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**CONTRIBUTION OF FAMILY SUPPORT IN ADDRESSING  
CHILDREN STREETISM IN DAR ES SALAAM AND DODOMA CITIES**

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**Contribution of Family Support in  
Addressing Children Streetism in Dar Es  
Salaam and Dodoma Cities**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** Tanzania has been implementing several initiatives to address the challenge of street children in the country. Despite such efforts, the child streetism has become the daily reality and has shown the sign of increasing. This dissertation is a study on the influence of poverty and family support on child streetism in urban Tanzania. Specifically, the paper focused on analysing the lived experiences of street children; describing the influence of the family support on children streetism.

**Methodology:** The paper adopted interpretivism research paradigm using descriptive cross-sectional design and inductive research approach. It involved a total of 38 informants who were purposively selected while the snowballing sampling technique was used in accessing street children. Semi-structured interview, documentary review and observation method were conducted.

**Findings:** Through thematic and content data analysis techniques, this study reveals that street children experienced difficulties in getting their basic needs and did not easily access health services when they fell sick. They also engaged into intra-violence among themselves. Further, child streetism has been largely influenced by lack of family support. Lack of family support included unwillingness of parents and guardians to cater for the needs of their children, single parenting and poor orphaned families with limited economic opportunities, abusive parenting and, absence of love and care to children i.e. child neglect.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** These negative consequences of inadequate family support were attributed by substance abuse and use by parents and guardians, family violence incidences including gender-based violence, death of one or all parents, relatives' thirsty in confiscating family properties when the death of male parent occurs.

**Keywords:** *Family Support, Children Streetism*

## INTRODUCTION

Child support is the amount of money that a court orders a parent or both parents to pay every month to help pay for the support of the child (or children) and the child's living expenses. Every county has a family law facilitator who will help you for free to:

- Prepare forms;
- Explain court procedures for getting and changing child support orders;
- Calculate child support using the guideline, if you have the necessary financial information; and
- Explain how the court makes child support decisions.

A parent paying child support may not claim a tax deduction, as the same person could when paying alimony. This means that you need to make sure that the appropriate amounts are characterized correctly in any support agreement involving a former spouse and child. For tax purposes, the government may deem any payment to be spousal support unless the parents specifically identified them as "child support." A vague term such as "family support" will be considered spousal support (Alem & Laha, 2016).

Parents often find the experience of raising a child to be joyful and deeply rewarding. It also can be very expensive. Parents who do not regularly live with their children and who do not act as their children's primary caregiver must help pay for their care and support. The amount of child support typically depends on how much money each parent earns and how much time each parent spends with the child. The gender of the parent makes no difference in who pays or receives child support. Contrary to stereotypes, a court may require the mother to pay child support to the father, particularly when the mother is the higher wage earner and the father has primary custody of the child ([www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children](http://www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children)).

Child streetism can be defined as people especially children living homeless and doing menial jobs to gain income for a living (Barret, 2004). Christian Yaw Adinkra, a journalist also explains child streetism as a result of increased urbanisation and the difficult socio-economic circumstances rural families are experiencing (Adinkra, 2011). Statistics pertaining streetism in Ghana and UK According to the 2009 Consortium for Street Children census of street children in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, it was recorded that there were: 21,140 street children, 6000 street babies and 7,170 street 'mothers' under the age of 20 (Plan Ghana, 2014).

Sub-Saharan Africa often comprises the leading lines of the world's fastest urbanizing region of the developing countries. This urbanization trend is also regarded as a critical contributing factor for streetism. On the basis of this contextual feature, it is proven that authorities in Africa are experiencing significant levels of streetism (Urban Management Program [UMP], 2000). Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries of the world. The country is a host of tremendous problems, such as famine, population pressure, poverty, political instability, environmental degradation, and

lack of proper health service, illiteracy, poor sanitation, unemployment, underemployment, ethnic conflict, war, displacement, migration, HIV/AIDS and what not.

It is estimated that 60% of the population live below the poverty line (MOLSA, 1992; cited in Abebaw, 2003). Therefore, it is easier to presume the fate of children in such a country. As with the global picture on street children, the data on street children in Ethiopia is very limited, and studies and reports on the subject have come up with varying estimates; therefore, it is very difficult to find the exact number of children living on the streets of Ethiopian cities. A report by CRDA estimated that approximately 200,000 children were working and living on urban streets, of which 150,000 reside in Addis Ababa (2006)

Street living children and youth' is a phenomenon found across globe, not only in developing countries (Dabir and Athale 2011). This is a sign that social and economic development do not necessarily come together, thus the problem is not limited to only poor or developing countries. There is however, often the difficulty of defining what actually constitutes street children. Different factors like cultural, geographical, economical, age, gender and the revolutionary nature of street children make it difficult to come up with a common definition.

