

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**STREET CHILDREN IN HAWASSA:
ANALYSIS OF THEIR LIFE SITUATION**

By:

Zenebe yohannes

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EPPLE (PhD)

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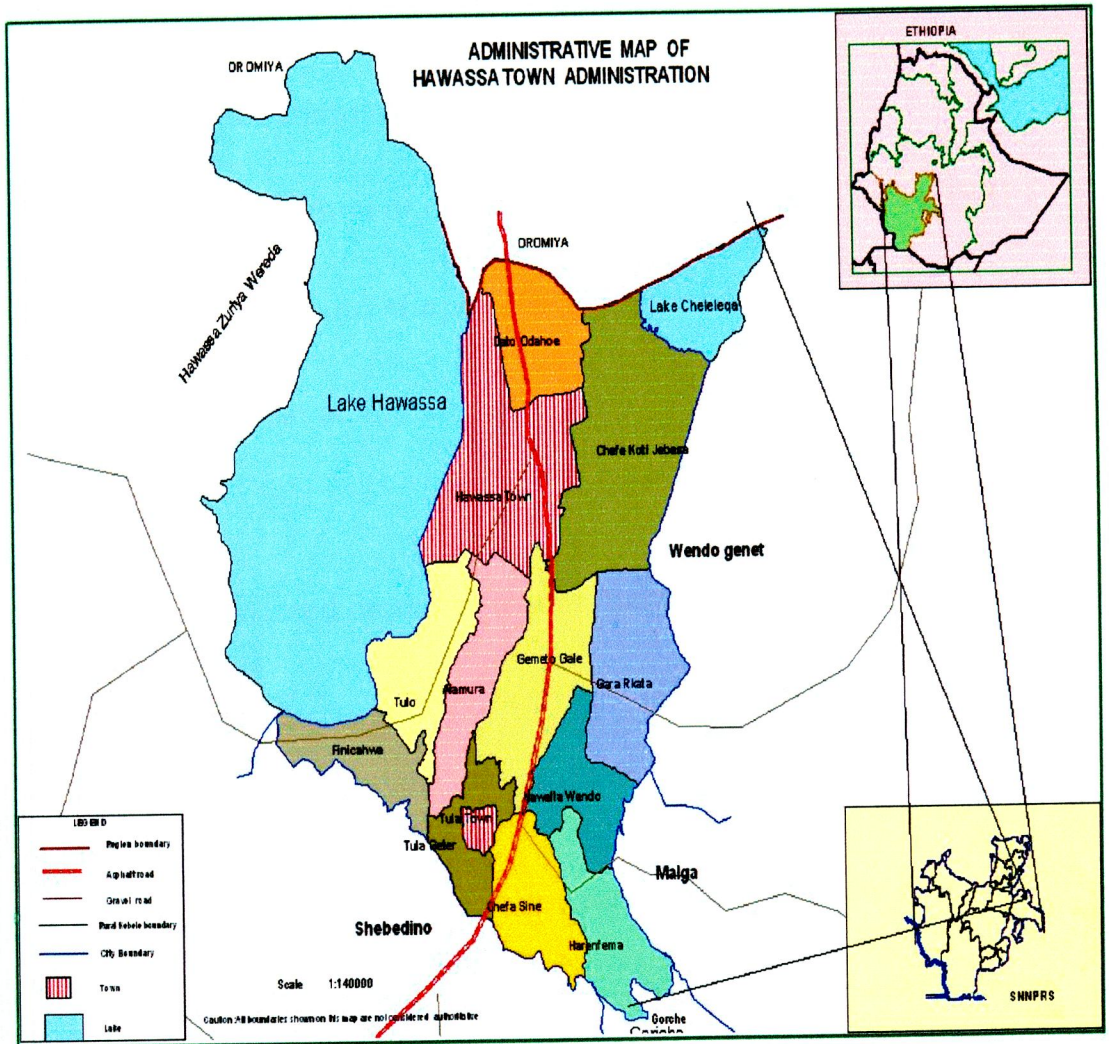
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Source: SNNPR BOFED GIS case team

