provincial Administration of the Orange Free State, Cape Provincial Administration, Courts, South Africa Police Services, National Association of Child Care Workers, Nicro, Mental Health Society, Famsa, South African National Council for Child and Family care, The children's foundation, SOS Children's village, Boys Town, Addington Hospital and Kalafong Hospital were interviewed (Ennew, 2004:24).

The perceptions of these institutions regarding the definition of “street children” causes of the problem, street children’s way of life and advantages and disadvantages of street life are as follows.

2.5.2.1 Definition of “street children”

The following definitions emerged from the data collected by Schurink (1994:92-136)

- A street child is “a child who seeks a refuge in order to survive and who has broken all bonds with his/her family”.
- A street child is “an unfortunate, dirty child who learns to beg, steal and sell his/her body for food and money”.
- A street child is “someone who depends entirely on all that is found on the street, for example, clothing, food and many other needs”.
- A street child is “a child who is deeply unhappy and lonely and has been deprived of the fulfilment of his/her basic needs”

2.5.2.2 Causes of the problem (children living on the streets)

The respondents identified the factors discussed below as the aetiology of the street child phenomenon.

Macro level factors

The following factors within the community context were identified: urbanisation, forced resettlement, overcrowding, and education that is not compulsory, school boycotts, destruction of teaching and educational facilities, fewer or no job opportunities, low salaries, high cost of living, lack of recreational facilities and violence.

Meso-level factors

The following factors within the family context were identified as: parents’ relocation to the cities without adequate planning for the provision of substance and care for their children; the disintegration of marriage and family life; single parent families; the inability of parents to feed the children; and irresponsible

procreation. Family violence; physical and psychological maltreatment of children by parents; lack of parental control and supervision; the presence of step-parents; clashing values of parents and children; the collapse of traditions; dominating father figure with an unbridled temper; the absence of parents due to their long working hours; and children being sent to the cities to beg or look for a missing family member without a fixed abode were also identified.

Micro-level factors

The following personality traits were identified: a feeling of inferiority because parents cannot afford school books or school uniforms; a need for personal attention which is impossible in a large family; school performance; children who are orphans or whose parents or guardians are either in jail or have deserted them; young unmarried mothers without an income; a feeling of uselessness; the desire to survive; a love for adventure; the need to be free and peer pressure.

2.5.2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of street life

The data gathered entailed implied and explicit references to the advantages and disadvantages of street life. These are listed below.

- **Advantages**

- The group provides empathy and security for the child.
- The child is safe from maltreatment from parents and adults.
- The child earns more money on the street than he/she could at home or elsewhere.
- The child is not subjected to corporal punishment (physical abuse) as he/she usually is at home.
- The child learns to think creatively and differently since he/she continually has to devise plans in order to survive.
- The street fulfils the child's need for adventure.

- **Disadvantages**

- **Emotional problems** – these include street children's continuous search for people who will empathise with them, a fear that nobody will ever love them, a fear of being alone, and distrust of their fellow men, self-image problem, anxiety depression and hallucination.
- **Health problems** - various health problems can be caused by exposure to cold, unhygienic conditions and contagious disease resulting from street life. Examples are colds, chest and breathing problems, dental problems, skin problems, gastric fever, malaria, food poisoning, cholera, malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases and bite wounds.
- **Educational problems** – these include lack of schooling as well as the deterioration of skills
- **Exposure to antisocial and exploitative activities** - the following appeared to be the most important: assault, rape, prostitution, illegal trading, cheap labours, street fights and victimisation.

2.5.3 The street child phenomenon as perceived by people who work with the street children

The sample in this category consisted of eleven social workers, seven volunteers in the social development field, six childcare workers, a coordinator, and a head of childcare services in the field of childcare, two university lecturers, two schoolteachers, a deputy headmaster, an educational psychologist, three business people and a social researcher (Ennew, 2004:29).

The duration of the respondents' involvement with the street children in the study conducted in Ennew,(2004:29) ranged from two to six years. The respondents were also involved in various capacities such as that of the vice-chairman of a shelter, teacher, co-ordinator, caseworker, volunteer and manager of street children's projects. Contact was mostly established through the respondent's involvement in street children's programmes. Some of them had established contact with the children through street outreach, while others' involvement resulted from referrals from community members and the police.

In the paragraphs that follow, the respondents' perceptions of street children will be discussed with reference to the following aspects; definition of a "street child" and reasons for the problem of children living in the streets instead of their homes/families.

2.5.3.1 Definition of a "street child"

The respondents defined "street child" in the following manner.

- A street child is a "child living away from familial structure without basic needs and eking out an existence alone typically in urban areas".
- A street child is "a child with no fixed address, who often does not know where his or her parents are, who has been on the street for a length of time, sleeping in doorways, eating from a soup kitchens and surviving through begging".
- A street child is "a child on the street who left his parental home due to his or her uncontrollable behaviour or family background to stay in town".
- A street child is "a child who habitually runs away from home and school to stay independently from his/her parents".

2.5.3.2 Reasons for children to live in the streets

A relatively large group of the respondents regarded problems within the family as reasons for children to leave their homes for street life. Some of these problems are:

- Family conflict due to factors such as alcoholism, stress and violence;
- divorce or separation;
- family disintegration and the presence of a step-parent;
- lack of proper discipline;
- broken homes due to disputes prevailing between parents;
- financial problems and illegitimacy;
- poor home circumstances such as inefficient housing and overcrowding;
- lack of parental involvement and lack of response to their needs;
- lack of adequate care and control combined with abuse of all kinds; and

- parents' inability to meet children's needs resulting in acting-out behaviour.

2.6 FAMILY FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE STREET CHILD PHENOMENON

Guttmann (2004:77) mentions the various family factors as contributing to the street child phenomenon that are discussed below.

2.6.1 Lack of a father-figure

Guttmann (2004:79) contends that only about 58% of black women over the age of 18 years have ever been married and, depending on the area, between 20% and 60% of black households are single parent female headed. Even when men and women are married, the housing shortage and migrant labour prevent about a third of them from living together. As a corollary, men and women sometimes live together for varying lengths of time, perhaps having one or more children together, without ever getting married.

Whether men and women live together or not, it is not always possible for them to have their children with them, mainly because of lack of accommodation and childcare. For example, it was estimated in the year 2003 that nearly 20% of children under the age of 15 years lived apart from their parents. It is obvious that many boys grow up without a much-needed father figure to identify with within their own homes (Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1521). As a result, when unable to find someone to imitate in their own environment, some boys will not hesitate to move out of their homes in search of a father figure elsewhere, including on the streets.

2.6.2 Divorce of parents

Lewis (2004:46) mentions that divorce is on the increase and, following their parents' divorce; children may opt for the street because they can no longer cope with their family situation. They need a father to identify with. Kilbourne (2004:28) adds that female single parents often do not realise how important it

is for their sons to have such a father figure. They tend to think that if their brothers were able to grow up without a father or with a father working away from home, then their sons should also cope. The problem is they forget that, in the old extended family settings there were other men such as uncles and grandfathers who provided the father figure their brothers needed. "This is no longer the case with nuclear families today. As a result, the boys go to the streets in search of a father figure and often gang leaders provide this male figure to young ones" (Kilbourne, 2004:29).

2.6.3 Stepfather / stepmother

According to Plummer *et al.* (2007:157), children come to the streets because of maltreatment by a step-parent, and/or insufficient family discipline, supervision and attachment (Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1521). On the same note, Le Roux (1996:97) argues that often, following a divorce, a boy will want to stay with his father but a stepmother will not accept him for all kinds of reasons or excuses such as "The boy eats too much, he is not well behaved, he steals, he is not co-operative, he does not look like the father".

Le Roux (1996:98) adds that, if the boy stays with his mother, the stepfather may refuse to feel responsible for him just because he is not his biological child. At times, the boy will refuse to take the surname of the stepfather, who will then refuse to look after the child. Finkelstein (2005:44) concludes that at other times, the stepfather will say that it is the job of the mother to look after him and that the biological father has a duty to support him financially and educationally. The researcher is of the opinion that the extended family is not there to help find a solution. The child then gets frustrated and ends up in the street.

2.6.4 Parentless children

Finkelstein (2005:46) explains that, following a divorce, children may find themselves in a situation where they feel unwanted by both their new stepfather and new stepmother. This seems to affect the boys particularly, who tend to be far more rebellious than girls are. For a time, boys may move between the two

new 'sets of parents' without ever settling down, until they feel unwanted by both sets and decide to make it on their own on the street by leaving their families. Usually, the extended family is not there to come to the rescue.

2.6.5 Abandoned children

Ennew (2004:39) mentions that boys born out of wedlock often fall into the category of abandoned children. While they are still young, their mothers are usually able to look after them. However, as the boys grow up, problems start emerging up, such as bad friends, refusing to go to school, smoking or sniffing glue, fighting, stealing, and sleeping out.

Unable to control them any longer, their mothers give up and chase them away from home. The streets provide them with the ideal refuge to survive. Pardey (2006:138) explains that at times, grandparents will bring up boys born out of wedlock because their mothers are busy studying or working. When their mothers marry, the husband sometimes refuses to have the children of another man. When the grandparents die, there is no one to take care of the children who then have to find a place to survive. The street welcomes children in need.

2.6.6 Talented children

Charlin (2006:216) explains that the family environment of the talented children may frustrate boys with a high intelligence, born of uneducated and poor parents because their parents do not see the need for them to be educated. All the parents want the children to do is to go and earn money so that they can support the family financially. Biller (2005:314) concludes that such boys will often be tempted to make their own way. The reason for being on the street is to 'make money' to carry on their education. Their dream is seldom realised.

2.6.7 Alcoholic parents

Erlbaum (2005:98) explains that children with alcoholic parents do not mind their parents' drinking as much as they fear its results. After drinking, parents

are more likely to shout at and to fight one another. They also become less patient with their children and beat them up, at times very harshly. They do not provide them with food, or they fail to cook for them, and do not give them the essentials they need, such as clothes, schooling, love and other basic needs. Goode (2005:348) mentions that there comes a time when the children start giving up on their parents and decide to opt out, at first for a day or two, and then for longer periods, until eventually they settle on the street for good.

2.6.8 Over-strict parents

Plummer *et al.* (2007:154) explains that many well-intentioned parents want their children to grow up the right way. However, they have little understanding of the psychology of how to raise children. Usually their point of reference is their own upbringing which could be summarised as follows: a hiding whenever there is a fault, little or no time for discussion with the children, and only 'do as I say', not allowing them to go anywhere except home, school or church. As a result, seeing other children given far more freedom than they themselves are able to enjoy, these children do not understand their parents and end up deciding that being out of their family is a far better solution than being within it and they then move to the freedom of the streets. Lewis (2004:49) mentions that children brought up in authoritarian homes are more likely to become street children than children who have grown up in permissive homes, while the latter are more likely than those from authoritative or democratic homes are. "Before becoming street children, these adolescents lose confidence in their parents and develop suspicion for other adults" (Matchinda, 1999:248-250).

2.6.9 Abused children

Pandey (2005:139) mentions that beating in some homes has become a way of life. As a result, children grow up in fear whenever they happen to make a mistake. They know that if they are discovered, they will be in trouble. There comes a time when a child makes what he/she considers a 'big' mistake and prefers to run away rather than face the violent consequences. Brennan (2006:118) mentions that abused children also include those who are raped or

abused sexually. As they grow up, unable to cope with such abuse, they prefer to run away to avoid being subjected to it again. The problem compounds itself when they are sexually abused on the streets as well.

2.6.10 Prostitute mothers

Goode (2005:356) explains that boys growing up with a prostitute mother tend to lose all respect for her. While young, they might have to call the men visiting the family/home 'uncles'. As they grow up and start realising what is taking place, they lose respect for their mother who will often try to compensate for her behaviour by showering their children with gifts. Realising that their mother is a prostitute usually engenders tremendous psychological problems in children.

2.6.11 Hungry children

Webber (2000:233) explains that boys are known to have good appetites, yet, in times of drought, suffering and unemployment, it is especially difficult for single parents to provide for the basic needs of their children.

While most parents try to give food to their children, every day often parents do not have the means to satisfy their hunger. The streets, where the probability of making a few rand will enable them to buy more or enough food, become the only avenue open to them.

2.6.12 Delinquent children

Ennew (2004:48) mentions that many parents with delinquent children do not know what to do in order to put them on the right path. There comes a time when parents give up altogether and allow their children to do whatever they want, sometimes because they even fear them. As a result, these children will live on the street and occasionally visit their homes. They have complete freedom to do whatever they please and are well on their way to becoming first offenders and future criminals.

2.7 FAMILY DISORGANISATION AS CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR TO CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET

2.7.1 Introduction

It is crucial to discuss the family in detail since it links directly to the title of the study, namely “Family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets: A comparative study of both parents’ and children’s perspectives”. In the study, the family setting will be closely investigated since it is traditionally perceived as providing the ideal within which child development can take place. It is very important to hear what other authors and professionals say about the contribution of families to their children becoming street children.

Pardey (2006:137) mentions that in South Africa, the family is regarded as the normal biological and social structure that should guide the growth and development of a child. The researcher is also of the opinion that one’s family should always exist as an oasis, a place that is safe and satisfying, where one can seek relief from, and aid in, dealing with the stressful demands of the outside world. Unfortunately, this is not always the case with families of street children; hence, this study seeks to focus on the family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets.

Barrette (2004:33) argues that it appears that the decision to bid the parental home farewell and to make the streets their home is made only when there are serious problematic child-parent relations. He adds that over the past 25 years or so, traditional African family life has undergone numerous changes. Many parents grew up within the context of the extended family, where apart from parents there were grand parents and relatives to provide the necessary psychological support to young people growing up. Today because of urbanisation, the traditional extended family is giving way more and more to the nuclear family and as a result, a new set of problems has emerged, and there are no structures or mechanisms to deal with these. Furthermore, children tend to become first victims of the new circumstances, and the streets provide them with a haven in which to find refuge in.

2.7.2 Definitions of a family

Goode (2005:149) defines a family as a group of people united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, characterised by a common residence or not, interacting and communicating with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by some family rules. On the other hand, Lankenblom (2006:82) defines a family as the society's primary institution for raising children, caring for the elderly and passing on the values of the society." It is usually the source of our greatest sorrow. It is the main mediating institution between the individual and the state, the basic social unit of our culture".

The first definition explains a family as a group of people with some kind of a relationship while the second definition sees a family in terms of the roles that it plays towards that group of people. The researcher then sees a family as a central and most enduring commitment beyond the self.

2.7.3 Types of families

A distinction is made between the two basic family types, namely, nuclear and extended families.

2.7.3.1 Nuclear family

Guttman (2004:119) defines a nuclear family as a type of a family where a family unit is made up of a husband, wife and their children, living in the same house. The primary bond of loyalty in the nuclear family is between the husband and wife. Cherlin (2006:214) mentions that in this type of family, when the parents pass away first, the children are left alone, without any adult person to look after them since their parents have been the only adults in their lives. This situation often leads to children leaving home to live in the streets.

2.7.3.2 Extended family

According to Biller (2005:431), an extended family is a family unit made up of three or more generations living in the same household or very close together. An extended family thus includes first generation parents, their married sons, their spouses and their children. Cherlin (2006:123) mentions that the extended family unit have a high degree of economic cooperation across all generations.” It is the unit, which used to keep the family going and the older generation taking care of all the younger generation. There was no child who could live in the streets during those days due to lack of adult care”.