Despite their cultural differences, street children represent a worldwide phenomenon. Examination of literature indicates that the backgrounds of street children are remarkably similar. Even though, there are different countries and regions that have different structures of the existing policy on street children (De Brito, 2014). In South Africa discrimination of races is commonplace with street children. These children are seen as a threat to public safety. De Brito (2014) write that for the children to be treated respectfully, an extensive protection system that protects all people is required in every community. Because as it seems now, many fall outside the system. Organizations that deal with human rights have a strong collective recommendation of precisely that dilemma concerning street children. Therefore, De Brito (2014) writes that the organizations should have an involvement in creating a meaningful protection system. Many street children come from structurally disadvantaged homes with poor living conditions. Parental loss through deaths or shortages of housing force children onto the streets in order to survive.

According to Nikku (2012), social workers work with children in need and provide services to ensure street children's rights. They are involved on a daily basis as to how to keep the children safe and which provider in society that can give the best tools for protection. As a social worker there is a need to work strategically as a civil society appeals to the protection of human rights, especially of minorities and street children that are often ignored by the government. Children's voices go often unheard and the right to affect the decision concerning them is ignored. Nikku (2012) mentions the importance for social workers to include the participation of children in practices, in terms of initial approaches on the street and concerning the rights of education and a place to stay.

The problem of street children in the world, a 69 country papers on street children were commissioned with attention both to: regional representation (29 African countries; 16 from Asia; 14 from the Americas; 6 from Europe and 4 from the Middle East and Oceania); and levels of

human development using the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2006). However the world has made huge strides in overcoming global poverty. Since 1990, more than 1.2 billion people have risen out of extreme poverty. Now, 9.2% of the world survives on less than \$1.90 a day, compared to nearly 36% in 1990. But the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse years of progress in the fight against global poverty and income inequalities, and it jeopardizes the future of a generation of children (World Bank, 2020).

Africa's economic challenges when viewing the numbers in a vacuum to add the figure in terms of poverty perspective, we can look at the GDP values of the wealthiest countries in the world. According to 2020 data, the country with the highest GDP per capita (PPP int.\$) is Luxembourg, with a value of \$118,356 which is more than 150 times higher than Burundi's \$771. Similarly, Norway's world-leading 2020 GNI per capita (Atlas method, current US\$) of \$78,250 seems almost modest until one realizes that it's a full 289 times higher than Burundi's \$270 (World Bank, 2020). In addition, African countries especially the Sub-Saharan countries are faced with extreme poverty (Ward and Seager, 2010; Le Roux, 2016). The rampant poverty in Sub-Saharan Countries has contributed to the problem of street children who do not have an access to education, nutrition, food, shelter, water, sanitation and good health services (Kopoka, 2000). In addition, the consequence of poverty, with reference to income poverty, is argued to be the main cause of street children (Bhukuth and Ballet, 2015; Chowdhury *et al*, 2017; Adrioni, 2018; Mandoyu, Gameda & Genemo, 2018; Mandoyu, Gameda & Genemo, 2018; World Bank, 2019).

In Tanzania, alike, poverty is considered to be the main driver for street children. World Bank (2019) reports that in the period of two years 10,000 children went to the street which indicates a rapid increase in the number of street children in Tanzania. The challenge of street children in Tanzania is more historical since then. Saramba (2002) attests that 30,000 children are in Tanzania while Dar es Salaam was leading with 10,000 street children. Mwinyiani (2004) reveals that the population of street children increased to about 40,000.