Glossary of Amharic Terms

<i>Autobus Tera</i>	Bus station
<i>Chat</i>	Mild plant stimulant which is chewed
<i>Derg</i>	Military government of Ethiopia during the years 1974-1991
<i>Injera</i>	A flat and round shape locally prepared pancake.
<i>Kebele</i>	The smallest administrative unit
<i>Ketema</i>	Town
<i>Kolo</i>	whole roasted cereal of wheat, barley and bean etc.
<i>Sefer</i>	District
<i>Tekeligizat</i>	Governor General
<i>Woyalla</i>	A boy whose role is calling and serving passengers in taxi
<i>Woreda</i>	An administrative division which is immediate higher to Kebele

ACRONYMS

ADC	Agriculture Development Center
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
FGDs	Focus Group Discussion
FSCE	Forum on Street Children Ethiopia
HTA	Hawassa Town Administration
ICCB	International Catholic Child Bureau
ILO	International Labor Organization
MOLSA	Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OMCT	Organization against Torture
RSA	Regional Statistics Abstract
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Abstract

This study attempts to explore the life situation of street children who live and work on the street of Hawassa. The study mainly aimed at investigating the factors contributed for streetism, survival strategies of street children, challenges of street life and the present living and working condition of these children. To better understand street children and to portray their everyday life situation qualitative research method was employed as the sole technique of data collection. Data pertinent to the study was gained through guided interview, in-depth interview, focus group discussion and personal observation.

This study assumes children as competent social actors who have certain freedom of choice and action. To this effect, the basic concept of structuration theory, a theory concerned with the intersection between knowledgeable and capable social agents and the wider social systems and structure in which they implicate was employed as a theoretical framework to address the research problem as well as to realize and interpret the situation of the studied group.

The findings of this research depict that every child has a reason for being on the street. For some children, the street is an escape from domestic violence and abuse. For others, the street is a means of survival in supplementing their family's income and in fulfilling their basic necessities. Once children join street life, they struggle to survive through undertaking a wide variety of activities which mainly take place in the informal sector. Besides, as integral part of survival strategy, street children interact with each other through multiple networks and over the range of issues and concerns that constitute social life. This social network serves as a buffer against vulnerability, shocks and livelihood constraints on one hand. On the other, it is characterized by hierarchies and unequal power relations between and among children of different age sex which contribute to conflict and competition.

Life on the street is a tough reality. The living and working situation make up street children vulnerable to various kinds of, physical, sexual, psychological, and drug abuse. Accessibility to basic necessities like food, cloth, shelter, health care and other services are also severely restricted to these children.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The phenomenon of street children has long existed in many regions of the world, and it became one of the many complex social issues confronting our world today (UNICEF, 2006).

Accurate information about the global extent of street children is nonexistent. This is partly due to definitional difficulties and mobile circumstances of these children. However, different estimates are given in various reports. The United Nations has been attributed as estimating the population of street children worldwide at 100 million, with the number rising daily (FSCE, 2003:2). The vast majority of these children, however, work and live in large urban areas of the developing world (UNICEF, 2006:3).

Particularly in Africa the problem of street children and the presence of large number of children in major cities has now become a major issue. It is instructive to note here that the emergence of large number of children on the streets of Africa today is partly a reflection of extreme poverty and the lack of social services that are endemic in many highly populated urban areas in Africa (Kopoka, 2000).

There is no accurate data that clearly explain when and how streetism emerged in Ethiopia. Some studies, however, indicate that the number of street children in the country increased dramatically in the late 1980s and early 1990s mainly

due to civil strife, demobilization of soldiers, effects of structural adjustments, relocation programs mass displacement and cyclic drought (Veale, 1996).

As in many cities and towns of Ethiopia, the scale of the problem of street children in different towns of SNNPR region has reached unprecedented levels. The region is estimated to have 28,955 of such children (Habtamu, 1997).

Hawassa, the newly and fast growing town of SNNPR is hosting a large number of street children. Since the town became the regional capital in 1993, there occurred escalation in the number of children who came out to the street (FSCE 2003:7).

It is with this background that this research is primarily designed to delve into the life situation of street children who live and work in the streets of Hawassa town.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Worldwide, the problem of children roaming the street endlessly is escalating. It is a problem of both developed and developing nations. Despite the existence of the problem of streetism in every country it is more prevalent in poor nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America (UNFPA, 2003).