2.7.4 The functions of a family

A family has a very important role to play in a person’s life (Brennan, 2006:196). The following are the most important traditional functions of a family:

2.7.4.1 Reproduction

Brennan (2006:204) states that, for a society to continue, replacement must be provided for the members who die and this is only accomplished through child-bearing. Finley (2004:93) explains that in almost every society, men and women who are married are the preferred producers of children. However, there are societies in which many children are produced by couples who are not formally married. Zinn (2003:119) mentions that in many societies, children are born to unmarried women and in these cases, even with the fathers absent, mothers and their children are usually accepted as family units.” In South Africa today, 38% of children who are born are to unmarried women, and this affects the manner in which children are raised”.

2.7.4.2 Care and nurturance

A human infant is incapable of caring for itself. It must be given physical and emotional care or it will not survive. Reiss (2004:93) mentions that family systems, regardless of their form, provide emotional support and nurturance for

its children. The reality of the matter is that more than half of all children in the country (South Africa) live in poor families. Poverty affects children by reducing their chances of living beyond their first five years through stunting their growth, rendering them vulnerable to infectious diseases and disabling injuries, reducing their confidence in and hope for the future and limiting their education capacity for developing to their full intellectual potential (Zinn, 2003:122).

2.7.4.3 Socialisation

Broude (2004:96) mentions that, if some degree of order and continuity is to exist in a society from one generation to the next, infants must be taught the society's cultural and social ways. Mckenry (2007:224) contends that it is within the family setting that morals and values are portrayed and secure families provide a conducive environment where family members can develop to their full potential, develop positive identities and form a set of values that serve as a frame of reference throughout later life.

2.7.4.4 Meeting economic needs

Erlbaum (2005:96) mentions that the family is a social unit in which members cooperate to satisfy their common economic needs. Generally, family members share their resources and the fruits of their labour with all other family members. Guttman (2004:118) adds that production within the family handcrafts has been most common through history. However, in contemporary economically developed societies, the family is primarily integrated through its consumption and not its production, and most families are unable to meet their members' economic needs, particularly those of the children.

2.7.4.5 Intergenerational and kin support

Lewis (2002:118) mentions that long after childhood, physical, economic and emotional support continues between generations within families and parents continue to help and support their adult children in a variety of ways. Adult children reciprocate by giving help, respect and attention to their parents.

Eastman (2007:336) mentions that it is in the best interest of communities and the state to ensure that families have sufficient resources to provide for the basic needs of their members. Family resources include education, employment, financial assets and savings, social grants, government provision and social support.

2.8 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES FACED BY STREET CHILDREN

Hecht (2003:34) mentions that life on the streets is difficult. Children are faced with very difficult and dangerous circumstances on a daily basis. They are in danger of injury, murder, violence, rape, sexual exploitation, drugs, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, hunger, solitude, contempt, and forced labour.

2.8.1 Street children and HIV/AIDS

Le Roux (1996:94) indicates that street children are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections when they have sex with infected adults for money or because of threats and violence. These infections also spread through the community of street children themselves, because some of them have sexual relations with each other. Both heterosexual and homosexual relationships are involved.

Le Roux (1996:76) mentions the following reasons for street children being at risk of infections.

- Sex with an adult person can lead to genital injuries and bleeding, so that the virus can be more easily transmitted.
- The children may already have a history of sexually transmitted diseases, which can increase their chances of HIV infections.
- Their health may already be poor, making them vulnerable to infection.
- They have no knowledge about HIV/AIDS and do not know how to protect themselves due to low educational levels and lack of guidance.

- They cannot afford to buy condoms because they are children or because they just cannot afford to.
- They are children and have no power to insist that clients use condoms.

2.8.2 Substance abuse and street children

Kilbourne (2004:48) mentions that glue sniffing or the use of other abusive substances is part of the way of life of street children. She contends that when the street children are hungry or unable to buy food due to lack of money, they often sniff glue or benzene to make them feel better because their sniffing seem to take away their hunger. "They also sniff glue and benzene to protect themselves from the cold and also to make them feel happy when they are depressed" (Finkelstein, 2005:14).

Schurink (1994:113) agrees with Finkelstein on this issue and adds that most of the street children carry a small bottle of glue or a cloth soaked in benzene in their shirt fronts in order to inhale the substance to temporarily escape from hunger, cold and other hardships, petrol vapours are also inhaled and even dagga and mandrax are used.

2.8.3 Street children and personal care

Finkelstein (2005:42) mentions that street children generally appear to be dirty and unkempt. Their clothes are often tattered. At night they sleep in gutters, dustbins, drainpipes, doorways, in graveyards, parks or scrap yards, deserted buildings and old cars. Sometimes they build fires to guard against the cold.

Schaffer (2001:28) asserts that their personal cleanliness usually consists of washing where there is a public tap. If there is a river nearby, they will make use of it over the weekends. They almost have a phobia about being clean. Medical care is nearly always non-existent because they cannot afford it and are afraid to go to the local hospital or clinic in their street child attire.

2.8.4 Street children and prostitution

The most common reason suggested for finding fewer girls than boys on the streets has been that girls are taken off the streets to become prostitutes. According to Rothman (1991:56), all unprotected young people who spend time on the street report engaging in so-called 'survivor sex' or sex for money, protection or care. Unfortunately, street children are easy targets for prostitution. Their inferior status as children, and furthermore, street children, exposes them to a variety of sexual practices. Some street children report that their main source of income is through "risk activities", often meaning theft for boys and sex work for girls. Far higher proportions of street girls engage in sex for their main source of income (Plummer *et al.*, 2007:1525).

Webber (2000:106) reports that many children are trapped into providing sexual services through being offered food, money or clothing. Having been solicited, they may be given a bath and food, shown a sex video and then coerced into performing sexual acts similar to those they have seen on the video. "The younger children report being so traumatised by these experiences that they subsequently hide from people who they believe is soliciting for sex. Some older boys, on the other hand, say that prostitution is just selling a service like any other" (Webber, 2004:108).

2.8.5 Street children and human development

According to Maslow's theory of human development as stated in Meyer *et al.* (1997:437-443), street children will never develop to their full potential or self-actualisation if they continue to live in the streets since the streets are not conducive to their development.

Maslow believes that human development can be explained in terms of need gratification. He presents the human as a 'yearning being' who is seldom satisfied because, no sooner is one need gratified, than another surfaces. Need gratification is not merely a means of relieving tension or frustration; it is also

the basis for growth and the realisation of an individual's full potential through self- actualisation.

Maslow's view of humankind is a holistic one. The person is an integrated whole and cannot be studied piecemeal. All aspects of the personality are closely interwoven and people have certain basic needs hierarchically arranged, which are biological, safety, love, and esteem needs. These needs must be satisfied before the need for self-actualization, which is at the top of the hierarchy, becomes apparent.

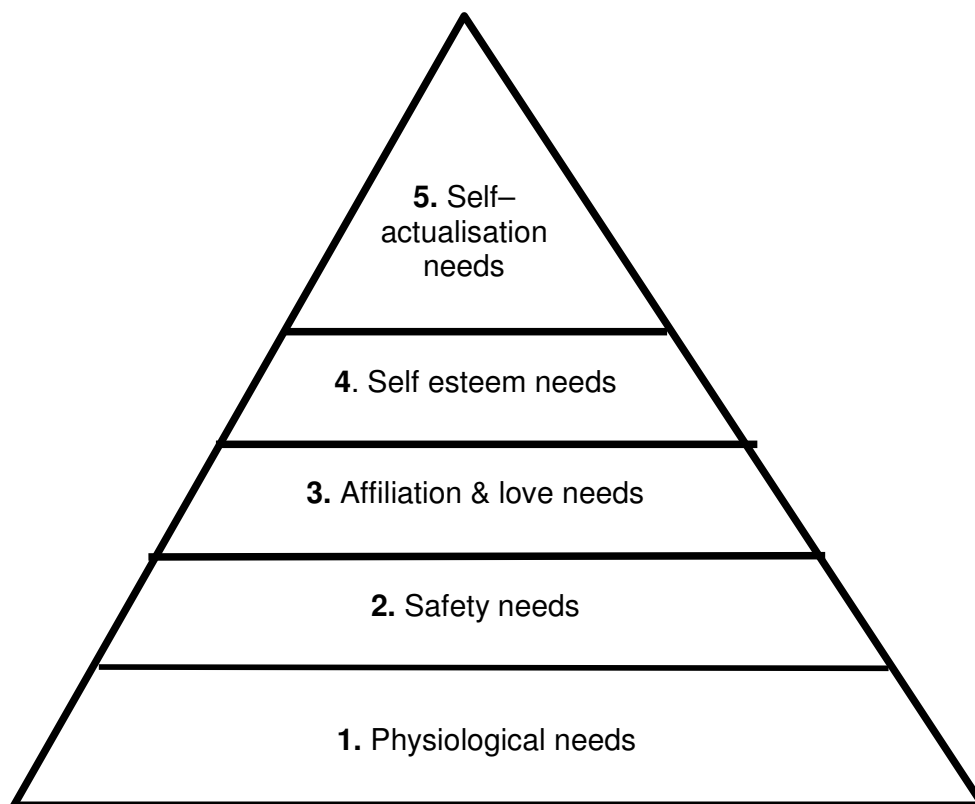


FIGURE 1: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

According to Maslow, the fact that needs are arranged in a hierarchy means that the person's development progresses through successive stages of need gratification towards the goal of self-actualisation. The lower the need in the hierarchy the more urgent it is, which simply means that lower needs must first be gratified before needs at a higher level manifest themselves.

When a specific set of needs is gratified regularly, the next set of needs becomes dominant. Instead of dominated by hunger, for example, a person now becomes obsessed with the need for safety. This does not mean that the person will never experience hunger again, but when he/she is reasonably sure that the physiological needs will be satisfied regularly, the safety needs become an important motivator of development.

The same principle applies to all the other needs in the hierarchy. A person becomes aware of his/her love and affiliation needs only when the safety needs are gratified regularly, and the self-esteem needs come to the fore only when the love needs are satisfied regularly. This simply means that the self-actualisation stage is reached only when the other four levels of needs are all being gratified gradually.

Maslow explained his hierarchy of needs as follows with the basic needs ranked from lowest to highest.

- **Physiological needs:** These needs have to do with survival such as thirst, the need for oxygen, sleep activity, sensory stimulation and sexual gratification as examples. Physiological needs are usually homeostatic and their gratification restores equilibrium inside the body. According to Maslow, physiological needs are the most basic needs and if they are not gratified regularly, they dominate all other needs. Accordingly, someone who is always hungry because he/she has no food will not be interested in gratifying higher-ranking needs.
- **Safety needs:** When a person is reasonably sure that his/her physiological needs will be satisfied regularly, these needs lose their urgency. At this point, safety needs come to the fore and may become dominant to such an extent that all functioning is directed towards achieving security, stability, protection, structure, law and order, limits and freedom from fear. Maslow's theory accords with the general view held by educationalists that children feel safe in an environment where there is some kind of structure, with set limits and boundaries and where fixed patterns apply. In a crisis, people

who are functioning on the level of safety needs will identify more easily with a leader figure because they are seeking some kind of protection.

- **Needs for affiliation and love:** Once the physiological and safety needs are satisfied, a person becomes aware of his or her need to belong somewhere and to be with someone, to receive and give love. Maslow suggests that rebel youth groups are formed because of the need to belong to a group and to participate in the struggle against a common enemy. He emphasises that a person not only needs to belong to others, but that identification with a home and neighbourhood also contributes to the gratification needs.
- **The need for self-esteem:** Self-esteem refers to the need to evaluate oneself positively. As soon as a person's need for love has been satisfied to the point where it diminishes as a motivating force, the need for esteem awakens. When the needs for self-esteem have been satisfied, people feel confident, competent, strong, and useful and needed in their world. By contrast, unfulfilled needs for self-esteem give rise to a feeling of inferiority, weakness and helplessness.
- **The need for self-actualisation:** A person whose basic needs are satisfied on a regular basis can start functioning at the level of self-actualisation and growth motivation comes to the fore. Self-actualization is the process of becoming all one is capable of being, making full use of all one's abilities, talents and potentials. According to Maslow, a person becomes restless when he or she is not doing what he or he is capable of doing.

The researcher is of the opinion that the fact that street children live in the streets where it is very difficult to get a good meal on a daily basis makes it impossible for their physiological needs to be gratified. According to Barrette (2005:98), children on the streets survive by pushing trolleys from the supermarkets to the taxi ranks, collecting trolleys left near people's cars and returning them to the supermarkets where the people have paid a deposit for them, washing cars and taxis, and serving as caddies at the golf course. "If they had a bad day financially, they will revert to begging people for money for food", explains Barrette. The researcher suggests that this simply indicates that street

children find it very hard to satisfy their physiological needs regularly and as a result, their process of human development becomes arrested. According to Maslow's theory, physiological needs are the most basic needs and if they are not gratified regularly, they dominate all other needs. Thus, someone who is always hungry because of lack of food will not be interested in gratifying higher ranking needs such as safety needs, needs for affiliation and love, self-esteem and self-actualisation.

Street children do not care about safety needs; hence, they sleep in the bush or in the public parks, in a public place or in the street pipes where there is neither safety nor security. It simply means that they are stuck in the physiological needs and their human development is affected.

2.9 SUMMARY

2.9.1 This chapter examined the literature dealing with the phenomenon of the street child.

2.9.2 The literature described numerous attempts at defining the street child phenomenon and found that many of the definitions are similar, having three main elements in common, as set out before.

- These children live or spend a significant amount of time on the street.
- The street has become their source of livelihood.
- Overall, they are inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.

2.9.3 All over the world, street children are exploited, victimised and are social reprobates whom society loves to hate. They are called many different names that are derogatory. For an example, in South Africa they are called "Skadukinders", which is an Afrikaans term meaning "children of the shadows". In Spanish, particularly in South America, they are called "Tombadinha", meaning "juvenile thief". Other names include 'Hopeless', 'Ruffians', 'Thieves', 'Parasites', 'Hooligans' and 'Bad influences'. Most people prefer to call them "Street children" because they have homes and parents somewhere in the community but they happen to find

themselves living and working in the streets due to different circumstances.

2.9.4 Different categories of street children were identified, and they are as follows:

- children with families working on the streets;
- children with weak family ties who live in the streets;
- abandoned children;
- runaway children; and
- young delinquents.

2.9.5 The following experiences facing street children were discussed:

- street children and HIV/Aids;
- street children and substance abuse;
- street children and personal care;
- street children and prostitution; and
- street children and human development according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

2.9.6 Nuclear and extended families were discussed as the two types of families. The functions of a family are reproduction, care and nurturance, socialisation, meeting economic needs, and intergenerational and kin support.

2.9.7 Family factors contributing to the street child phenomenon are the lack of father figure, divorce of parents, stepfather/stepmother; parentless children, abandoned children, alcoholic parents, over strict parents, abused children, prostitute mothers and hungry children.

CHAPTER 3

INTERVENTION WITH STREET CHILDREN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One, the introduction and a general orientation of the study were given. Chapter Two consists of a literature review and focuses on the family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets, focusing on both parents' and children's perspectives. This chapter examines the different types of programmes available to help the children working and living in the streets and includes programmes on the micro-level, Macro level and long-term programmes.