Statistics from a research conducted in 2017/2018 in about six regions of Tanzania show that Dar es Salaam has about 2984 street children. Mwanza has 978 children, Arusha 544, Iringa 954, Dodoma 347 and Mbeya 586. According to these statistics, Mwanza and Iringa regions are more prevalent because of domestic violence and hardship which lead to children fleeing the streets. The main reason these youngsters give for their state is domestic violence, especially in these leading regions. Society has developed plenty of negative perceptions and attitudes about these children, which leads to a lot of abuse and even isolation from the larger part of the society, which is probably dangerous and more often than not, could lead to them being involved in informal activities with gangs. It is now common occurrence to hear of terrifying stories of abuse of children by parents or family members. Children as old as three are increasingly being sexually abused, starved and ignored by the family and community at large.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Tanzania as one of the developing countries in Africa has instituted a number of national initiatives to curb the challenge of street children. These initiatives include economic and social initiatives

that mainly focus on addressing family reunification. Despite such initiatives, the number street children keep on increasing (World Bank, 2019). In this case, various researchers become interested to research on the causes of street children. The prior empirical studies on street children (De Benitez, 2011; Lemoyan, 2015; Kopoka, 2002; Corsaro, 2011) associate the challenge of street children with family issues. This further has been evidenced in a way that it is possible to find children from rich families in the streets or children from poor families not in the street. The may be determined by the family support and vulnerability level which may play an important role in addressing the challenge of street children. Despite such possible relationship between family support and street children, there is scanty knowledge on such relationship. In this case, it has resulted to the lack of comprehensive interventions in addressing a challenge of street children. Hence, it is the direction of this paper to explore the contribution of family support in addressing children streetism in dar es salaam and dodoma cities.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

The paper was anchored by the theory of social welfare by David Stoesz, (1989), the theory explains how political and economic forces shape the structural institutions of social welfare of the people in communities. The theory emphasizes the role of interest groups in defining social welfare and provides an explanation of why some groups remain marginal to the welfare enterprise. The interest groups of the social welfare industry are classified, and the viability of each group is evaluated according to the dynamics of bureaucratization and privatization. Some predictions about the future of certain interest groups also are offered.

### **Strength of the Socials Welfare Theory**

The Strengths Perspective is an approach to social work that puts the strengths and resources of people, communities, and their environments, rather than their problems and pathologies, at the center of the helping process. It was created as a corrective and transformative challenge to predominant practices and policies that reduce people and their potential to deficits, pathologies, problems, and dysfunctions. The Strengths Perspective emphasizes the human capacity for resilience, resistance, courage, thriving, and ingenuity, and it champions the rights of individuals and communities to form and achieve their own goals and aspirations. While acknowledging the difficulties that clients experience, the Strengths Perspective never limits people to their traumas, problems, obstacles, illness, or adversity; rather, it addresses them as challenges, opportunities, and motivators for change. Social workers are enjoined to collaborate with clients, their families, and communities to discover and generate hopes and opportunities, to mobilize inner and environmental strengths and resources, and to act for individual and collective empowerment and social justice. Thus, the helping relationship is characterized by alliance, empathy, collaboration, and focus on clients' and communities' aspirations and goals.

Further, our school has long joined the Strengths Perspective with commitments to honor diversity, to promote empowerment and justice, and to engage in critical inquiry and thinking.

The main principles of the Strengths Perspective are for social workers to:

- Recognize that every individual, group, family, and community has strengths and resources
- Engage in systematic assessment of strengths and resources
- Realize that while trauma, abuse, illness and struggle may be injurious, they may also be sources of challenge and opportunity
- Honor client-set goals and aspirations for growth and change
- Serve clients' and communities' interests through collaboration with them as directors of their own helping process
- Mobilize the strengths and resources of clients, relationships, and environments
- Link goals to specific doable actions that activate strengths and resources
- Engage in social work with a sense of caring and hope

### **Weaknesses of the Social Welfare Theory**

According to welfare critics, generous welfare provision may distort people's capacity to plan and control their lives and pervert norms whereas according to welfare proponents on the other hand, generous welfare provision alleviates poverty and inadequate social participation. In line with the 'command over resources' approach, generous welfare provision are believed to improve the conditions that determine choices, strengthen agency and the ability to direct the conditions of life as well as 'buffer' the extent to which individual disadvantages in one area are related to disadvantages in another area.

Generous welfare provision introduced in countries with different cultural and institutional conditions will not necessarily increase social participation and alleviate poverty. However, the findings of this paper, supported by a range of other studies (at both the macro and the micro level), seem to warrant encompassing state intervention and generous welfare provision to handle welfare problems, at least up to now.