Like in other developing countries, the situation of children in general and that of street children in particular is at a very critical stage in Ethiopia. Despite their visibility, these children have more often served as tragic illustrations of neglect and vulnerability than as genuine targets of policies, programmers and services (FSCE, 2003; MOLSA, 2005). Besides, in most urban areas street children constitute a marginalized group. They have little or no relationship with major institution of childhood such as family, education and health which society considers the most essential (Innocenti, 2002).

In Hawassa, today it is very common to observe numerous children sleeping and working on main road sides and garbage places. The increase in depth and magnitude of streetism is well known, however, little is known about the problems street children face and their life situation in the study area. Some available studies on the issue of streetism in Hawassa (FCSCE, 2003, MOLSA, 2005; Zenebe, 1996) remained to be shallow quantitative summaries and fail to provide a real insight into street children's experiences. Moreover, these research works do not give due attention to children's own attitude, opinion and perspective on life at the street.

Therefore, the justification of this study on the situation of street children emanates from the fact that this group of the society has their own life experiences which can be explained in light of their perspective. By so doing, the research attempted to probe into the factors for streetism, survival strategies of street children, challenges of streetism, their present living and working conditions and future aspirations. In the entire discourse of this study, great attention is given to the perception and opinion of street children to express themselves and their life experience as a center of study. As a result, understanding their perspective, ideas, opinions, the factors for, trends and consequences of streetism will help in planning intervention strategies aimed at enabling street children to look for better opportunity.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to understand the life situation of street children in Hawassa Town from an emic perspective.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- identify the reason why children join street life in Hawassa;
- analyze the various ways of survival strategies (livelihood activities, threats, opportunities, access to basic necessities) while they are working and living in the street;
- Identify the social relations and network developed between and among street children and how these contribute to their life situation.

1.4 Methodology

In this study only qualitative methods, traditionally the dominant research methods in the field of Social Anthropology were employed. These methods were employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the general life situation of street children from their own perspective, as the researcher assumed that the children should be self conscious actors.

1.4.1 Guided interview

The researcher employed a structured interview with 40 selected street children, to acquire basic socio-demographic profile of the street children including sex, age, duration on the street, ethnicity, education, place of origin, family occupation, family size and status of biological parents. Also used to get in to first contact and later selected 15 children for in-depth interviews.

1.4.2 In-depth Interview

In-depth interview was one of the principal methods of data collection implemented in this research in order to obtain more qualitative data. Information was solicited from street children, social workers from Women and Children Affairs Office of the town and concerned municipality officials through this method.

Out of the 40 children, Fifteen street children were selected purposively for in-depth interview. These children were composed of seven “of street” children and eight “on street” children from both sexes. The selection of these children was based on their ability to express their life experience and their interest to discuss the situation of their lives, as identified during the guided interviews.

The questions of in-depth interview covered a wide range of issues with emphasis on the factors contributed for being street child, survival strategies, and problems encountered in daily life experience, access to basic necessities, the present living and working condition and future aspiration.

An in-depth interview was also convened with three social workers from the Office of Women and Children Affairs and two officials from the town's municipality. In an interview held with these respondents, the researcher raised issues such as the nature of the problem, factors for streetism, access to basic necessities and major challenges of street life.

1.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

Primary data was also achieved through FGDs with street children. Accordingly, two focus groups were formed with selected eight boys and six girls from both 'on and of street children' categories, who were living and working on the street for more than one year. Girls were separated from boys in the formation of FGD, because they usually have different life experience in the street. Also I expected girls to speak more freely in the absence of males. Some of the children who partook in the FGD were those who had been previously enrolled in an in-depth interview about their personal experiences. The selection criteria were based on sex (male and female), age (younger and relatively older children) and occupation (type of street economic activities engaged in). The major aim of FGDs was to substantiating, verifying, building on and adding to the results from other sources of data.

Major discussion guidelines with participants include the general life experience of a group of street children, their common challenges and problems encountered while living and working on the street, reason for being a street child, survival strategies and their interaction among themselves and with others. The researcher took the role of a moderator during the discussion.