3.2 INTERVENTION WITH STREET CHILDREN

In an attempt to address the street child phenomenon, varieties of intervention strategies have been introduced. Stated below are some of the intervention strategies to be considered focusing on micro-level and macro-level intervention programmes.

3.2.1 Micro programmes

Schurink (1993:243-259) suggests the following programmes at micro level, contact and outreach, immediate care, intake and assessment , intervention sub-programmes which are further divided into child care services, education and training.

3.2.1.1 Contact and outreach programmes

Erlbaum (2005:96) mentions that a number of NGO's that offer services to street children in South Africa have an outreach programme where a street worker (referred to as a street educator in most overseas programmes) goes to those places frequented by street children and tries to become acquainted with

them. There is yet no specialised training in South Africa for personnel dealing exclusively with street children. People such as social workers, childcare workers and youth leaders receive general training that to some extent equips them to deal with the phenomenon of street children.

Eastman (2007:336) explains that socio-educative institutions such as schools, youth organisations and welfare service expect young people to come to them, whereas the opposite should be encouraged. Trained outreach workers should go out to those places where young people can be found and try to establish rapport or act as resources.

The contact and outreach programme should aim at reaching young people who are normally suspicious of adults, authority and agencies, and should try to understand their situations with the aim of offering them some long-term support, attention and care through a variety of programmes with appropriately trained or experienced staff (Sneddan, 2003:136).

3.2.1.2 Immediate care programme

The basic needs of street children are food, clothing and safer shelter, and this is where this kind of programme should start. It has been indicated that many children seem to need medical attention for septic wounds, cuts, flu, infections and serious illness such as epilepsy and heart defects.

Pandey (2005:137) advises that a programme needs to have sanitation, a bath and some medical facilities in offering immediate care. The children should also have someone to talk to if they have such a need and some form of recreation would help provide a relaxed atmosphere. Some of the children need, besides protection and shelter, psychological help to adjust to their “new life” after the trauma and brutalisation they have experienced at home and subsequently, on the streets.

Brennan (2006:117) mentions that a soup kitchen or a drop-in centre in various parts of a city would be ideal for this type of programme, where not only referred

children can come but also any child who wishes to come for a meal, a shower or just to play with peers. Existing community structures such as church halls and community centres can be used to run these facilities. The opportunity to utilise the services of such a programme should be given to all willing children, including those who still have daily contact with their families. While they are in this programme, the children should be protected from each other as well as from outsiders.

Goode (2005:346) believes that trained staff including outreach workers, social workers, health staff and childcare workers should manage the programme. When the staff members of the programme have decided that a child needs further attention, he/she should be referred to the intake programme, where further information on the child will be obtained so that the child can be referred to an appropriate and relevant programme.

3.2.1.3 Intake and assessment programme

Barnette (2004:9) suggests that, in order for decisions to be made by the children and adult people helping the children, some information is necessary. The people helping the children should try to observe their social and interpersonal functioning in order to know what to expect of the children's behaviour and how to deal with it.

Most of the present assessment techniques are aimed at children in need of care in general and not at street children as such. From interviews held with people involved in programmes/projects for street children, it would seem that street children often view this as an invasion of their privacy and generally do not tolerate assessment procedures followed in the assessment of children in need of care (Schurink, 1993:17).

The following are some of the issues to be considered when decisions about street children have to be made.

- Strengths and weaknesses in the child need to be identified.
- The child's perception of self and others must be taken into account.

- Assessment of the child's stability to a programme is most important.
- A child's IQ (intelligence level) and wish to go to school do not guarantee that he/she will survive in the school environment for long.
- It is important to assess the child's consistency, e.g. a child comes to the shelter/home regularly, sleeps in regularly and keeps track of his/her belongings. This kind of assessment will give some indication as to whether a child is suitable for a specific programme or not.
- Another assessment is how the child is going to adapt to the school environment (where applicable).

3.2.1.4 Intervention sub-programme

Rothman (1991:123) mentions that local and interceptive approaches used in other countries aim at assisting children to meet their needs in respect of their education, vocational preparation and income generation. The two approaches that seem to accommodate the needs of street children are an emphasis on the importance of allowing the children voluntary entrance to programmes and the prevention of family disintegration.

Schurink (1993:259) suggests the programmes discussed below as the ones that children could be referred to or choose from after intake and assessment. These programmes are childcare services, education and training:

- **Child care services**

In these kinds of services, the role of each individual taking care of the children should be that of a change agent and an enabler in respect of the child's individual needs. The following aspects must be borne in mind with regard to the childcare services.

- The services should be offered at a place with which the child can identify. It should be such a place in which consistent, stable and predictable relationships with the children can be developed, while helping them to realise their personal identity.

- Efforts should be made to interest the children in the activities of the programmes up to a point where they are able to make joint decisions with the staff.
- The child should be allowed to develop by allowing him to experience the consequences of choices made by him. It is essential to give the children the maximum opportunity to make choices about their plan of action. An increasing knowledge of children together with information could bring about necessary adjustments to the plan of action.

- **Formal and informal education**

According to Hecht (2003:129), both formal and informal kinds of education need to be considered in respect of street children due to the implications of their schooling patterns. Many street children attend local schools while residing in a shelter or children's home. Schaffer (2001:122) mentions that the fact that the ultimate aim of the residential resource is to get the child back into the community as soon as possible. Street children should attend school in the community to help facilitate the reconstructive process. The staff member's role will include liaising with school social workers in the community in order to take care of the identified problem areas in respect of the children residing at residential care facilities.

Webber (2000:288) notes that it has been observed that street children cannot concentrate on any one thing for a long period at a time. In order for them to cope in a formal school setting, some remedial techniques need to be applied. Non-formal education emphasises the learning of specific knowledge and skills and has benefits that include improved self-awareness and the ability to control the environment. It has substantial autonomy at programme and local levels and emphasises initiative, self-health and innovation. Unlike the curriculum of formal education based on theory and certain rules of acceptance, the non-formal curriculum is determined by the learning needs of individuals.

- **Training**

Rothman (1997:183) explains that some of the programmes in South Africa provide training according to the children's needs. An observation made by one

programme staff member at a children's home was that, while young children are more likely to settle into a programme, most of the older ones displayed the need to work. Finkelstein (2005:144) adds that apart from the need for vocational training, most street children come from families where there is little concern for the child and his needs. These problems may hinder the socialisation process through which a child learns about self, others, relationships and moral values. This suggests that street children may benefit not only from job skills training, but also from being helped in social skills as well.

3.3 MACRO PROGRAMMES

Presently, a variety of services are being offered to street children, but so far, there have been no known national attempts at preventing the problem. Prevention does not seem to have been achieved by the programmes that already offer services to street children. The basic step as far as prevention is concerned is to extend the street programmes to communities. The community can be developed through community awareness, community services and parental training and support.

3.3.1 Community awareness and participation

One way of addressing the street child phenomenon is contact with communities of origin and to work with them towards preventing relapses through workshops for parenting training and support. Schurink (1994:118) explains that all the key people should be made aware of their moral and social responsibility towards street children.

Awareness of the problem can be achieved through community workshops, dramatic life interpretations at school and in the community halls, press coverage as well as nationwide campaigns. The researcher is of the opinion that a greater awareness of the problems that affect these children may help to facilitate acceptance and help eliminate the fear, rejection and disdainful charity that they experience.

3.3.2 Community resources

The researcher is of the opinion that the majority of street children could remain in their own homes if effective and supportive services within the community were available. Le Roux (1998:194) mentions that there is a great need for the generation of community resources that include childcare and after- school care facilities, job recreation programmes, parent training and support programmes and social work services at schools.

Ennew (2004:44) concludes that the community should constantly be made aware of the services and facilities that should be utilised. School social workers offer help to the children's families by educating them about community resources. At schools, the social workers can also offer remedial education and counselling to children and parents.

3.3.3 Parental training and support

Parental training should be encouraged in order to decrease the incidence of conflict between parents and their children, and to prevent children from leaving their homes for the streets.

Kilbourne (2004:123) mentions that one way of making provision for this is to involve parents in the treatment plan. Apart from carrying out certain tasks and responsibilities, the parents could also be trained in child management skills. Schunik (1993:288) explains that, despite the fact that the traditional role of women as primary caregivers of babies and young children is changing in some Western countries, it remains a fact that, in most societies of the world, women are the child's primary care giver. For this reason, efforts need to be directed towards improving women's education, raising their level of literacy and their general awareness of the constructive role they play as caregivers of their children, including health and nutrition. Mothers are likely to influence the children's development more strongly and more directly than any other measures.

3.4 SHORT AND LONG-TERM INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Lewis (2003:106-114) proposes the following short - and long-term intervention strategies:

3.4.1 Levels of intervention for short-term programmes

The first priority for the front-line professional, namely the police officer, shelter or crisis centre worker, social worker, nurse, or physician who initially encounters a street child is to provide safety, and meet the child's physical needs for food, shelter, clothes and health care. Miller (2001:87) mentions that the child needs to know that the basis of this contact is only to provide immediate care and help. Appropriate consultants or agencies such as departments of youth services or mental health can then be brought in to begin to work with the child. Early involvement of the helping agencies is important in any form of effective assistance, and front-line personnel need to know which agencies to contact.

Lewis (2003:107) explains that, once the immediate physical needs of the child have been met, helping professionals can begin to assess the child's problems. One way of doing so is to use the following levels of intervention. These approaches are based on how long the child has been away from home.

Level 1 - This level is aimed at the new runaway who has been away from home for less than one month and who has a potential for being returned home. Careful assessment concerning the youth's safety in the home needs to be made, particularly if the youth is female and thus at high risk of being both physically and sexually abused. The researcher reiterates that it is necessary to take time to find out the reason for the child's running away, the child's choice of a stable environment and the viewpoint of the child's family. With the pre-teen runaway, undisclosed sexual abuse must be suspected.

Level 2 - The child who has run away several times and who has been away from home for between one month to a year is not only at high risk of having been physically abused at home, but also of having been abused while on the street. In addition to level one assessment, these types of runaways need to be evaluated for general physical and sexual health, drug and alcohol abuse, and predatory criminal behaviour while on the street (Lewis, 2003:107).

Level 3 - This level deals with the child's homelessness as well as with the problems that caused him or her to flee. Warren (2000:123) mentions that these types of children are generally older and lack satisfactory school and work experience. This group of runaways often contains the "tough kids", the youth who carry weapons and survive on the streets by criminal means. They may be under the influence of another person such as a pimp or drug boss, and thus require some special protection from these exploiters. The researcher adds that in addition to level two, assessment, these youth need to be stabilised in a safe environment, helped to use existing skills for work, treated to decrease their tensions and anxiety, detoxified for drug and alcohol abuse, and also assessed for potential aggression towards themselves as well as other people.

3.4.2 Long-term intervention programmes

It is important to conceptualise treatment programmes that fit in with the runaway's social setting. Three basic settings in which 50 runaways generally could remain for some time can be identified, namely the family, an institution, and a community based setting (Lewis: 2003:108).

3.4.2.1 The street child and the family

The target of intervention in the first setting is the runaway youth and his/her family system. The primary resources for therapeutic efforts and planning are the family itself, the neighbourhood and the school. The sources of programme guidance can be the local mental health clinic, a family service agency, a church sponsored programmes or a contemporary self-help programme.

Harwath (2001:204) mentions that the objectives of therapeutic programming are best derived from careful assessment and evaluation, made in conjunction with the family and the runaway child and of the issues that prompted the running away behaviour. Brannen (2002:133) explains that from research on the reasons for running away, the area of verbal and physiological abuse would require the skill of a clinician who is familiar with assessing dysfunctional communication pattern within a family context. Patterns of verbal and psychological abuse are subtle.

Reynolds (2004:114) believes that a skilled family clinician is needed to identify the structure of the family dynamics. This dynamic and structural approach to communication patterns has an immediate outcome of changing the negative experiences among people in the family to more positive and productive ones. Once achieved, family members can address more personal causative factors with sensitivity, compassion and understanding.

3.4.2.2 The street child in an institution

Lewis (2003:108) mentions that institutionalisation of street children occurs for three major reasons. Firstly, the youth cannot be returned to a functional family home, secondly, the youth's behaviour is so disorganised and disturbing that it is dangerous and non-functional to the youngster and thirdly, the youth's behaviour is so deviant that the youngster becomes dangerous to others.

For the street child who cannot be returned to a functional family and who is placed in a mental facility or in a juvenile detention facility, the immediate therapeutic objective is to assess the youth and move him or her to a safe community based residence. Unfortunately, the placement of youths in mental institutions or juvenile detention settings occurs because community-based courses have not been adequately developed.

Greenwood (2001:184) mentions that assessment and the reduction of major symptoms are the first objectives for the young person in a mental institution. Therapeutic efforts are aimed at utilising the crisis for a more constructive

alignment of psychological defences and resources. Next, the social context of the institution is used to assess as well as to strengthen positive social interaction. Aspects of education and work are to be supported to whatever reasonable degree. The researcher is of the opinion that in conjunction with ongoing therapeutic support, educational and work opportunities, a format for evaluating the relative strengths and gains of each youth is needed.

3.4.3 Strengthening of weak social integration bonds and internal commitment bonds of the youth (street child)

Hecht (2002:311-316) further proposes the intervention strategies described below.

3.4.3.1 Strengthening weak or attenuated social integration bonds

This type of intervention would focus on the patterned integration of the youth with the main social institution in which he or she is involved (primarily the family and the school). Goss (2005:117) mentions that the empirical evidence indicates that many youth are severely rejected, stigmatised and blocked from having rewarding roles. Therefore, the main point of intervention would be to tackle this rejection process and to open up more opportunities for the positive participation of the youth in these institutions (Hecht, 2002:314)

Cherlin (2005:19) highlights that institutional practices such as stereotyping, labelling and denial of access to rewarding social roles would have to be dealt with by some restructuring of the institutional process. Two general approaches are possible: firstly, modification of the internal process that denies youth positive role and secondly, the opening of new opportunities for rewarding social roles.

This researcher is of the opinion that within the family, the main objective would be to integrate the youth into the family. Objectives would be to provide success experiences as opposed to failure experiences and to emphasise integration rather than rejection. There could be an attempt to open up reasonable

disciplinary practices and rewarding roles for the children as well as providing higher levels of companionship with their parents.

3.4.3.2 Strengthening the internal commitment bonds of the youth

Hecht (2003:3114) explains that this strategy aims at modifying the attitudes, beliefs, normative values and other internal commitments of the youth. The soft versus hard intervention approach is highly recommended in this regard. Cigoli (2006:174) adds that individual counselling and psychotherapy aimed at the development of stronger internal commitment bonds are often referred to as soft services, while the provision of new roles, new modes of participation, institutional restructuring and advocacy are often known as hard services. This researcher is of the opinion that these latter intervention strategies primarily aim at strengthening external social integration bonds. A careful mix of these two approaches would be the most appropriate in the treatment of pre-runaway and runaway youth. If anything, a greater emphasis on external social integration bonds would be a more appropriate intervention strategy.

3.4.3.3 Care programmes and rehabilitation

The following are vital facets in rectifying the street child phenomenon.

3.4.3.3.1 Development of a care programme

Cherlin (2005:122) mentions that friendship needs to be expressed in a constructive way. People's actions should be geared towards encouraging and developing children. Hecht (2003:3115) explains that, whilst it is important to have fun and play, it is more important to channel the child into a programme that embodies all the ingredients related to care.