While poverty is widely perceived as lacking material resources to meet needs, the concept of social exclusion emphasizes the processes by which individuals and groups become marginalized in contrasts social exclusion with distributional issues, i.e. implying a lack of material resources, while social exclusion focuses on relational issues such as inadequate social participation, lack of social integration, lack of power. Within the field of social policy, the emphasis is in particular on a multidimensional approach and dynamic understandings of social exclusion over time

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Methods and Data**

The paper adopted interpretivism research paradigm using descriptive cross-sectional design and inductive research approach. It involved a total of 38 informants who were purposively selected while the snowballing sampling technique was used in accessing street children. Semi-structured

interview, documentary review and observation method were conducted, through thematic and content data analysis techniques.

The paper covered areas of Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. Dar es Salaam was chosen because it makes up over one third of urban population in Tanzania (UN – Habitat, 2009) and leading in terms of the number of street children in Tanzania (URT, 2018). Due to increasing population growth, the Dar es Salaam infrastructure and basic services such as water, and health services are not adequate.

The population of this paper included street children who are living in the streets of Dodoma and Dar es Salaam regions. The street children consisted of those ones who were either living in streets or earn their living from the streets. The paper also included children who once lived in the streets but are under children’s homes or care centres. The paper also included social welfare officers, ward executive officers, and children’s homes staff as the units of inquiries. These are people who are knowledgeable on the causes of street children and how the family development status results to children streetism.

The paper adopted both snowballing and purposive sampling techniques. Snowballing sampling technique was used to reach children living in the streets of Dodoma and Dar es Salaam. Key Informants which included local government officials from Dodoma and Dar es Salaam regions cities and senior staff member from Non-governmental organizations involved with children and street children were interviewed in order to gather the qualitative data regarding the objectives of this study and its research questions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and took on average of 40 to 45 minutes.

Trustworthiness and authenticity of qualitative data were also observed. The researcher and her assistants familiarized themselves with the experiences of street children and variances guidelines and laws which stipulate their rights. Thematic data analysis technique was used to analyse the qualitative data. Brawn and Clarke (2006) contend that thematic data analysis technique provides rich and detailed findings as per each thematic area supported by thematic statements. The researcher focused on six steps when analyzing the collected data thematically. These steps consisted of data familiarization, development of initial codes, theme searching, identification and classification and report production. Content analysis was also used to analyze the data collected through documentary review.

Compliance to ethical issues is one of the most important aspects in research. In this study, informants were given an opportunity to withdraw from the research whenever they needed to do so. Fortunately no one withdrew from the study. Secondly, the researcher familiarized informants with the study objectives and guaranteed of confidentiality.



## **FINDINGS**

### **Family Support and Child Streetism**

Family support is also one of the factors which contribute to child streetism in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam. This paper analysed the influence of family support on child streetism focusing mainly on access to food, shelter, clothes, educational and health services, parenting style and family environment in general. The aforementioned indicators of family support were found to largely influence on the children's decision to live and work on the streets. Specifically, the study revealed the following specific findings on the influence of family support on child streetism which were categorized into three groups i.e. (a) family support on child access to basic needs and other social services; (b) parenting style and (c) family disintegration.

#### **Family Support on Child Access to Basic Needs and Other Social Services**

The findings from this paper revealed that economic status of the family may not guarantee access to basic needs and services by a child. Parents/guardians may have adequate income to sustain their families with good job but still their children may be deprived, neglected and excluded from satisfying their basic needs and services. One of the informants attested that he had no access to basic needs including health services and further added that it was better going to the street rather than waiting dying at home (Street Child, 14 years ago). The social welfare officer added that *"in societies that have free access to health and educational services, the magnitude of child streetism is relatively low despite the fact that the family is extremely poor"* (Social Welfare Officer, Female)". This implies that in areas that public services which are necessary for the survival of human beings are available, the challenge of street children is minimal but it was determined by the parents'/guardians willingness to support their children in accessing education services.

In the same way, (Shaefer, 2003) reveals that the family is the primary institution responsible to fulfill the basic needs of their children including providing security, love, food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and entertainments. CRC (1990), convinced that the family as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all their family members and particularly children, should afford the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community. Moreover, the family socializes children in their own culture and passes this culture to them through the socialization process. The family is considered as the reference point for the construction of children's norm, for shaping their personality and for the direction they take in their community life.