Table 1. Summary of street children who participated in this study

Data collection methods	Male		Female		
	Age	No	Age	No	Total
Guided interview	7-18	31	11-18	9	40
In-depth interview	9-18	9	12-18	6	15
Focus groups discussion	13-18	8	13-18	6	14

1.4.4 Observation

Observation was another major means of data collection employed in this study as observation provides a firsthand insight into the situation of the studied group. Observation did mainly take simultaneously with researcher work with individual interviewees or focus group discussions. The researcher prepared an observation checklist to record data on what street children were doing, their physical appearance, feeding and sleeping places, relation between and among themselves and with others, and different walk of life of these children in the town.

1.5 Secondary Sources

Secondary data were used to conceptualize and provide clear ideas to analyze the research work. It also helps to gain better insight of the issue under study before getting into field work. The researcher used secondary data from different sources that comprise published and unpublished sources. Especially, documents produced by different organizations that are working on street children such as UNICEF, FSCE and MOLSA research results were used according to their relevance.

1.6 Selection of Research Site and Informants

On the basis of preliminary exploration and information from municipality officials of the town, four sites with high concentration of street children were identified. All informants involved in this study were purposefully selected from these sites, namely, *Awtobus Tera* (Bus station), Piassa, Bermuda and St. Gabriel Church area.

The researcher set some criteria for selecting informants with consideration to diversity. Hence, street children having diverse geographical locations, livelihood activities, age, ethnicity, working and living background were targeted and selected as informants. The researcher believed that information obtained from diverse participants would ensure a broader picture of street life in Hawassa.

In order to obtain rich qualitative data the researcher decided to select a limited number of children. Thus, the researcher selected 40 children, 10 from each side. Out of these, 31 were boys and 9 were girls. The age range of the participants was 7 to 18 years.

Table 2. Age and Number of Street Children who participated in the Study.

Age	Sex		Total
	M	F	
7-12	6	1	7
13-14	15	4	19
15-18	10	4	14
Total	31	9	40

1.7 Documentation and Data Analysis

The data obtained through the aforementioned methods were organized in line with the objectives of the research and interpretation of the data was done. In this process, transcription of information from interviews and FGDs were primarily carried out. Besides, field notes based on observation by the researcher during the data collection were organized and included to enrich and validate the discussion of the findings. In some cases, the researcher also used direct quotes of respondents which were believed to articulate best either individual or group life experiences.

Data gained in the process of interviews, FGDs, observation or from documents were analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures that involve documentation, analysis and representation.

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to four research sites of Hawassa town.: *Autobus Tera* (Bus station), *Bermuda sefer*, Piassa and St. Gabriel Church area and it focused on the life situation of 40 selected street children living and working on the aforementioned sites of the study area.

Though decisive efforts made to come up with rich and dependable data to address the research objective, some problems were encountered while conducting this research. The following were the major ones.

- Recent and accurate statistical data about street children were not available in study area.
- Due to mobile nature of street children it is hardly possible to get and interview them effectively.
- Some street children do not know their accurate age and may present their age by guess .This may have affected the validity of the data.

1.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher considered the ethical values of the children who were subject to the study. These ethical issues include informed consent, confidentiality and privacy. Informed consent was given prime importance in this study. Hence, the research process began by informing the children on the aim of the study and by asking street children to what extent they wished to participate in the research. Then, prior to the conduct of interview, all the respondents were provided with information about the objective of the study. The researcher also paid 5-10 birr to all children who took part in in-depth interview and focus group discussion by taking in to account the time they spend with the researcher. Moreover, children were told to be free in expressing themselves as the information they provide would be kept confidential, for their names would be mentioned by pseudonym.

1.10 The Study Area

1.10.1 Physical Background

Hawassa is located in the southern nation nationalities and peoples region (SNNPR) on the shores of Lake Hawassa, in the Great Rift Valley. It lies on the Trans- African High way; an international road that stretched from Cairo (Egypt) to Cape Town (South Africa). Regarding its absolute Geographical location, it is located between 7°13'N latitude and 38° 28'E longitude; 273 Km south of Addis Ababa (HTA; 2009:1). The town is bounded by Lake Hawassa in the West, Hawassa Zuria wereda in the south, Wondo Genet wereda in the Eastern part and Oromiya Regional Government in the North (Ibid).