3.4.3.3.2 Rehabilitation of prejudices

Broude (2004:403) mentions that social and community workers need to work with children and it is possible that with them separated from their parents, initial

rehabilitation can be implemented. Mckenry (2004:112) states that it is also possible for this rehabilitation to be intensive and include the worth of an educationist and psychologist. Brubaker (2003:111) adds that an effective method of assessing this issue would be the involvement of the shelters as the home away from home for these children while they are being educated. This researcher is of the opinion that while the children are helped, the parents should have intensive counselling as well.

3.4.3.3.3 Drug rehabilitation

Smoking and glue sniffing are part of the street subculture. Guttman (2004:216) mentions that over the years while the children were on the streets, they became dependent on drugs. All concerned people must acknowledge that the children who become drug dependent will be a disruptive element in the community. Therefore, a drug rehabilitation programme must be developed in order to help these children.

3.5 STREET CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE AND SHELTER PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are a vast number of residential care and shelter programmes in South Africa catering for the needs of street children. The researcher met some of the representatives at a national child care summit in Pretoria in the 2007 and gathered some information about them. The following are some of the places:

3.5.1 Street Wise

Marhonyele (2007), the secretary at Streetwise, mentions that Streetwise was founded in 1986 in order to: help street children return to formal schooling; prepare those who are unable to return to formal schooling vocationally; provide basic child care in the form of shelter; food and clothing; and to co-ordinate welfare, psychological, medical and legal services.

Their personnel include professional and non-professional people, paid staff and volunteers as well as students. Their street outreach programme has two objectives: firstly, providing street children with clothes, blankets, food and medical attention as well as protecting them from abuse, and secondly, making the children aware of their education programme. The shelters are open throughout the year and the staff offer a substitute home environment for the children and offers them information and guidance.

Their assessment of the children includes their family background and their reason for leaving home, the effects of street life on the children, their possible placement in alternate care or their re-integration with their families, and the placing of the children into an appropriate level of education. It includes remedial education, formal education, life and job skills and work ethics. Other activities include assisting other organisations to provide services to street children, negotiations with the police, provision of health check-ups, and social and psychological support.

It is important to note that shelter, food, clothing and care are provided only for boys who make a commitment to go to school. Care is also taken not to make children on the street too comfortable (by taking care of all their needs while on the street), in order to attract them to the services offered by the programme.

3.5.2 Molo Songololo

Sekhuthu (2007), care worker at Molo Songololo, explains that Molo Songololo is located in Cape Town and is a community project that aims to improve the quality of life of street children and help them become productive citizens, mainly through a preventive approach. It initiated a project for street children with the aim of building awareness of the street child phenomenon; setting up an outreach programme on the streets; and looking at the possibility of setting up a non-formal residential centre.

Since its inception in 1990, research on street children, street work, legal and community involvement as well as community awareness and prevention of the

street child phenomenon have taken place. The purpose of the research is to highlight, among other things, the children's communities of origin, their ages, educational standard and their contact with their families. A soup kitchen also forms part of the programme and legal assistance is sought for children charged with petty crimes. In such cases, contact is made with their families, and parents are encouraged to visit their children in prison. Apart from this, community-based organizations from which the children come are contacted to involve them and to facilitate a comprehensive awareness of the street child phenomenon.

3.5.3 The Homestead

Magagule (2007), outreach worker at The Homestead, mentions that the Homestead was opened in 1982 in Cape Town to provide a centre for street children. It is a branch of the Cape Child Welfare Society and is affiliated to the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). It serves as a shelter for street children before they are transferred to the second phase of the programme at Patrick House, foster care places of safety, or schools of industry.

The staff at Homestead consists of a principal, a social worker, two housemothers and an outreach worker. The Homestead accepts children brought in by concerned people as well as those children who present themselves, who are referred by the courts or brought in by the police. Children are allowed to visit their parents when they so wish while at the Homestead. Some children alternate between living on the street and at the centre for some time.

No formal programme is followed, but an assessment of the children is made using the Problem Profile Approach. As soon as a child is "settled", he or she is referred to other centres or homes for further treatment. When residing in the centre, children are provided with meals, clothing and basic childcare facilities. The children can choose between going to school at Learn-to-Live or a formal

school in town, or they can use their free time as they please after doing their chores at the centre.

These include making the beds, cleaning the premises and washing the dishes and their clothes. All the children are expected to be back at the centre by a stipulated time every day. The services provided by the social worker together with childcare workers focus, among others, on:

- building a relationship between the child care staff (together with the social worker and the child;
- assessing the child's specific problems and needs;
- stabilizing the child by using a number of treatment models (e.g. behavioural modification and contract setting);
- processing detention orders and attending to court enquiries; and
- tracing the children's families; and referring children to appropriate agency social worker.

The shelter only admits boys between the ages of 6 and 16 years, and at the time of admission, no child should be under the influence of solvents or drugs, unless there is a danger of physical harm. The prospective resident should not be accompanied by parents and should preferably come of his own accord rather than being referred by a social worker. Some of the Homestead children, especially runaways who were on the streets for a short time, have been successfully reconciled with their families. This pinpoints the importance of preventative care, namely reconciling children and their families before the children become 'street-wise'.

3.5.4 Patrick's House

Magagule (2007), outreach worker at Patrick's house, continues to mention that in 1986, the Homestead expanded to incorporate a second phase: Patrick's House. This was registered as a children's home in 1987 and cares for boys considered to be 'settled' or 'stabilised' (after their life on the street) through social work intervention. The social worker services address four main areas,

namely direct services to the children, liaison with the principal, liaison with the governing body, and liaison with the community.

The activities of the house include:

- obtaining and evaluating the information on the child prior to admission;
- guiding the integration of new children through the child care workers;
- providing casework and group work services to the children (using a multi-disciplinary approach);
- co-coordinating services with professional services outside the house (e.g. Drug Counselling Centre);
- liaising with state departments in respect of services to be rendered to the children's families; and
- creating and using opportunities to involve children who are staying in the house in community activities, with a view to enhancing their spiritual and mental development and future adjustment.

While at Patrick's Houseboys either attend school at Learn-to-Live or go to other schools in the community. To be admitted, children from the Homestead must be boys who attend school regularly, are reasonably stable in their behaviour, and are not prone to wandering around the streets and who have ceased solvent abuse.

3.5.5 Learn-to-Live

Magagula (2007), once worked at Learn-to-Live centre as out reach worker, explains that Learn-to-Live was established in 1987 in Cape Town, it provides remedial education to street children and supplements the work of established residential care centres. This project, a joint effort of the Salesian Institute and the Homestead shelter for street children, is a non-formal education programme designed to prepare former street children for a better lifestyle.

The programme, run by the Salesians (a Catholic order), remedies their lack of schooling, offers them a chance of rehabilitation into local communities and

enables them to earn an honest living. Learn-to-Live is effectively providing non-formal education to street children from several shelters as well as to those who still living on the streets. It caters for 10 to 20 year old children.

The programme has adopted the street-Wise education programme and classes begin at 09:00 and end at 13:00; the Western Cape school terms are observed. It also provides meals as well as remedial tuition in order to achieve literacy and numeracy. Once a certain level of literacy has been reached, the pupils join a small study group in order to broaden their knowledge and acquire skills necessary for a more fulfilling way of life. After a year or two, those on the remedial programme are assessed for formal schooling.

3.5.6 Highway Home

Zimuse (2007), care worker at Highway, explains that Highway Home, also in Cape Town, served as a soup kitchen for four years before becoming a registered children's home in 1989. It aims at providing a temporary home for boys while preparing them for the return to their families. A social worker manages the home with the help of two housemothers, one housefather and a community social worker.

No children are admitted directly from the street and most of those admitted are referred from the Homestead. Before a child may be admitted, the length of his schooling is taken into consideration. The home caters only for children aged between four and eighteen years. All the children attend school on weekdays. Apart from school, there is no formal programme, but the children are expected to make their beds and do household hold chores such as cleaning the house on a rotational basis.

After school they can choose to attend after-school classes (English, Maths, Afrikaans, Art), or any subjects run by volunteers or to engage in recreational activities like swimming and soccer. After supper, the children have Bible study, watch television, play the guitar or read books. Over weekends they often visit their families, are taken to the beach, the park, and the ice-rink or soccer field.

They receive free medical attention, swimming lessons and sponsorship to attend a pre-school at Sea-Point. When the children are at school, the social worker attends to their court inquiries, takes them to hospital when necessary and visits their families to promote reconciliation between parents and children in preparation for their return home.

3.5.7 Ons Plek

Viljoen (2007), assistant director at Ons Plek, mentions that Ons Plek is a registered children's home that opened in Cape Town in 1988 in response to a need for services to female street children. Their aim is to help female street children to get used to home life again, to get a feeling of belonging and to accept responsibility. Their main objectives are to get the children off the street, to help them in any appropriate direction that they choose (depending on ability and personality) and empower them socially and economically. Ons Plek has one social worker and two housemothers who have been trained as child care workers.

The girls are involved in activities aimed at training them to be responsible and independent. This is done, for example, by allowing the girls to sell second-hand clothes and to decide whether the money is to be spent on the home, on school or holiday. The girls themselves run the home by performing household duties such as cleaning the house and planning the menu, as well as setting the rules. Girls with babies are allowed to keep them and staff members teach them how to look after their little ones (e.g. bathing, feeding and handling).

The housemothers supervise, arbitrate and ensure that the rules are observed. Those who can continue with formal education which has been disrupted by street life, are prepared for their return to formal school by activities that improve concentration such as art, dancing and sewing. The social worker concentrates on conflict resolution between the child and her family; getting rid of unrealistic expectations on the part of the child and creating an environment that is not too different from home. In preparation for a girl's return home.

3.5.8 Pietermaritzburg street children project

Mohlala 2007) a senior care worker at Pietermaritzburg street children project mentions that a committee consisting of a social worker, teachers, a lawyer and other interested persons developed this project in 1987. It was formed out of concern for the number of children begging and sleeping on the street. A housemother and a teacher who cares for the boys, and trains them formally and informally with the help of a number of volunteers run the shelter.

The boys conduct their morning routine and thereafter go to the schoolroom for two to three hours everyday. They themselves have drawn up a set of rules about behaviour, (such as not sniffing glue) to which they try to adhere. They play games, watch television or go out in the afternoons and are expected to be back by 20h00. They are taught hymns and the word of God by the Youth for Christ team who also take them on outings. The programme enables the boys to learn social rules and to trust others both youngsters and adults. The project cannot afford the services of social workers to provide intensive ongoing care and volunteers come to assist in various aspects. The team running the project perceives it as a long-term venture needing much dedication and sacrifices from the staff.

3.5.9 Twilight

Smith (2007), the manager of Twilight, stated that Twilight started as a voluntary organisation to provide for the needs of street children in Hillbrow (Johannesburg). It operated independently until 1990 when Johannesburg Child Welfare took over its management. Its main objectives are to develop the children's educational capabilities, connect them with the community, provide vocational training and re-integrate them into the community by providing long-term care if possible. A manager, six childcare workers and a number of volunteers run the programme, which is divided into two phases.

The first phase orients the child to the programme and once the child is stabilised, he is promoted to the second phase that has more privileges such as pocket money, going to the cinema and so forth. Such privileges can be maintained or withdrawn, depending on the child's behaviour. The activities include an outreach programme, a soup kitchen, a bridging programme, remedial education provided by streetwise, health services, social work services, spiritual inspiration, recreation, case conferences, behaviour modification, vocational training and a holiday programme.

3.5.10 Lakehaven

Joubert (2007), the director of Lakehaven, mentions that Lakehaven is a registered children's home in Durban. In 1998, its management established a street child programme as a special project to provide care and shelter for children after the Khayaletu Shelter was burned down and closed. Its main objectives are to keep children off the street, to equip them with necessary life skills and to reunite them with their families. Admission is voluntary, and the children come and go as they wish; they recruit each other by word of mouth. The staff members are a project manager, a social worker, two childcare workers and two educational co-coordinators. In providing services to the children, the programme has the following activities:

- an enrichment programme for life skills;
- a formal school programme using schools in kwa-Mashu and Umlazi;
- a social work programme for individual counselling and recruiting children with their families;
- a drug programme which is run by social workers from SANCA;
- a recreation programme; and
- a behaviour modification programme with incentives for acceptable behaviour such as television, videos and outside visits.

3.5.11 Jabulani child and youth care centre

Matsimela (2007), the director of Jabulani, mentions that the centre is situated in Soshanguve, near Pretoria; Jabulani was opened in 1987 and caters for children in need of care in terms of the Child Care Act of 1983 and the Procedure Act of 1977. Children from birth to 18 years are taken in. For street children, Jabulani serves as a transit before taken to a school of industry, a children's home or foster care, or before they return home. Their programme is designed for all children, including street children.

A multi-disciplinary team that decides on a treatment programme for each child two weeks after admission does the assessment of the children. Treatment includes basic childcare, social work services, nursing services and formal education. Social workers train street children in social skills, attend to their adjustment to the place of safety, link up with outside social workers in respect of pending court cases and progress reports, provide social workers engaged in the reconstruction of the children's families with feedback when the children leave Jabulani, and promote acceptance and adjustment on release.

Nurses examine the children on admission, take care of their routine check-ups and attendance, and those who choose to go to school are immediately admitted. There is a school readiness programme for those who had been out of school prior to their arrival at Jabulani. All the children are expected to remain on the premises.

3.5.12 Ethokomala School of Industry

Mabuse (2007), the care worker at Ethokomala, explains that Ethokomala is situated in Kinross in Mpumalanga, Ethokomala was established in 1989 in terms of the Child Care Act No. 74 of 1983, and caters for boys aged between 11 and 19 years. Children are referred there by a detention order from the children's court that stipulates that they remain for two years. Ethokomala has a principal, three remedial teachers, ten academic and technical teachers, one

educational psychologist, six house-parents, five supervisors and a professional nurse.

Education is provided through an academic as well as a technical curriculum. The subjects taught only aim at providing social proficiency to pupils and are thus not taught on Higher Grade. School readiness and social skills training are some of the sub-programmes. The prefect and group systems are used to promote social skills. Some of the subjects are based on a market-related proficiency that includes metal, wood, painting and motor training and other related courses.

Physical training is part of the school programme and is conducted during school hours. Soccer games are organised between the school and local teams. Gumboot dances and concerts are held from time to time as a form of recreation. On Saturdays, pupils are allowed to go to town and in the evening television and videos occupy the pupils' time.

The children do not have a choice in respect of what they would like to do. Only circumstances and readiness determine which training is appropriate. Permission is needed before a child can leave the premises. The absence of a social worker makes it difficult for the school to have contact with children's families; this is the responsibility of the social workers in the children's respective home areas.

3.5.12 Bayhead Place Society

Mabena (2007), care worker at Bayhead, mentions that Bayhead was established because of a government effort to alleviate and combat child neglect in KZN. It provides temporary shelter and care for children who have no parents or guardians, children whose parents or guardians are unable or unfit to have custody, children held before and during a court inquiry, and children held for offences before being sentenced. It can accommodate 375 male and female children aged between 12 and 18 years. Street children are brought to Bayhead by the police or by social workers from the Child Welfare Society.