#### **CASE I: Family Support and Child Streetism**

Eunicea is a girl aged 15 years old and coming from the rural areas of the Southern part of Tanzania. She is now residing in Dar es Salaam as a street child since 2018. Limited access to education, health services and electricity drove her decision to migrate from a rural area to the urban area of Dar es Salaam as a street child. She contended that life is so hard in the rural areas and sometimes you have to walk more than 20 km to access health services. Schools are still far

from where they live in their rural village. It even took her 60 km (go and return) every day to go to school. For instance, Le Roux (2016) reveals that family violence is one of the factors that contribute to child streetism. Mandoyu, et al (2018) attest that parental disintegration leads to child streetism. On the other hand, Sofya, et al (2019) argues that abusive parental punishment, hate of step parents and parents' alcoholic behavior are the contributors of child streetism.

The findings in this paper are in line with (Dinku, 2005) that many families have broken up and children left to fend for themselves. As a result of family disintegration the proportion of the number street children in urban areas has reached alarming proportions. Many families are also increasingly characterized by absence of parents, lack of communication between parents and children, alcoholism and domestic violence. Many children run away to the streets to avoid violence and abuse in the family (Kopoka, 2000:9). Together with the high rate of family disintegration, children and parents reported physical abuse as a major factor pushing children away from home. Domestic violence especially physical and sexual abuses of children were among the main reasons why a large number of children run away from their homes and end up on streets (Bibars, 1998:2002). Parental illness (physical and mental), and drug and alcohol use among the fathers and stepfathers were considered as precipitating factors for family disruption. Children frequently used drugs, and said that drugs were easily obtained within the neighborhood and that parents usually punish their addicted children which in turn forces children to move away from the home.

### **Substance Use and Abuse of Parents and Guardians**

Substance use and abuse of parents and guardians contributed to the problem of street children in Tanzania. The findings revealed that some of the street children went to the street after the failure of their Parents and Guardians to take care of them. Substance abuse and use for mood-altering purposes included the use of drugs and excessive alcohol. For instance, one of the informants said that *"my parents did not have time for us .....they came home very late and did not know whether we had eaten or not. I had to go to the street for help"* (Male informant, 14 years of age, street child). Likewise, the use and abuse of substances also led to family separation and divorce hence single parenting. The findings showed that single parenting contributed to child streetism. Interview with some of the Street Children indicated that their mothers left their fathers because of the excessive use and abuse of substances, which later shift a family burden to a single parent with a limited income.

In this regard, substance use and abuse led to family disintegration and hence child streetism. It is supported by one of the informants who argued *"we had good life before my father engaged into the substance abuse which led my mother and I to run away from home and become homeless"*. Similarly to note, (Boakye-Boaten, 2006) Family violence especially step fathers or step mothers maltreatment leads children to become or end in street. Extreme physical abuse in the home promotes rebellious attitudes among many adolescents, and the children begin to perceive leaving the family as an alternative for their dependence and emancipation from their parents' abusive behavior. MOLSA (2005) also argued all forms of violence against children including physical or

mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect and maltreatment, deprivation and exploitation, including sexual abuse which leads children to leave their home and become on street.

### **Single Parenting Families**

Children in a single parenting families characterized by low-income level were prone to child streetism. Single parenting families resulted by the death of one parent or guardian, divorce, family separation and spouse failure to perform their roles. It was evident that spouses may live together but the family qualified to become a single parenting family. For instance, one of the informants argued that *“most families that street children are coming from were headed by a single parent despite the fact that both parents are living together.”* Today single parent families have become even more common than the so-called “nuclear family” consisting of a mother, father, and children. Today we see all sorts of single parent families: headed by mothers, fathers, and even by a grandparent raising their grandchildren. Life in a single parent household though common can be quite stressful for the adult and the children.

The single parent may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of juggling caring for the children, maintaining a job, and keeping up with the bills and household chores. And typically, the family’s finances and resources are drastically reduced following the parents’ breakup. Single parent families deal with many other pressures and potential problem areas that other families may not face. The single parent can help family members face these difficulties by talking with each other about their feelings and working together to tackle problems. Support from friends, other family members, and places of worship can help too. But if family members are still overwhelmed and having problems, it may be time to consult an expert or a licensed mental health professional.