The town has the total area coverage of 50 sqkm. Currently, Hawassa is divided into eight sub cities. These are: *Hayek Dar, Menaharia, Tabor, Misrak, Bahil Adarassh, Addis Ketema, Mehal Ketem* and *Hawela Tula* sub-city (HTA, 2009:2)

1.10.2 Population

Followed by the town's promotion as a political and administration seat of SNNPR in 1993, and the subsequent expansion of infrastructures, industries, government and private colleges; the migration of people from different parts of the country has been accelerated. Thus, this situation has speeded up the growth of the town's population. According to the 2007 census, the population size of Hawassa town was 217, 283 of which 110,719 were male and 106, 581 were females. Children share 45.9% (99,770) from total population of the town (RSA 2006:24).

1.10.3 Foundation and Growth of the Town

The principal cause for the foundation of the town was the natural beauty of the lake Hawasssa. Even the city got its name from the name of Lake which means 'big' in Sidama language. Before the establishment of the town, the land along the edge of the lake was grazing land for the pastoralists from the adjacent places. The existence of water throughout the year and the availability of grass for grazing gradually attracted the highlanders to visit an area consonantly. As a result, there was a steady conflict between the Sidama people who inhabited the southern part and the Arsi Oromo in the northern part of the lake area (Zelege and Serkalem 2007:3).

When Ras Mengesha Seyalm was appointed as the governor of '*Sidama Tekeliyizat*' in 1957, Emperor Hailesilassie ordered him to prepare a suitable master plan for the foundation of a tourist attraction town along the shores of the Lake. Accordingly, seven Ethiopian experts started the planning work in coordination with Italian engineers. During the same year, the construction of the 'Lake palace' (temporary palace of king Hailesilassie in the town) was built at the southern beach of the lake (Zelege and Serkalen, 2007:13).

The plan of the town had been completed in 1960, and people were provided with pieces of land for construction of residences on the basis of the plan. The agricultural development center (ADC) was also founded in the same year after the investigation of the region's agricultural potential by Yugoslavia and Ethiopia experts (Ibid, 17).

The time when Hawassa emerged as an urban center was the moment that royal families and other government officials commenced mechanized farms in the town and its surroundings also greatly attracted the attention of the officials and the royal families as a recreational situate (Tekelu 1987:36).

Since 1993, the town had been serving as the capital city of SNNPR and the Sidama Zone Administration. This continuous promotion of the town as a result of political and administration centers in different regimes has become the milepost to its brisk urbanization process, rapid population growth and development. Each promotion was followed by further infrastructural construction and opening of different administration offices, social-economic institution and manufacturing sectors (Zelege and Serkalem 2007:17).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Defining Child and Childhood

The term 'child' does not have a generally accepted definition. The biological, legal and cultural considerations or variations in the meaning of the term 'child' contribute to this complexity. Poluha (2007:7) explained that:

Though children and childhood is a human universal, it is well known that the ways in which human beings interpret and understand childhood, or the various ideas they have of what it is to be a child and how a child should be treated, vary cross culturally.

She further elaborated that, the variation also implies that in a hierarchical society even adults can be treated as children; the opposite exists, thus where there is a belief in reincarnation, infants might be approached by elders with a respect otherwise only shown by children towards adults (Ibid).

Similarly, Fyfe find out that in some communities' age may not be adequate for explaining 'Childhood'. The fulfillment of certain social rites and obligations may be a significant requirement in defining 'childhood' and 'adulthood'. The integration of children into the socio-economic life of their community may begin so early and the transition from childhood to adulthood may be almost indistinguishable (Fyfe, 1993:6). For these various reasons, 'children' and 'childhood' must be understood as socially and culturally constructed and not as universal phenomena. However, Fyfe believes that, children as a group

could be distinguished from other groups of human society by their age rather than other things (Ibid).