On arrival, they undergo a medical examination before being allocated rooms according to their ages. A bed, locker, bedding, toiletries and extra clothing are given to each child. A day after admission, each child goes to a social worker for orientation and assessment. The social worker then draws up a programme for individual treatment. Other services offered by social workers in preparing the children to return to their own homes or communities or to be transferred to other institutions, include individual and group therapy, according to the needs and age groups of the children.

The therapy involves family reconstruction, the development of learning skills, behaviour modification and responsibility training, teaching the girls how to sew, knit and cook and engaging the children in recreational activities such as football, volleyball, lawn/table tennis, boxing and concerts.

3.6 SUMMARY

3.6.1 Two main issues were discussed in this chapter, and these were: intervention with street children and street children's residential care and shelter programmes in South Africa.

3.6.2 Types of programmes used in helping street children include macro and micro programmes. Micro programmes are short-term intervention programmes while macro programmes are long-term intervention programmes.

3.6.3 The following residential care and shelter programmes catering for the needs of street children were discussed:

- Streetwise;
- Molo Songololo;
- The homestead;
- Patrick's house;
- Learn to live;
- Highway home;
- Ons plek;

- Pietermaritzburg street children project;
- Twilight;
- Lakehaven;
- Jabulani child and youth care centre;
- Ethokomala school of industry; and
- Bayhead place of safety.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an exposition of the research methodological procedures and techniques used in the research study. Procedures used in the gathering of the respondents' information and the techniques used for the analysis of the pertaining data are described.

4.2 PILOT STUDY

Strydom and Delport (2002:337) assert that it is important to conduct a pilot study whether in qualitative or quantitative studies. In qualitative research, the pilot study is usually informal and a few participants possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation can be involved in the study, merely to ascertain certain trends. The purpose is to determine whether the relevant data can be obtained from the actual participants.

4.2.1 Testing data collection instrument

Moser and Kalton (1997: 321) mention that researchers should build into their proposals a pilot venture in which they try out their interviewing design with a small number of participants. Researchers will hereby come to grips with some of the practical aspects of establishing access, making contact and conducting the interview, and they will become alert to their own level of interviewing skill. Strydom (2002:211) adds that since the purpose of the pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation, space must be given on the questionnaire, during the interviewing, or with whatever data collection method is used, for criticism or comments by the participants. The researcher must then carefully consider these comments during the main investigation. As a way of piloting the study and trying out the interviewing design, the researcher recruited two children, one boy and one girl, and one adult person and asked

them the set of predetermined questions that would be asked in an in-depth interview schedule. The two children and an adult were not part of the eventual main study. It was after this exercise that the researcher determined that the relevant data could be obtained from the main participants since the questions seemed to have been clearly understood by all the piloted respondents. There was no need to change the questions after the pilot study.

4.2.2 Feasibility of the study

Feasibility has to do with whether the study can be undertaken considering different factors such as those mentioned above. Monette *et al.* (1999:92) point out that the feasibility of a research study centres on practical consideration of what can be accomplished within a specific time and within limited resources. Considering the above-mentioned, the researcher strongly believed that the study would be feasible because the study would be conducted at the Leratong and Itumeleng shelters, situated in Mamelodi, around the Pretoria area. The participants would be easily accessible since they were already making use of services offered by the shelter.

The researcher would also have enough time to see the participants, review literature and compile the mini-dissertation. This study would not require a great deal of money. The process for obtaining permission to involve the children in their shelters as participants of the study from the management of the Leratong shelter was set in motion and a relationship was established. The children would refer the researcher to their parents/ family members wherein permission to involve children in the study as participants would be gained from them. The study would take twelve months for the researcher to complete.

4.3 RESEARCH POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

4.3.1 Research population and sample

The concepts of universe and population refer to the individuals or groups that will be included in the study (Struwig & Stead, 2001:110). The universe in this

study was all the children living in the street around the Gauteng Province. The population were the children living in the streets of Pretoria. Ten children in the Leratong and the Itumeleng shelters were purposively selected as sample and referred the researcher to their families/guardians, who were also part of the sample.

Although it would be ideal to study the whole population, as it would give more weight to the findings and representation, it is sometimes practically difficult to study the entire population. The sample in this study consisted of a minimum of ten children (five boys and five girls) and their family members/ guardians (one family member/guardian per child) or until saturation was reached.

4.3.2 Sampling method

A non-probability sampling method and a purposive technique was used in the selection of participants in this study. Strydom and Venter (2002:207) state that the purposive technique is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representatives or typical attributes of the population. The judgment of the individual researcher is obviously a prominent factor in this type of sample.

Strydom (2002:319) states that purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that involves the selection of participants for study based on already identified criteria for selection and, as such, the participants in the study would have to meet the criteria set out below to qualify as participants.

- They should be boys and girls of between ten (ten) and eighteen years of age.
- They should have been benefiting from the Leratong and Itumeleng shelter services for at least six months and more.
- They should have a family consisting of both parents, either single parent or at least a guardian who would also be included as a respondent in the study.
- Their families should be around Pretoria for accessibility.

- They should not be in constant contact with their families (they should have spent at least three months on the street without visiting their families/ guardians).
- Mr. Sejake, the social worker at the Shelter would get permission from both children and parents for participation in the research.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher regarded the phenomenological strategy as being more suitable for this study and aimed to explore and understand the factors contributing to children living and working in the streets, thus understanding and interpreting the meaning that children living and working on the streets, together with their families, give to their everyday lives.

Fouchè (2002:273), who states that the phenomenological strategy aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives, supports the researcher's choice of a research strategy. She mentions that in order to accomplish this, researchers should be able to enter the subjects' "life world" or "life setting" and place themselves in the shoes of the subjects. This is mainly done by means of naturalistic methods of study, analysing the conversations and interaction that researchers have with subjects. This is exactly what the researcher intended to do in this study.

4.4.1 The participants

Ten children (boys and girls) and their family members, one member per family per child and specifically parents or guardians, formed the sample. The children introduced their parents/guardians to the researcher. The children were sampled from a population of all the children benefiting from the services of the Leratong shelter that is situated in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Their families or guardians were interviewed in order to gather data. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews to gather data until saturation was reached.

The particular phenomenon that children in this study had experienced is that they had left their homes to live and work in the streets due to factors that influenced them to do so.

4.4.2 Data gathering method

In-depth one-to-one interviewing was used as the method of collecting information. Greef (2002:292) confirms that interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Struwig and Stead (2001:98) explain this as a method wherein predetermined questions are posed to each participant in a systematic and consistent manner. Greef (2002:292) defines qualitative interviews as attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations.

This method gave the researcher and participants much more flexibility. The researcher had a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the schedule guided the interview rather than dictating it.

The in-depth one-to-one interview helped the participants to share more closely in the direction the interview took. The in-depth interview empowered participants to introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of, and in this kind of a relationship, the participants were perceived as the experts on the subject and were therefore allowed maximum opportunity to tell their stories.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

De Vos (2002a:339) defines data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. On the other hand, Struwig and Stead (2001:169) see qualitative data analysis as a process that enables a researcher to organise and bring meaning to large amounts of data. Data analysis is therefore the only way to help the researcher make some sense out of all the raw data collected.

In this study, the researcher used Creswell's model of qualitative data analysis as tabulated in De Vos (2002b: 360), which is described below.

4.5.1 Data collection and recording: the twofold approach

This phase involved a twofold approach: The first aspect involved data analysis at the research site during data collection, while the second aspect involved data analysis away from the site, following a period of data collection.

In this phase, the researcher used an in-depth one-to-one interview to collect data. The participants' consent was requested to record the interviews on an audio tape during the interviewing process. The researcher took notes during the data collection process. Immediately after the data collection process, he found a quiet place where he listened to the recorded interviews, checked the jotted notes and coded them accordingly.

4.5.2 Managing data

This phase came after all the participants had been interviewed and all necessary data was gathered. The researcher then organised and converted all the gathered data into file folders, index cards or computer files in terms of the responses received in different questions in the semi-structured one-to-one interview.

4.5.3 Reading and writing memos

Creswell (1996:48) defines this phase as "analysis by getting a feeling for the whole database", during which the researcher reads the transcripts in their entirety several times, trying to gain a sense of the interviews as a whole before breaking the data into different parts. In this phase, the researcher read the gathered data until he had a better understanding of it. This is the stage in which he performed the minor editing necessary to make the field notes retrievable and generally cleaned up what seemed overwhelming and unmanageable.

4.5.4 Describing, classifying and interpreting data

Creswell (1998:144) states that classifying means taking the text or qualitative information apart and looking for categories, themes or dimensions of information. He further mentions that interpretation involves making sense of the data or the lessons learned. This is where the researcher stepped back and formed a broader opinion of what happened. He searched for identity from the presented data and described them, and then demonstrated how and why the explanation offered was the most plausible of all.

4.5.5 Representing and visualising

This is the final stage of the data analysis process and is where the data will be presented in themes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes will also compare boys and girls' responses (children who live and work in the streets) in terms of their different family backgrounds.

4.6 SUMMARY

- 4.6.1 Aspects discussed in this chapter were the pilot study, research population, sample and sampling method, research design and data analysis.
- 4.6.2 The researcher did a pilot study with two children and one parent. They were not included in the final sample for the research. In qualitative research, the pilot study was for information and involved a few participants possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation, merely to ascertain certain trends. The purpose was to determine whether the relevant data could be obtained from the actual participants or not.
- 4.6.3 Ten children sheltered at the Leratong and the Itumeleng shelters, and ten parents/guardians, one for each child, were purposively selected as a sample of the research study. Non-probability sampling and purposive sampling were used in the selection of participants in the study.

- 4.6.4 A phenomenological strategy was used since the study was aimed at understanding and interpreting the meaning that children living and working on the streets, together with their families, give in their everyday lives.
- 4.6.5 An in-depth one to one interviewing schedule was used to collect information from the respondents.
- 4.6.6 Creswell's model of qualitative data analysis as tabulated in De Vos (2002b:360) was utilised to analyse the data:
- data collection and recording: the two fold approach;
 - managing data;
 - reading and writing memos;
 - describing, classifying and interpreting data; and
 - representing and visualising data.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 gave an introduction and general orientation of the study. Chapter Two consists of a literature review and focuses on family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets to compare both parents' and children's perspectives. Chapter Three gives an overview of available intervention programmes and settings for street children while Chapter 4 provides information on the research methodology for the research study.

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative research will be discussed based on the in-depth interviews with both parents and children.

5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR BOTH CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

5.2.1 Introduction to the empirical study

The researcher signed an agreement with the participants, ensuring them that the personal information that they gave during the study would be handled confidentially and anonymous. Struwing and Stead (2001:132) state that the researcher is expected to respect the confidentiality/anonymity of the participants and others involved in his/her research project. On the same note, Strydom (2007: 61) adds that if the names of the participants are required, the researcher must ensure that such information will not be made available to other parties without the participants' consent. The information should also not be included in dissertations, articles or reports.

It is necessary to mention that the ten child participants (five girls and five boys) used to live in the streets. During the time of research study, they were living in shelters. The five boys were living in the Itumeleng shelter for Boys, situated in

Sunnyside, Pretoria. The five girls were living at the Lerato House for girls, also situated in Pretoria. They had been removed from the streets and placed in the shelters where they were being cared for by a team of social workers, child and youth care workers, administrators and others.

Each of the ten children had a family. They ran away from their families due to different reasons, some of which were given as responses. Social workers from the shelters were trying to render reconstructive services between children and their families with the aim to reunite the children with their families.

The researcher received permission to involve the children in the study by Streetwise management. The management of the two shelters introduced the researcher to the children. The researcher requested the children to take part in the study as participants and they agreed. They also signed consent forms.

The social workers at both Lerato House and the Itumeleng shelter assisted the researcher to locate the children's families. One family was in Soweto, while the rest were around Pretoria (Soshanguve, Mabopane, Atteridgeville, Winterveld, Mamelodi, Nelmapius and other areas). The researcher accompanied the social workers and care workers during their home visits. They introduced the researcher to the children's parents. The researcher requested them to take part in the research study as participants, and they agreed. They also signed the consent forms. During research interviews, the researcher went to each family alone together with his interpreter since he already knew their whereabouts and made appointments with each of them.

The following questions were put to both children and their parents in order to gather some biographical information:

- How old are you?
- How far did you go with your schooling?
- With whom were you staying at home before you lived on the streets?
- How are you related to the child in question (parents/guardians)?

5.2.2 Ages of children

Table 1: Ages of children

AGE	BOYS	GIRLS
14 years old	4	1
15 years old	0	3
16 years old	1	1
TOTAL	N=5	N=5

The children interviewed were between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years. Hudson (2004:194) confirms these findings in that, in general, the age range of children on the streets is between seven and sixteen years. Ballape (2003:104) mentions that the age factor when dealing with street children is important since often, the temptation is to regard them as being one big group, forgetting the various dynamics of big and small children together, peer group and many more. Bearing in mind as Greef (2002:396) rightly asks, "can the approach to rehabilitate street children be the same for these different categories of children? Can they be looked upon as one group? Are their interests the same? And to what extent are their expectations and needs at the same level?" Mouton (2004:79) advises that service providers need to be careful about assessing the ages of street children because often the lack of proper nutrition tends to make the children look younger than they actually are. The best way to determine the age of street children is therefore by listening to the children themselves.

5.2.3 Educational level of children

Table 2: Level of education

School grade	Boys	Girls
Grade 3	1	0
Grade 5	1	1
Grade 7	1	2
Grade 8	1	2
Grade 9	1	0
TOTAL	N=5	N=5

The children interviewed left school between Grade Three and Grade Nine. Lauer (2003:217) confirms the results by stating that the majority of street children drop out of school before they leave their homes in preference for life on the streets. Ennew (2003:324) adds that most of the street children are about three or four grades behind in their school standards.

5.2.4 Living arrangements before living on the street

Table 3: Living arrangements before living on the street – male participants

Boys	Lived with
Boy A	Stepmother
Boy B	Mother and father
Boy C	Father
Boy D	Mother
Boy E	Aunt
TOTAL	N=5

Table 4: Living arrangements before living on the street – female participants

Girls	Lived with
Girl 1	Mother and father
Girl 2	Mother
Girl 3	Mother
Girl 4	Aunt
Girl 5	Mother and father
TOTAL	N=5

The results indicate that all the children interviewed had families somewhere and that they came from different kinds of families such as stepparent families, biological families, single parent families or families where they lived with guardians such as aunts and other relatives.

Mashologu-Kuse (2007:61) and Ennew (2003:168) confirm that many children on the streets come from female-headed families. It is, however, also true that many street children do not come from single parent families and that many single mothers do not lose their children to the streets. Many poor families stay together in spite of their circumstances. It can thus not be generalised that children from single-parent families will eventually end up living on the streets.

Table 5: Period of living on the streets – male participants

Boys	Period living on the streets
Boy A	5 months
Boy B	6 months
Boy C	6 months
Boy D	2-3 years
Boy E	7 months
TOTAL	N=5

Table 6: Period of living on the streets – female participants

Girls	Period living on the streets
Girl 1	2 years
Girl 2	2 months
Girl 3	7 years
Girl 4	3 months
Girl 5	5 months
TOTAL	N=5

In the study, time on the street ranged from two months to seven years, but most children had been on the streets for less than seven months. Waghid (2004:218) mentions that the longer children remain on the street, the harder it is to integrate them into mainstream society.