### **Child-Headed Household and Child Streetism**

The findings also revealed that most children who led the families and lived in the child-headed households were likely to be in the street. Child-headed households were characterized by income poverty, inadequate care and accessibility to social and educational services and, child protection, which pushed children to be in the street. One informant argued that *“I had to become a street child in order to serve for my siblings who depend on me... we don’t have parents”* (A boy, 16 years of age). The fact that the majority of the street children are either of school going age who have never been enrolled in school or school dropouts, I am inclined to believe that school is a factor in whatever is behind the street children phenomenon. In fact, Munene, Kasente, Carasco, Epeju, Obwoya, Omona, and Kinyera (1997) indicated a 34 percent dropout rate in Kenya While Stone, Firme and Boyden (1994) marvel at the low completion rate in the primary cycle (15-22 percent) experienced in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Furthermore, the term urban-out-of school used to describe street children in Thika District suggests that school dropouts are closely associated with the street children phenomenon. I am particularly, intrigued by the large number of school dropouts found among the street children.

The size of the family also has a strong impact on the family’s economic situation, and the emotional ties families have for their children decreases as the size of the family increases. Families with more children incur more costs and require more efforts in terms of provision of

care and large family size have low emotional attachment for their children. Often poor families are unable to assume complete responsibility for raising and supporting their children if there are many. Large families provide less time, care, and money for each single child. When the father is working all day to earn enough to cover the basic needs of his family, children become deprived of their father's attention and affection, and even from his mere physical presence. A study on street children in the Philippines indicated that most street children come from large families with an average size of 6 to 10 members (UNICEF, no. d: 18). Another important dimension worthy of explication is some contradictions in the literature concerning street children and attachment to their families. As it is stated earlier, some scholars assert that children who have had little attachment to their primary giver have higher potential to leave their homes for the streets and vice versa. Different studies reflect that street children are not always seen as abandoned or without any family support. From their studies in Sudan and Ethiopia, children looked to the streets as an avenue to fulfill their basic needs (Boakye-Boaten 2006).

### **Child Neglect and Child Streetism**

The findings revealed that parenting style influenced children's decisions to either live in the street or not. It was evident in the collected data that when children are shown care and love are less likely to become street children. On the contrary, when a child is abused in any form i.e. whether psychological, physical or sexual abuse s/he may decides to run away from their homes and become street children. The findings showed that not necessarily that income level of the family may influence child streetism. A wealth family which characterized by abusive parenting and child neglect may push a child to go to the street which in most cases they were considered as the safe place to run to.

Abusive parenting associated with inadequate social support network services was one of the factors pushed children to be in the street. One informant stated that *"some of the admitted street children in the children's home were abused and neglected by their parents, guardians or relatives"*. Abusive acts that were mentioned included severe punishments, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Moreover, absence of care and love to children were among the factors mentioned to influence child streetism. Also relating to this paper, former research by Ward and Seager (2012) describe the so-called push-factors. Push-factors explain the reasons and lack of choices these children have before leaving their families for a life on the street. As mentioned earlier, push-factors are consequences of poverty, low education and lack of parenthood that pushes children onto the street. Other reasons for leaving home is because of the situations of abuse, domestic violence and poor family relationships that make these children eventually leave their homes. In fact, most of the parents of street children have a similar childhood filled with violence or abuse and do therefore not see the risks and dangers of the street life.

### **CASE II: Parenting Style, Child Abuse and Child Streetism:**

*Monkey Vinta 5 is a street child aged 16 years old in Dar es Salaam and his parents live in Mwanza Region. He had no an opportunity to meet his biological mother apart from seeing her in a picture. His father married another woman (his step mother) who treated him like nobody and when he*

*found no food at all when he returned from school. She normally gave him the leftovers while his father was always busy with his work and had no chance to talk to his child. Due to the prevailing situation, he quitted the primary school education and began to engage into begging and collecting iron steel.* The concept of parenting styles was first introduced by Diane Baumrind to explain differences in the way parents attempt to control and socialize their children. Do parents show lots of affection, or remain aloof? Do they expect blind obedience, or encourage children to ask questions? Do they enforce limits, or let kids do as they please? Here you will find information about the four basic parenting styles:

- Authoritative parenting, who encourage kids to be responsible, to think for themselves, and to consider the reasons for rules
- Authoritarian parenting, who expect their orders to be obeyed without question and who rely on punishment or the threat of punishment—to control their kids
- Permissive parenting, who are responsive and warm (a good thing) but also reluctant to enforce rules (a bad thing)
- Uninvolved parenting, who offer their children little emotional support and fail to enforce standards of conduct.