In different literature, international organizations and conventions as well as national laws the term 'child' is defined based on biological age. The UN convention, Article 1, on the rights of the child defines the term child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless, under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier." (Eade and Williams 2000: 270). Likewise, ILO convention (1999, Article 2, No.182) define a child as "a person who is below the age of eighteen years." The revised family code (2000, Article: 215) of Ethiopia, on its part defines a child as "a person of either sex who has not attained the full age of eighteen" (OMCT 2001: 14).

The above legal instruments and most researchers applied commonly eighteen years as some kind of benchmark of age limit in defining child. Thus, this study also considers street children, both boys and girls of 7-18 years of age who earn their living on the streets and stay there for most, or all of the day.

2.2 Anthropology of children

Anthropological studies that incorporate children are recent phenomena (Nardos, 2006). Some earliest studies in social anthropology such as by Margret Mead (1928) and Ruth Benedict (1935) intentionally focused on and illustrated cross- cultural variations in child-rearing practices. However, these studies did not question the common understanding that children were passive recipients of adult socialization techniques. Most researchers at time thus looked upon children as immature and unable to communicate their own

experience; consequently, in order to obtain information about children, adults or parents were interviewed, not children themselves (Poluha, 2007:7). Similarly, Ardener (1977), also argued that in various earliest studies, "Children have been seen as a 'mute' because nobody had listened to their voice" (Cited in Nardos, 2006:16).

However, in spite of the fact that children were neglected and voiceless for a long time; the second half of twentieth century has implied a great shift in the study of children. In this regard, for instance an anthropological study of Hecht (1998) among street children of North-East Brazil can be considered as one of the implications of a paradigm shift in the study of children. In his detail ethnographic account, Hecht represented the voices of street children clearly. He also insights, how children can effectively understand and explain their daily activities, survival strategies, dreams, frustration and etc. Therefore, according to the new paradigm it was stressed that children have knowledge as well as individual experience and agency, and research with them has to depart from the understanding that children must be viewed as subjects rather than objects (Poluha, 2007:7-8).

2.3 Concept and Definition of the term "Street Children"

The meaning and definition of the term 'street children' is contested among scholars, policy makers, practitioners, politicians and the general public. Many researchers who conducted their research on the issue of street children have been preoccupied with the problem of classifying and defining the term 'street

child' (Aptekar, 1994; Cosgrove, 1990; Heinonen, 2002; Angelli, 1986; Luccihni, 1986 ;).

A widely accepted set of definition commonly attributed to UNICEF defines street children as "boys and girls for whom 'the street' (including unoccupied dwellings waste and etc) has become their home and/or source of livelihood and who are inadequately protected or supervised by responsible adults" (ICCB: 1995:58). Here, the criteria for classifying street children are the type of relationship they have with their families and their lack of family ties or magnitude of deviant behavior/and the place where they live. UNICEF also made efforts to categorize street children in to four distinct categories. These are: children at high risk, children on the street, children of the street and abandoned children (Ibid).

-Children at high risk: poor working children, living at home but earning money on the streets for their families and themselves.

-Abandoned children: homeless children who lost their parents or were rejected by their parents.

-Children on the street: children who spend a lot of their time on the street but have some family support and live at home on a regular basis.

-Children of the street: actually live on the street (or outside of a normal family environment). Family ties may exist but are tenuous and are maintained only casually or occasionally. They work, live and sleep in the streets.

However, the concept of 'street children' has been increasingly recognized by sociologist and anthropologists to be a socially constructed category as in

reality these children do not form a clearly defined homogeneous population or phenomenon (Hecht, 1998; Glasur, 1990; Henionen, 2002). As a result, they deconstruct the stereotypical images of street children when making the distinction between those children who are *in* the street and those who are *of* the street. Anthropologist, Hecht (1998) in a study of street children in Northeast Brazil, highlights the difficulties in using the term 'street child' as a blanket term referring mainly to any poor child found in the streets. He states that it is a term that was widely spread through a UNICEF document and thus became the catch phrase any poor child found in the street. A child who merely realizes his/her daily activities on the street are it working, begging, stealing, hanging out, etc., is in the street. The street is his/her social place. They are those who still maintain ties to their families and have a place to sleep at night. Children who are of the street are usually classified as those who have completely left their families and actually sleep on the streets. Contrary to popular belief, this group is in fact, a very small minority of those who are considered street children (Ibid). It is important to note however, that there is no strict dichotomy between the two classifications, therefore making it difficult to pinpoint those children who do and do not have home to which to return.