5.3 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.3.1 Qualitative data: comparison of parents' and children's perspectives on factors causing children to live in the streets

The researcher gathered the qualitative data using an in-depth one to one interviewing schedule. The participants were ten children and ten parents/guardians. Different themes and sub-themes were identified from their responses.

The researcher will present the questions used during the study and the responses of the parents/guardians and children and they will be taken directly from the transcripts. Interpretation derived from the data was by means of the word-by-word analysis as explained by De Vos (2002:341) that it is empirical information and research findings given as found in the transcribed responses. Similar responses/data from the children and their parents/guardians in terms of themes and sub-themes will be classified together and a single theme or/and sub-theme will then be given.

5.3.1.1 Question to parents/guardians and children

- **Question for children: What are the reasons that caused you to live in the streets? Please explain in detail, focusing on your family systems.**
- **Question for parents/guardians of boy child A: What do you think are the reasons that caused the child in question to live on the street? Please, explain in details focusing on your family systems.**
- **POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

BOY CHILD A:

"I saw that my parents were unemployed. Even though they used to do some odd jobs, the money was not enough to support all of us at home. I then decided to go to the street to ask for money and come back home, but I got

hooked on the street life and stayed on the street for ever and never went back home”

PARENT A:

”It is difficult to explain. I do not even know where to start. My shoulders are painful. At home, there is no food, there is nothing. As you see me, I am failing. I have nothing. My husband and I are unemployed. Our children are unable to go to school due to lack of school fees.”

Main theme: The main theme from parent A and child A’s responses is that unemployment leads to poverty and lack of means and the inability to provide for family members. It is clear from the responses that poverty caused the child in question to go and live in the streets.

It is also clear from both the child’s and the parent’s responses that had the family background been different, the child would have stayed at home. The reason for going to the street was to ask for some money in order to help his unemployed parents but he ended up living on the streets and never went back home. The comment of parent A shows an ignorance from the parents’ side and possible malpractice by the schools because children should not be refused to enter a school if the parents are unable to pay school fees. A government programme called ‘Bana pele’ aims to overcome this problem.

These sentiments are shared by Mouton (2001:123), Bezuidenhout (2004b:10) and Mashologu-Kuse (2007:63) in that the reasons why children take to the streets are complex and manifold. Broadly speaking, a distinction can be drawn between push and pull factors. Poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, child abuse, family violence, family disintegration, alcohol abuse by parents, failure at school and the collapse of alternative care facilities are examples of push factors. Examples such as the desire to earn some money to contribute to family income as in this case, and the desire to roam the streets could be seen as pull factors. According to Plummer *et al.* (2007:1530-1531) a number of factors attract or “pull” many of the street children. Some children report that they decided to work on the streets in part because they wanted to have pocket

money to spend during their free time; they had a friend in the street; there were nice things in the street; and/or they were bored at home. In their research, many street children — particularly boys — also reported being pleased and proud to work, because it enabled them to support themselves and their families. For some, this positive draw of street life seemed to contribute to their self-esteem, as well as their pleasure in their free time.

Plummer *et al.* (2007:1521) emphasise that many factors in sub-Saharan Africa are believed to contribute to children working and living on the streets, including the state of the economy, poverty, the lack of educational opportunities, rural to urban migration, social changes (mainly linked to weakening family structures and family abuse), displacement, civil unrest or political violence, and HIV/AIDS.

Sub-theme: Unemployment leads to poverty and has detrimental effects on the family systems (Benokraitis, 2008:393). Once parents fail to fend for their families, children may be faced with the challenge of leaving the family to live on the street in order to make some money to support their poverty-stricken families.

- **Child abuse and mischievousness by children**

BOY CHILD B:

“My mother used to beat me up and everyday I don’t get food.”

PARENT B:

“The reason that I can give you is that the first thing is that I am unemployed and that I am a single parent. This child does not want to listen to me. I always try to guide him but he loves his friends more than me. When I tell him to work here at home, he thinks that I abuse him, e! e!”

Main theme: The child and his parent blame each other for being the cause of the problem, which made the child to live on the street. The child sees physical abuse and lack of food provision by the mother as being the main cause of his living on the street, while at the same time, the child’s mother sees her

unemployment, the child's inability to listen to her and the child's inability to assist with the household chores as being the main causes (mischievousness). Plummer *et al.* (2007:1530) found that family dysfunction was very widely reported by street children. Many street boys and girls reported leaving home because of family disagreements, physical abuse or exploitation, and being thrown out of their home. They also found that children came to the streets due to economic need, the death or absence of a father, maltreatment by a stepparent, and/or insufficient family discipline, supervision and attachment.

Sub-theme: Lack of effective communication between parents and children leads to misunderstanding, differences and quarrels in the family system and some family members, particularly the children, are hurt in the process (Bezuidenhout, 2004:5).

- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The responses from children C, 2, 3 and 5 and their parents/guardians were grouped together because of the fact that they share a common theme, namely alcohol abuse. They are as follows.

BOY CHILD C:

"My father used to drink too much beer and did not take care of me. When he was paid, he could not buy me some food and clothes. He always went to drink beer. I then decided to go to the street in order to ask for money and buy some food and clothes for myself."

PARENT C:

"This child says that I abuse him when I tell him that he should help with some household chores. He does not want to do what I tell him to do here at home. I think that that is the reason that caused him to go and live on the street."

GIRL CHILD 2:

"My father used to drink beer and when he came home drunk, he used to beat up my mother. I was afraid and ended up running away."

PARENT 2:

"I am not sure as to what could be the real cause because the child did not tell me anything. Maybe the reason is that her father drinks beer and when drunk, he beats me up in front of her. Maybe that is the thing that made her angry but she did not tell me anything."

GIRL CHILD 3:

"My mother used to drink beer and sometimes she used to pay people by giving me to them to have sex with them. I got tired and decided to run away."

PARENT 3:

"Inability to listen. This child is disrespectful. She takes nothing from what I tell her. She listens more to neighbours and her friends than to me. She does not want to do anything in the house and I am unemployed."

GIRL CHILD 5:

"At home, my aunt used to drink beer and left me with her young children to look after. She did not want me to go to school. When I went to school, she would come to school and tell lies about me to my teachers. I then decided to run away from home and live in the streets rather than living with such an abusive aunt."

PARENT/GUARDIAN 5:

"This child does not want to do anything in the house. When you give her some work to do, she complains, saying that she is overworked and she is not loved. She only wants to go and play with her friends. She does not want to help me with anything such as cleaning the house. She only wants to play the whole day."

Main theme: Children expect their parents to look after them and buy food and clothes for them. They also expect them to love and to protect them and, when parents do not meet those expectations children, become discouraged and lose faith in their parents. On the other hand, parents also have some expectations

from their children. They expect their children to listen to them, to respect them and to do everything that they tell them to do, and when they do not do as expected, parents get angry and feel disrespected.

Sub-theme: Alcohol abuse by parents tends to affect other family members in a negative way, especially children. It can cause problems such as abuse (physical, emotional or psychological), inability to meet the needs or expectations of the family members such as buying food or clothes for them. Arnold (2001:120) and Bezuidenhout (2004c:122) mention that children living with alcoholic parents do not mind their drinking as much as they fear its results. After drinking, parents are more likely to shout at and to fight with one another. They also become less patient with their children and beat them up, at times very harshly. They do not provide them with food or sometimes fail to cook for them, and they do not give them the essentials they need, such as clothes, school fees, love and other basic needs.

- **STEPFAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

Responses from children D, 1, E and their parents/guardians were grouped together because of the fact that they share a common theme, which is non-blood relationships (aunts and step-child/step-mother relationships) and they are as follows.

BOY CHILD D:

"My stepmother used to ill-treat me. She used to expect me to clean the house every day and she also used to send me everywhere but when I came back, she did not give me some food. She wanted me to go around asking for food."

PARENT/GUARDIAN D:

"This child, as I am his stepmother, when I send him, he does not want. He eats too much and does not listen to me. When I talk to him, he insults me. I think that that is the reason that led him out of the family to live in the streets."

GIRL CHILD 1:

"I used to live with my mother and father. My mother got sick and eventually passed away. My father brought in a stepmother. The stepmother came with her two children. They used to ill-treat me and not give me food. I used to go to the neighbours to ask for food. They did not buy me clothes. They only bought for the children of the stepmother. I then ended up taking a decision to go and live on the street, thinking that maybe life will be better on the street as compared to at home."

PARENT 1:

"When I started to stay with these children and their father, this child never loved me. She always complained that why did their father marry me. She even influenced the other children to hate me. She does not listen to me. Even if I try to advise her, she does not listen. She always said that she would leave and she ended up leaving."

BOY CHILD E:

"My aunt used to ill-treat me. She used me to wash dishes, she did not give me food, she beat me up and over-worked me."

PARENT E:

"The reason that caused the child to go to the street, the first thing is that this child does not want to do anything here at home. Even if you can ask him to wash dishes, he does not want to do it. He just wants to eat and nothing else. The other thing is that when you can put money somewhere, you cannot find it, and that is very problematic. When you advise him, he does not cooperate. He wants to do nothing. What he wants is to play with his friends and nothing else."

Main theme: Step-mother/step-child households are different from nuclear or biological households because they contain what Radcliff-Brown (2005:147) calls affinal kin. Radcliff-Brown defines affinal kin as individuals related through the marriage of a family member. An example of a commonly known affinal kin is the stepmother/stepchild relation. They are related just because the stepmother has married the child's father and therefore becomes the child's

stepmother. Berns (2003:233) states that the stepmother stepchild relation is perhaps the most closely scrutinised relationship within remarried families. It is accepted by many to be the most important relationship in predicting overall stepfamily happiness and is generally considered the most problematic and stressful of relationships.

The phrase “blood is thicker than water”, captures the notion that being related to someone by blood creates a stronger bond of love. In the stepmother/stepchild family, this bond is absent and necessitates the constant need for reaffirmation of love and connection. Adolescent stepchildren can display more acting-out behaviour such as using drugs and alcohol, engaging in sexual intercourse and having children out of wedlock (Benokraitis, 2008:507). Conflict may result in emotional and behavioural difficulties for the children. Stepmothers may find it easy to abuse/ill-treat their stepchildren just because there is no blood relationship with the stepchild. However, the stepchild is not an inert player in this family drama. Some stepchildren may intentionally resist forming a bond of love with their stepmothers just because these women are not their “blood mothers.”

Sub-theme: Children usually think of a mother as a person who does things for them, takes care of their physical needs, gives them affection and attention, who is almost always happy and in good humour, who tolerates a great deal of childish mischief and comes to their aid in times of trouble. Although the stepmother is most often the all-giving protector, she can change into the cruel stepmother if she denies the stepchild something he or she wants or needs.

- **SEXUAL ABUSE**

GIRL CHILD 4:

“I used to live with both my mother and father. My mother passed away. I was left with my father. My father started to abuse me sexually. He used to sleep with me every morning before I went to school. He threatened me that if I told anyone he would kill me. I kept quiet for a long time until one day I told my friends and that is the day I left home to live on the street.”

PARENT 4:

“I will start by saying that her mother passed away. I was left with this child as an elder child in the family. When I tell her to clean the house, she does not want to do it. When I tell her to wash the dishes, she refuses, and she goes around the community telling people that I slept with her.”

Main theme: The main theme for child 4 and her father is sexual abuse. Many factors may contribute to the occurrence of child abuse. Parents may be more likely to abuse their children sexually if the parents abuse drugs or alcohol (Bezuidenhout, 2004a:154; Benokraitis, 2008:433). Some parents may not be able to cope with the stress resulting from the changes and may have trouble in caring for their children. King (2002:67) defines sexual abuse as inappropriate sexual behaviour with a child. Sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals; making the child fondle the adult's genitals; intercourse; incest; rape; sodomy; exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. To be considered child abuse, these acts have to be committed by a person responsible for the care of a child or related to the child. If a stranger commits these acts, thus will be considered sexual assault and handled solely by the police and criminal courts.

Sub-theme: Single fathers are more likely to molest or to abuse their own biological girl children sexually when there is no adult female person such as the children's mother in the family. It is advisable that girl children should be placed in the custody of relatives where there are both male and female adults, or even in the custody of only female adults due to the fact that girl children are more likely to be unsafe in the custody of their single fathers. They are more likely to become “wives.”

• SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING CHILDREN TO STAY AT HOME AND NOT LIVE ON THE STREET

The last question to parents and children was: what do you think can be done by children, parents and government to help children to stay at home and not live on the street?

Both children and their parents/guardians, made various suggestions as the possible solutions to the problem. The responses of the parents and children will be reported directly as they are in the transcripts. Interpretation derived from the data was again done with the word-by-word analysis explained by De Vos (2002b:34) as the empirical information and research findings given in the transcribed responses. All responses will be grouped together since they are similar and one theme, representing all the responses, will be given.

CHILD A:

"Government could help us with free school fees, free feeding schemes at school and child support grants be paid to children until the age of 18years."

PARENT A:

"I think that if the government could place our children in places of safety, register them in schools for free and provide us with some food parcels, it could be better just because the child support grant is too little."

CHILD B:

"Maybe if children could be taken away from home or be placed with parents who are able to care for children and the child support grant be issued so that everything could be sharp."

PARENT B:

"What I see is if the government could empower us so that we could get some jobs and support our children."

CHILD C:

"Government could get me some stepparent who could take care of me as compared to my father who always drinks beer."

PARENT C:

"Government should force children to go to school. If they find a child on the street they should forcefully remove him and place him in a school."

CHILD D:

"If government could take us to a place of safety where we can be safe and attend school, so that we can buy some cars like some adult people."

PARENT D:

"The government should place them somewhere and take care of them, give them lessons that they should respect other people, just because children these days, when you talk to them, they tell you about their rights."

CHILD E:

"If my aunt can give me some food and stop beating me up, I could go and stay at home."

PARENT/GUARDIAN E:

"The first thing that I see is that the government should give us some jobs because most of us are unemployed and there are many things that we need in our families. The other thing, as a parent, what I see is that the rights that the government gave to children are too much. Children want to do what they want, they want to tell us what to do in our families, It will not happen. Children know their rights but they don't know their responsibilities is a problem. Parents should discipline the children so that they can have better future, such as Jacob Zuma. He is the president, Mbeki is the former president, and Nomvula Mokonyani is one of government people in Gauteng. I want our children to go there. Only if they can listen to us as their parents when we tell them to do something. They always tell us about their rights, so, as a parent, you find it difficult. I suggest that the government should limit these children's rights just because when we discipline them, they threaten to report us to the police, and as a result, we are unable to do anything to discipline them. Government must do something about these children's rights."

CHILD 1:

"Eh! Parents should not abuse us. They must give us love. It is not nice to be always beaten up. Children need love."

PARENT 1:

"Government should forsake this thing of children's rights. Government should leave this thing of telling us that children have rights because this thing of children's rights destroys our children. When you talk to your child she says that you abuse her. When you talk to your child, she does not listen to you. She tells you that she will report you to the police. The government should do something about this thing of children's rights."

CHILD 2:

"Mothers should not ill-treat their children and fathers should not beat up mothers."

PARENT 2:

"I think that if children could be able to talk to their parents when they have problems or if there could be a place where they go and be taught about their rights and responsibilities, to be taught what to do and also about life in the family."