## **Family Violence**

Family violence had influence on child streetism especially when a family, which is characterized by family violence, was likely to push their children to the street. Different types of family violence particularly gender-based violence's were identified. From the responses of respondents reported to have experienced violence sometimes in their lives. Majority of respondents agreed that many women experienced gender-based violence includes psychological, sexual and physical violence. Since majority of respondents agreed that many women experienced physical, physical and sexual violence and this indicates that the problem is exiting and many women have been victims of gender based violence.

More importantly, majority of informants argued that women experience physical and sexual violence more than the psychological violence. With regard to physical violence, one informant stated that: *“Some people believe that women have to be disciplined by their husbands if they do wrong. If they are not beaten, they will not respect them”* (Male informant, social worker, 40 years of age).

The findings also revealed that structural and functional social support networks adopted different approaches towards addressing GBV and its consequences. Structural social support networks such as family members and relatives mainly adopted for the voluntary measures in order to achieve reconciliation within the families. However, sexual violence incidences in most cases were not reported to the structural social support networks. The findings in this paper were in line with

Mokomane and Makaoae (2015) describe the need for information in how to approach these children. It is knowledge-needed in all countries and communities, especially since this is a phenomenon shown in different ways. It is not basically about describing the factors that pushes children onto the street, there is also important to understand the dynamic of how street children work together and the factors that draw the children onto the street.

But physical violence incidences were reported to and addressed by the structural social support networks. Structural social support networks were sometimes used to address physical violence cases that were withdrawn from the legal enforcement institutions or considered to be the initial mechanism to address physical violence. But mostly, it was used after withdrawing physical violence cases from the legal enforcement institutions. One informant argued that *“when I was beaten by my husband I reported him to the police station in order to get a form (i.e. PF3) which would enable me to access health services. But later on, I decided to withdraw the case because our relatives wanted to reconcile us”* (Women informant, 38 years of age, business woman). The findings revealed that structural social support networks organise family meetings, individual meetings with the victim and perpetrators before involving the larger group of relatives and sometimes religious leaders and respected elders within the community are involved. But, religious leaders and respected elders were involved when family members and relatives failed to reconcile spouses.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary**

The paper concludes that lack of family support to children contributes to child streetism. Lack of family support to a child to access basic needs and service regardless of the employment and income status of the household head push children to join the street life. Likewise, substance abuse and use of parents and guardians, family violence, single parenting with limited economic opportunities, presence of child headed household under poverty, child neglect and abuse also pushed children to join the street life.

### **Conclusion**

In this case, family disintegration and separation resulted from irresponsible behaviours and practices of parents and guardians promoted child streetism. Hence, family as a system which has a responsibility to ensure children’s welfare is well protected and managed, may contribute to child streetism if it is disintegrated and no proper mechanisms to unity such family. Likewise, poor orphaned families are also likely to end up to the street due to the lack of parental guidance and counseling. Moreover, family relatives thirsty on family properties left children with no choice apart from joining the street life because they are left poor with no any other means of survival. Hence, irresponsible relatives as a social system contribute to child streetism.

### **Recommendations**

Government of Tanzania through the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children should basically pay attention to the increasing number of street children in

the country, by formulating intervention programs that can reduce the number of children who live in streets. This could be through a supportive mechanism such as the provision of clothing, schooling and medical care and also sustainable programs that will boost the economic status of families such as soft loans and training on entrepreneurship, small scale agricultural activities, and also fishing or animal keeping. All these activities should intend to give economic strength to the poor rural families so that they may be able to handle families' responsibilities. When these are provided and children are sure of them, it will automatically help the number getting reduced because children will be able to stay home with families.

The NGOs in Tanzania should be encouraged to participate and support effort towards reducing street children by fighting against abuse, child labor and denial of human rights, such as use of street children to selling drugs. The ability to deal with these problems which hinder the reduction of street children need close attention from the NGOs.

Religious leaders have to play their role accordingly by filling spirit to their followers so that they abide to the teachings of their holy books, in order for them to become good parents who will be responsible for their children and families; thus reducing the 58 possibility of children leaving their homes and moving to urban areas seeking to meet their basic needs.

Family development was found to largely influence child streetism. It was found that areas with an availability of better public services and easy accessibility experienced a low level of child streetism. Hence, it is important to strengthen public services distribution mechanisms to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas in terms of the quality and accessibility of public services by families.

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