CHILD 3:

"Parents should be given some jobs."

PARENT 3:

"Look here man; our government does not help us with anything, and they must give us parents some parenting skills, do you know them, so that the children could listen to us. These children's rights we do not want them anymore. Mandela should take them away. Children do not listen. I was taught at school that the children's rights go with responsibilities. They must be cancelled."

CHILD 4:

"I think that the fathers and mothers should stop the wrong things which they do to their children so that children could be able to stay at home."

PARENT 4:

“Government should visit us in our families and check as to what is wrong because these children, when we talk to them, they tell us about their rights. What are rights? I do not understand. The government should come to us and tell us what children’s rights are.”

CHILD 5:

“I would like my family to stop drinking beer and also stop abusing us children.”

PARENT 5:

“What the government can do to help us who take care of these kinds of children is to give us some money so that we could buy some food for them.”

A comparison of the themes and sub-themes formulated according to the responses of children and their parents focusing on what government can do to help children to stay at home and not live on the street are discussed in the next section.

Main theme: The responses for child A, B, C, D, 3 and parents/guardians 1, 3, 4, 5, A, B, C, D and E are similar. All of them suggested that the government should do something to solve the problem of street children. The main theme is therefore government’s assistance to families. Williams *et al.* (2005:316-317) mention that families in need should receive comprehensive protection and support from state and organisations within civil society. Family support programmes should address the fundamental causes of family disintegration. Conditions such as teenage pregnancy, single parent homes, child headed households, abuse of substances and family breakdown, render family members vulnerable. The solution therefore lies in strengthening the family unit.

Richter (2002:346) and Mashologu-Kuse (2007:63) add that it is in the interest of communities and the state to ensure that families have sufficient resources to provide for the basic needs of their members. Family resources include education, employment, income, social grants and financial assets and savings. Mashologu-Kuse (2007:63) emphasises that community-based programmes to

address the challenges of the families of street children are needed to enhance family functioning. The focus of social scientists should be on preventative and developmental programmes that promote healthy family functioning rather than on programmes focusing on treatment.

Sub-theme: When families are able to take care of their members, it reduces the burden on the state in terms of long-term costs incurred by social problems that may result from the failure of the families to perform their normative roles. For example, one of the main causes of family breakdown in poor communities in developing countries is the lack of access to employment and services that enable people to maintain family life.

The responses for child E, 1, 2, 4 and 5 are also similar. They suggested that if their parents/guardians could change their behaviour of ill-treating them, abusing them physically and sexually and start providing some food for them, they could stay at home and not go to live in the streets.

Main theme: Putnam (2003:115) mentions that families should provide a suitable environment for the physical, emotional and social development of all their members, particularly children. Parents have a responsibility to love, care for and support their children and not to harm or abuse them in any way. Mashologu-Kuse (2007:57) and Sneddon (2007:137) mention that secure families provide an environment in which children can develop to their full potential, become “healthy citizens”, develop positive identities and form a set of values that serve as a frame of reference throughout their later life.

Sub-theme: Soltz (2000:186) mentions that poor preparation of children for school, inadequate educational provision and poor support for children by caregivers result in high school failure rates. Children from intact families have less absenteeism at school, higher popularity ratings, higher IQ, higher reading, spelling and maths scores, and fewer behaviour problems at school than do children from problematic families.

5.4 CONCLUSION

- 5.4.1 The contents of the literature study in Chapter Two formed the base for the questions that were put to both parents/guardians and their children in this chapter.
- 5.4.2 Ten children and ten parents and/or guardians were included in the sample and in-depth interviews were used to gather research information.
- 5.4.3 Parents/guardians and children were asked different biographical questions but similar research questions.
- 5.4.4 The questions were answered directly by both children and parents individually, and transcripts were done.
- 5.4.5 The researcher identified main themes and sub-themes from the questions.
- 5.4.6 Themes were integrated with information gathered during the literature review.
- 5.4.7 From the questions and themes, important information was identified about what could be the reasons for children to live in the streets. The following reasons were mentioned:
- Poverty;
 - Unemployment;
 - lack of effective communication between children and parents;
 - mischievousness by children;
 - step-family relationships; and
 - child abuse and ill-treatment by parents/guardians.
- 5.4.8 The majority of the participants were of the opinion that the government should provide intervention to solve the problem of street children.
- 5.4.9 Preventative and developmental programmes to enhance family functioning and prevent family disorganisation can help to ensure secure families that provide an environment, in which children can develop to their full potential, become healthy citizen, develop positive identities and form a set of values that serve as a frame of reference throughout their later life.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors in the family systems that cause children to opt for street life rather than a safe environment such as a home, family and alternatives such as places of safety, children's homes and foster care placements. The researcher aimed to gain an understanding of both parents/guardians and children on this matter. Street children, family and factors were the key concepts defined at the start of the study.

Chapter one of the study explored the planning of the research process as well as establishing the research goals and objectives. The research question was clearly defined. The research approach selected was that of a qualitative approach in order to answer the research question as well as meet the goals of the study. A preliminary literature review was conducted in Chapter 1 on factors in the family systems that cause children to live in the streets. This preliminary literature review guided the compilation of the interview schedule. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, in order to obtain both the parent's and children's perspectives' on the factors in the family systems that cause children to live in the streets.

Chapter Two was devoted to an in-depth literature review, with specific reference to factors in the family systems that cause children to live in the streets instead of living in their homes and families. The preliminary research done in Chapter 1 as well as the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was in keeping with the objectives of the study.

Chapter Three examined the different types of programmes used in helping children who work and live in the streets. They included micro programmes, mezzo programmes and macro programmes.

Chapter 4 discussed the exposition of the research methodology used in the research study. The outcomes of the empirical study were provided in Chapter 5 and focus on information obtained through the semi-structured interviews, from both children and their parents/guardians. Biographical information for both children and their parents/guardians was tabulated. Themes and sub-themes were then identified as an outcome of the study. Themes and sub-themes were then integrated with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Chapter Six is the last chapter of the study and provides an overview of the whole study. This overview will be provided using the following structure.

6.2 CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

6.2.1 Summary

The first chapter provided an overview of the study and included a preliminary literature review, which guided the research process. Aspects of the research that received attention were an introduction to the research study and the researcher's motivation for choosing the research topic. The problem was identified as that children run away from home and researchers often focus on the children's perspectives and not on both children's and parents' perspectives. The goal of this research was to explore and compare the perspectives of both parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family systems that contribute to the children leaving home and living on the streets. The research was applied research and was done within the qualitative research approach. A limitation of the study was identified as the inability to generalise the findings due to the small sample size.

6.2.2 Conclusions

- This study focused on those children who have families but ran away due to some problems, which they faced in those families. They do not have any contact with their families. They spend much of their time on the streets, where they live and work.

- Reasons for children taking to the streets or being forced out of their homes are multiple; meaning that no single factor is responsible for the homelessness of children. The family is traditionally perceived as providing the ideal within which child development can take place.
- A qualitative approach was used. This approach was phenomenological and as a result, it provided the researcher with a clear understanding of what the parents' and children's perspectives on family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets are. This approach was the most suitable to explore the personal perspectives of both the children and the parents.
- A pilot study was conducted in order to test the interview schedule. This provided the necessary guidance in ensuring that the information sought would be obtained.
- Engaging in a study that involved children living on the streets and their families faced challenges in terms of time and distance. Some children's families are in Soweto and some are in the North West province. The researcher had to travel long distances to visit the children's families.

6.2.3 Recommendations

- A larger scale study needs to be conducted in the whole of Gauteng Province, in order to explore further the family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets. The saturation point that was obtained within this study suggests that the findings could be applicable to a larger portion of the population. The researcher recommends that a larger scale study be conducted to measure the reliability of these findings.
- The needs of children and families should be a priority in any society. Families are the most accessible and the most successful units for providing childcare and they should accordingly be supported in all their diverse forms.
- The street child phenomenon represents a complex issue resulting from a wide variety of integrating factors. Intervention strategies and

programmes, whatever their nature, need to be developed by scientifically-based research.

6.3 CHAPTER TWO: THE PHENOMENON OF STREET CHILDREN

6.3.1 Summary

This chapter examined the literature dealing with the phenomenon of the street child and reported numerous attempts at defining the street child phenomenon and found that many of the definitions are similar, having three main elements in common, namely that these children live or spend a significant amount of time on the street; the street has become their source of livelihood; and they are inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.

All over the world, street children are exploited, victimised and are social reprobates whom society loves to hate. They are called many derogatory names. Most people prefer to call them “Street children” because they have homes and parents somewhere in the community but they happen to find themselves living and working in the streets due to different circumstances. Different categories of street children are children with families working on the streets, children with weak family ties who live in the streets, abandoned children, runaway children and young delinquents.

Street children have challenges with regard to HIV and AIDS, substance abuse, personal care, prostitution and sexual exploitation. Family factors contributing to the street child phenomenon are: lack of a father figure; divorce of parents; stepfather/stepmother; parentless children; abandoned children; alcoholic parents; over strict parents; abused children; prostitute mothers; and hungry children.

6.3.2 Conclusions

- The concept of homelessness or street children among African people is new because in the traditional cultures, a child was perceived as

everybody's child. It is from this practice that the belief that "there is no orphan in the African family" originated.

- The disintegration of family life affects the well-being of the family members, particularly children, which also affects the fiber of society as a whole.
- All over the world, street children are exploited, victimised and are social reprobates whom society loves to hate. They seem to hover on the periphery of other people's lives, and because of this, society tends to pay them little regard.
- Life in the streets is difficult. Children are faced with difficult and dangerous circumstances such as injury, murder, violence, rape, sexual exploitation, drugs, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, hunger, solitude, contempt, forced Labour and many more.
- Street children may never develop to their full potential or self-actualisation if they continue to live in the streets since the streets are not conducive for their development.
- There are a number of reasons for the public's intense hostility towards street children. Many people draw their views about street children from their personal encounters with them in highly visible but anonymous places, such as when people are asked for money at traffic lights or while shopping. This leads to the children's antisocial and minor delinquent behaviour being perceived in the extreme.
- The decision to bid the parental home farewell and to make the streets their home is made only when there are severe problematic child-parent relations.

6.3.3 Recommendations

- The basic needs of all children, including street children should receive high priority in South Africa to enable them to develop well in a conducive family environment.

- The needs and circumstances of children, and especially children in difficult circumstances such as those of street children, should be monitored at all government levels (local, provincial and national).
- Vulnerable families should be assisted. An example of this would be to provide job opportunities.

6.4 CHAPTER 3: INTERVENTION WITH STREET CHILDREN

6.4.1 Summary

Two main issues were discussed in this chapter, namely intervention with street children and street children's residential care and shelter programmes in South Africa. Micro and macro programmes were identified as the two kinds of programmes that could be used in helping children who are working and living on the street. Micro programmes are short-term programmes while macro programmes are long-term programmes. Thirteen residential care facilities for street children were identified and discussed.

6.4.2 Conclusions

- In an attempt to address the street child phenomenon, various intervention strategies on micro and macro level was discussed.
- The basic needs of street children are food, clothing, safer shelter and medical services. Intervention programmes should start at this point.
- A soup kitchen or a drop-in centre in various parts of a city would be ideal for this type of programme, where not only referred children can come but also any child who wishes to come for a meal, a shower or just to interact with peers.
- Trained staff, including outreach workers, social workers, health staff and childcare workers should manage the programme.
- The ultimate aim of the residential resources is to get the child back into the community as soon as possible. Street children should attend school in the community to help facilitate the reconstructive process.

6.4.3 Recommendations

- NGO's and government departments, particularly the Departments of Health and Social Development, as presently known, need to see to it that there is a specialised training for personnel dealing exclusively with street children. People such as social workers, childcare workers and youth leaders should receive general training that to some extent would equip them to deal with the phenomenon of street children but it is not sufficient.
- Socio-educative institutions such as schools, youth organisations and welfare services expect young people to come to them, whereas the opposite should be encouraged. Trained outreach workers should go to places where children are found, such as the streets and establish support or act as resources to the young people.
- A programme needs to have sanitation, a bath and some medical facilities capable of offering immediate care. The children should also have someone to talk to if they have such a need, and some form of recreation would help provide a relaxed atmosphere.
- The helping services should be offered at places with which the child can identify. It should be a place in which consistent, stable and predictable relationships with the children can be developed, while helping them to realise their personal identity.
- It has been observed that street children cannot concentrate on any one thing for long periods. In order for them to cope in a formal school setting, some remedial techniques need to be applied.
- Parental training should be encouraged in order to decrease the incidence of conflict between parents and their children, and to prevent children from leaving their homes for the streets.

6.5 CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.5.1 Summary

This chapter includes information about the pilot study, the research population, the sample and sampling method, and the research design and data analysis. In qualitative research, the pilot study is usually a few participants possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation can be involved in the study, merely to ascertain certain trends. The purpose is to determine whether the relevant data could be obtained from the actual participants or not.

A non-probability sampling method and purposive technique were used in the selection of participants. From the population of all the children living on the streets around Gauteng Province, ten (five boys and five girls) were purposively selected as a sample for the study. Ten parents/guardians, one for each child, were also included in the sample.

A phenomenological strategy was used since the study was aimed at understanding and interpreting the meaning that children living on the streets together with their parents/guardians, give in relation to the street child phenomenon. An in-depth one to one interviewing schedule was used to collect data from the respondents.

6.5.2 Conclusions

- A qualitative approach was used. This approach was phenomenological and as a result, it provided the researcher with a clear understanding of what the children and parent's perspectives cause children to live in the streets.
- In the pilot study, two participants possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation were involved, merely to ascertain certain trends. The purpose was to determine whether the relevant data could be

obtained from the actual participants. The pilot study provided the guidance for the planning of the research.

- An in-depth one to one interviewing schedule was used as the means of collecting information. This provided the information that the researcher intended to obtain.

6.5.3 Recommendations

- Due to lack of time and resources, only ten children and ten parents/guardians were involved in the study as participants, and as such, the finding cannot be generalised to the larger scale. The researcher therefore recommends that a larger scale study be conducted in order to measure the reliability of these findings on a broader scale.

6.6 CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL STUDY

6.6.1 Summary

This chapter focused on the results or findings of the qualitative research study based on the in-depth interviews with both parents and children. The researcher gathered the qualitative data using an in-depth one to one interviewing schedule. The participants were ten children and ten parents/ guardians. Different themes and sub-themes were identified from their responses

6.6.2 Conclusions

- The contents of the literature study in Chapter Two formed the base for the questions that were put to both parents/guardians and their children in this chapter.
- Ten children and ten parents and/or guardians were included in the sample and in-depth interviews were used to gather research information. This provided the information that the researcher required for.

- Parents/guardians and children were asked different biographical questions but similar research questions.
- The questions were answered directly by both children and parents individually, and transcripts were done. The verbatim recollections of the interviews aided in formulating themes and sub-themes.
- The researcher identified main themes and sub-themes from the questions and integrated them with information gathered during the literature review.
- From the questions and themes, important information was identified concerning the reasons for children to live in the streets. The following reasons were mentioned:
 - Poverty;
 - Unemployment;
 - lack of effective communication between children and parents;
 - mischievousness by children;
 - step-family relationships;
 - child abuse and ill-treatment by parents/guardians; and
 - The majority of the participants were of the opinion that the government should intervene to solve the problem of street children.

6.6.3 Recommendations

- Preventive and developmental programmes to enhance family functioning and prevent family disorganisation can help to ensure secure families that provide an environment wherein children can develop to their full potential, become “healthy citizens”, can develop positive identities and form a set of values that serve as a frame of reference throughout their later life.
- Community members should be made aware of the aftercare needs of street children and their responsibility in this regard. They should thus become part of the whole process of providing care and aftercare for street children.
- Furthermore, intervention in the street children’s life has to be goal directed. Special attention should also be given to the aftercare of children who are 19 years and older.

- In order to address the street child problem effectively, a holistic, multi-professional approach is required.
- The services provided to street children should not alienate them from their roots but should reintegrate them with their cultural groups, communities and families of origin.
- South Africans need to go back to their roots and revive their values such as the notion that “every child is my child” and that “it takes the whole village to raise a child”.

6.7 TESTING OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

6.7.1 Goal of the study

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001:103; 2005:104), the goal of the research is defined as that which the researcher hopes to achieve through the study. The purpose of the research was to explore the family factors in the family systems that cause children to live and work on the streets.

6.7.2 Objectives of the study

According to Fouché and De Vos (2005:104), the objectives of the research refer to the steps undertaken in order to achieve the goal. The following objectives were defined in order to reach the goal of the study:

- to explore the phenomenon of street children;
- to explore the family factors in the family systems contributing to the disorganisation of the family;
- to do an empirical investigation into the perspectives of both the parent and street children regarding the family factors in the family system which contribute to children leaving home to live in the streets; and
- to draw conclusions and make recommendations to be used by social and childcare workers involved with street children.

6.7.2.1 Objective one

- This was to explore the phenomenon of street children.

This objective was achieved through a literature study that focused on street children. This informed the basis on which the semi-structured interview schedule was developed.

6.7.2.2 Objective two

- This was to explore the family factors in the family systems contributing to the disorganisation of the family.

This objective was achieved through a literature study that focused on family disorganisation. This also formed the basis on which the semi-structured interview schedule was developed.

6.7.2.3 Objective three

- This was to do an empirical investigation into the perspectives of both the parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family system, which contribute, to children leaving home.

This was achieved through data gathering, wherein a semi-structured interview was conducted with ten children and ten parents/guardians of the children. They provided phenomenological information on the family factors in the family systems causing children to live in the streets.

6.7.2.4 Objective four

- This was to draw conclusions and make recommendations to be used by social and childcare workers involved with street children.

After the research process, and in-depth literature review conclusions were made.

6.8 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question for the study was:

What are the perspectives of parents and street children regarding the family factors in the family systems that contribute to the children leaving home?

The research question was answered. The findings provided clear information as to the family factors in the family systems that contribute to the street child phenomenon. The research findings indicated that the following factors contribute to the street child phenomenon:

- Poverty;
- Unemployment;
- lack of effective communication between children and parents;
- mischievousness by children;
- step-family relationship;
- child abuse and ill-treatment by parents/guardians; and
- the majority of the parents/ guardians were of the opinion that the government should intervene to solve the problem of street children.

6.9 CONCLUSION STATEMENT

The personal encounters with the participants provided interesting material. However, it was also frustrating since the researcher had to travel some long distances to trace the children's families all over the Gauteng province , only to find sometimes that they were not present at home. Although the sample size was too small to be generalised to the larger scope, both the NGO's and the government departments that work with children and families could use the findings to inform intervention.

The researcher found that the reasons why children take to the streets are complex and manifold. A distinction was drawn between push and pull factors. Poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, child abuse, family disintegration, alcohol abuse by parents, failure at school, the collapse of alternative care facilities and family violence are examples of push factors, while the desire to earn money in order to contribute to the family income and an inclination to roam the streets can be seen as pull factors.

The street child phenomenon is present all over the world and necessitates intervention. Prevention of family disorganisation is of the utmost importance to ensure intact families where children can grow up, feel safe and develop, as they should. The research results of this study indicated that factors from both the parents' and the children's perspectives contribute to children leaving their homes to live in the streets.

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APPENDIX 1



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KOPO YA TUMELELO KA BOTLALO MO BATSWADING LE BANA

Se se raya gore o neelana ka tumelano go tsaya karolo mo thutong (Dipatlisiso)

1. Leina la modiri dipatlisiso

(Motho o ke mokaedi/moetapele wa dipatlisiso le lefelo le a dulang go lone)

Leina: Michael Mthombeni

Aterese: 1091 Block FF
Soshanguve
0152

Mogala: 012-798 4945 (Gae)
0827854120 (Sella thekeng)

2. Leina la Unibesity

(Leina le ke leina la Unibesity eo modiri-dipatlisiso a dirang dipatlisiso kwa go yone)

Lefapha la tirelo-loago le thuto ka ga businyi
Unibesiti ya Pretoria
Pretoria
0002

Motho o go ikopangwang le ene

Dr. CE Prinsloo

Mogala: (012)420 2601

3. Setlhogo sa dipatlisiso

(Le ke leina la setlhogo sa thuto ka ga dipatlisiso)

Mabaka mo magaeng a a dirang gore bana ba ye go dula kwa mebileng. Thuto tekatekanyo ya bana le batswadi tebang le ka mo ba boning u mabaka ka gona.

4. Maitlomo a thuto dipatlisiso

(Se se tthalosa lobaka logolo la thuto –dipatlisiso)

Lebaka legolo la thuto –dipatlisiso ke go itsise maphata a a tlhokegang a ditirelo a o a dirang mo mebileng le bana ba ba dulang mo mebileng ka ga mabaka mo gaeing a a

dirang gore bana bat loge mo gae ba ye go dula kwa mebileng le go thusa bana le malapa a kwa ga bona.

5. Tseo diakareditsweng mo thuto – dipatlisisong.

(Se se tlhalosa ka moo o yang go amega le go tsaya karolo ka teng mo go direng dipatlisiso)

Modiri –dipatlisiso o tla kokoanya tshedimosetso ka mekgwa e le mebedi:

Tsela ya ntlha e tla ba ya go botsa dipotso mo ditlhopheng di le pedi,tsa bana ba basimane ba le batlhano (5) bao ba tlhokomelwang kwa (Itumeleng shelter) e leng lefelo la tlhokomelo ya basimane bao ba dirang e bile ba nna kwa mebileng le basetsana ba le ba tlhano (5) bao ba tlhokomelwang kwa Leratong House. Palo gotlhe e tla nna bana ba le lesome (10).

Tsela ya bobedi e tla ba ya go botsa dipotso le leloko le le lengwe la lelapa e ka nna motswadi kana mogolo mongwe le mongwe o a tlhokometseng ngwana. Palo gotlhe e tla nna malapa a le lesome (10) (Batwadi/Mogolo).

6. Dilabe tse o ka kopanang natso mo thuteng e.

(Se se supa fa e le go re o tla gobala ka tsela nngwe fa o tsaya karolo mo thuto – dipatlisisong.)

O tla ba leseabe mo lenaaneng la go kokoanya tshedimosetso. Karolo e ya thuto – dipatlisiso e tla diragala kwa lefalong la gago le tlhokomelo ya bana le legae la batswadi. O tla be o le mo lifelong le le babalesegileng mo legaeng la gago o na le motwadi/mogolo. Tshedimosetso e o yang go neelana ka yona e tla bolokiwa mo go bolokegileng ka fa saefing ya lefapha la tirelo loago le thuto ya bosenyi se baka sa dingwaga di le lesome le botlhano (15). Ga go kitla go tlhagisiwa leina la gago go ya ka moo o tsereng karolo ka teng. Leina la gago ga le kitla le dirisiwa mo thuto – dipatlisisong.

7. Dikuno tse o tla disolofelang tsa thuto-dipatlisiso.

(Se se bontsha dikuno tse di ntle tseo o tla di boning gotswa mo thuto – dipatlisisong e ya gago.)

Sa ntlha o tla fiwa se baka sa go bua le go ntsha maikutlo a gago malebana le mabaka mo magaeng a a dirang gore bana ba tswe mo gae ba ye go dula kwa mebileng.

Bao ba amegang ka go rebola ditirelo batla kgona go dira sentle go ka thusa bana ba ba dulang kwa mebileng ga mmogo le ba malapa a bana bao ka tshedimosetso e e bonweng mo thuto-dipatlisisong e.

8. Ditokelo tsa me ke di fe?

(Se se raya go re ga o patelediwe go neelana ka tshedimosetso)

O tla tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong o lokologile. Se se raya go re o ka tsamaya nako nngwe le nngwe fa o rata le fa dithuto-patlisiso di ntse di tswelletse. Fa o ka ikgetela go tsamaya, tshedimosetso eo o e neetseng e tla sengwa e bile ga e ikitla e diresiwa. Ka tsela e, ditokelo tsa gago tsa go tsaya karolo ka kgololosego di a serelediwa.



9. Bofitlha/Sephiri

(Se se raya go re leina la gago le tshedimosetse e o neelanang ka yona e sereletsegile)

Tshedimosetso e o ifileng ga e kitla e fiwa motho o a senang seabe mo thuto-dipatlisisong. Batho bao bata lekolang tshedimosetso eo o ifileng e tla ba modiri-dipatlisiso le batho bao ba dumeletsweng e leng bao ba thusang mo dipatlisisong. Tshedimosetso eo o neelang ka yona go ikitla e bonwa ka gore leina la gago ga le kitla le dirisiwa. Leina la gago le ka dirisiwa fela fa o ka sayena foromo go supa fa o rata go tsaya karolo mo dipatlisisong tse tsa thuto. Tshedimosetso e ya thuto-dipatlisiso e ka dirisiwa gape mo isagweng fa go na le tlhokego ya dipatlisiso tse dingwe. Gape le mo lebakeng le, tshedimosetso eo o neelang ka yona le leina la gago di tla serelediwa. Tshedimosetso ya dipatlisiso e tla bolokiwa mo lifelong le le serelesegileng se baka sa dingwaga di le lesome le botlhano (15 years).

10. Tumelano ya go tsaya karolo mo thuto-dipatlisisong

(Se se raya go re o neelana ka tumelo go re o tseya karolo mo thutong ya dipatlisiso. Se se raya gape gore ga o patelediwe go neelana ka tshedimosetso o sa battle).

Pampiri e sayinilwe kwa (Lefelo)..... ka
(letsatsi)2008 (Ngwaga).

Sayino ya Batswai / Mogolo wa ngwana

.....

Mo go sayinileng ngwana teng

.....

Mo go sayinileng modiri-dipatlisiso

.....

Rebogela go tsaya karolo gag ago mo dipatlisisong.

Letlha (Date).....

APPENDIX 2

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Work & Criminology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

This means that you are freely giving your permission to take part in the research study.

1. NAME OF RESEARCHER

(This person is the leader of the research study and his residential address.)

Name: Michael Mthombeni

Address: 1091 Block FF
Soshanguve
0152

Tel: (012) 798 4945 (Home)

Cell phone: 0827854120

2. NAME OF THE UNIVERSITY

(This is the name of the University where the researcher is doing his research.)

Department of Social Work and Criminology

University of Pretoria

Pretoria

002

Contact Person

Dr C.E. Prinsloo

Tel: (012) 420 2601

3. RESEARCH TITLE

(This is the name of the research study.)

Family factors in the family system causing children to live in the streets: a comparative study of parents' and children's perspectives.

4. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

(This explains the reason of the research study.)

The main reason for doing the research is to inform service providers who work with children who live and work on the streets and other stakeholders, about the family factors in the family systems that cause children to live in the streets and to advise on how to help street children and their families.

5. WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

(This explains the ways in which you will be involved in the research study.)

The researcher will gather information in two ways.

- The first way will be through a set of questions (interview) with two groups of children (five boys, who are presently benefiting from Itumeleng shelter for boys working and living in the streets and five girls who are presently benefiting from Lerato House). In total, there will be 10 children.
- The second way will be through a set of questions (interview) with one family member (either a parent or guardian) per child. In total there will be 10 family members (parents/ guardians).

6. RISKS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

(This indicates whether you will be harmed in any way by taking part in the research study.)

- You will be involved in the information gathering process. This part of the research study will take place in your own environment (the shelter for the children and home for the (family) parents.)
- You are therefore in a safe place with your family/ guardian present. The information that you will give will be kept in the safe of the Department of Social Work and Criminology for a period of fifteen years. You will not be

identified through what you will share. Your name will not be used in the research study.

7. BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

(This indicates the good things that will come out of this research study for you.)

- Firstly, you will get an opportunity to talk about your views concerning the family factors in your family system that motivated the children to leave home and live in the streets.
- Service providers will be able to work effectively in helping street children and their families through the information and knowledge attained from the research study.

8. WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

(This means that you are not being forced to give information)

You will take part in the research study freely. This means that you may walk away from the research process at any time. Should you prefer to walk away; the information that you may have given will be destroyed and not be used. In this manner, your rights to take part freely in the research study are protected.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

(This means that your identity and information that you give will be protected.)

The information you give will not be available to any person who is not involved in the research study. The only people who will look at the information that you give are the researcher and approved persons who will assist with the research. The information that you give cannot be traced back to you as your name will not be used. The only time that your name will be used is when you sign this form to indicate that you are willing and not being forced to take part in the research study. The research information may be used again for future research purposes. Here again, the information that you gave as well as your identity will be protected. The research information will be stored in a safe place for a period of 15 years.



10. AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

(This means that you freely give your permission to participate in the research study. It also means that you are not being forced to give information against your will.)

This document was signed at on the
.....day of 2008.

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS/GUARDIAN OF THE CHILD:

.....

SIGNATURE OF THE CHILD:

.....

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER:

.....

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

DATE:

APPENDIX 3

Interview schedule for children / Lenane potso la bana

1. How old are you?

O na le dingwaga tse kae?

2. How far did you go with your schooling?

O fihlile kwa mophatong ofe ka dithuto tsa kwa se kolang?

3. With whom were you staying at home before you lived on the street?

O ne o nna le mang kwa gae pele ga ge o tla gonna mo mmileng?

4. How long have you been on the street?

O na le nako e kae o nna mo mmileng?

5. What are the reasons that caused you to live in the streets? Please explain in detail focusing on your family system.

Ke mabaka afe a a dirileng gore otle go nna mo mmileng, tswee, tswee, tlhalosa ka botlalo lemorago lwa legae la gago. Legae le otswang mo go lona?

6. What do you think can be done by children, parents or the government to help children to stay at home rather than living on the streets?

Ke eng go ya ka wean se se ka dirwang ke bana, batswadi le puso go thusa bana go itumelela go nna kwa gae le gore bana ba ye go nna kwa mibileng?

Interview schedule for parents (guardians)

Lenanego la go botsa dipotso la batswai (Bagolo)

1. How are you related to the child in question?

O golagana yang le ngwana o re buang ka ene?

2. What do you think are the reasons that caused the child in question to live in the streets? Please explain in detail focusing on your family systems.

Go ya ka kakanyo ya gago ke mabaka afe a a bakileng gore ngwana o a ye go nna kwa mmileng. Tswee, tswee, tlhalosa ka botlalo lemorago la legae le ngwana a tswang kwa go lona?

3. What do you think can be done by parents, children and/or the government to help children stay at home and not live in the streets?

Ke eng go ya ka wean se se ka dirwang ke batswadi, bana kona puso go thusa bana go nna kwa gae e seng kwa mebileng?