Hecht, raises the important question as to how many times a child has to actually sleep on the street to be considered a street child? Moreover, he also highlights the fact that more often than not, children who have homes to which they can return often opt to spend the night in the street due to certain fears/concerns about returning home. For example, some children who are

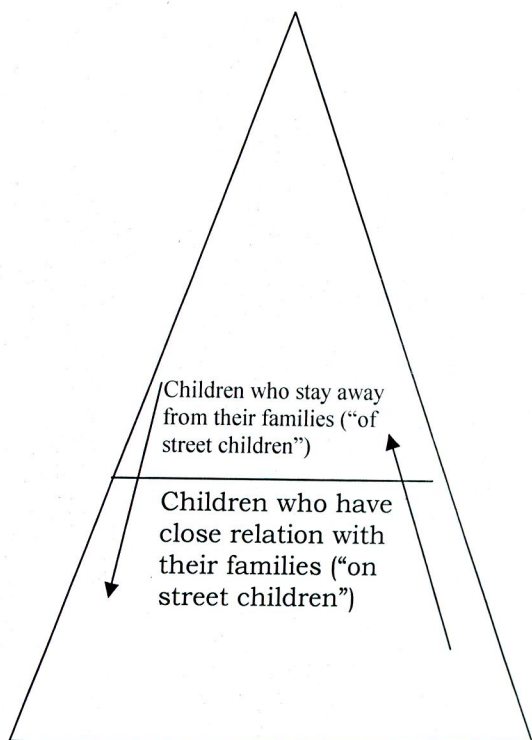
expected to work in the streets during the day and bring home something, be it food or money, end up sleeping on the streets rather than returning home empty handed at night. Furthermore, at times, it is also more convenient for some children to sleep in the street if it means that they are closer to school or the area where they work or if it's a matter of personal safety. Given the distance and safety involved in the children's commute, it is often better to spend the night in the street instead of having to worry about the commute and money spent on transportation. Additionally, children who are in the street do not necessarily return to their homes every night (Ibid)

Similarly, Glasur(1990) pointed out that:

The use of the word 'street' in conjunction with the word "child" denotes aberration. Children who play in gardens are not called garden children, nor are children who play in the attic referred to as attic children. Both are merely children and the locations of their play simply say something about where they do things, not who they are. Yet the combination "street" and "child" suggests that child's location is so peculiar that it become a mark of identity. (Cited in Hecht: 1998:102)

Instead of viewing 'street children' as a homogeneous group of children, Glasuer further stated that, "these children are very different and live under a variety of circumstances (Hecht, 1990). Hence, Glasuer use a symbol of triangle divided in the middle by a line or a threshold to develop a new construction of the category of 'street children'. In the lower part of the triangle there are children who have close relationships with their families. It includes children who live and work with their families on the street. This group consists of children who live and work at home but work on the street, usually referred to as 'street children' (Glasuer, 1990:159). In the upper part of the triangle there

are the children who stay away from their families. For these children the street is a public space where one can stay or place to stay when there is no other place to go. In this group there are also children who grow up in orphanages or institutions (Ibid). Children from the upper part very seldom cross the line to the lower part of the triangle, but children from the lower part can occasionally step over the line and sometimes move across it and stay in the upper part, becoming 'children of street'. Therefore, street children suddenly change their status from children 'on' the street to children 'of' the street or vice versa and alternate between home and the street. In some cases, they move away from the street and involve in non-street based activities or vice versa. Crossing the line is usually the outcomes of long process during which families including children, struggle to manage themselves (Ibid, 160)



Source: Glasuer, 1990:159

On the other hand, Lucchini (1989) conceptualized street children comprising of two dimensions: the 'physical' and the 'social'. The physical dimension refers to the amount of the child spends in the street; whereas the social dimension refers to the existence or absence of a significant relationship with parents or adults.

Agrawals (1999) define a street children as: "A street children is one who lives on the streets most of the time; works in the streets on jobs of low status and income; lives in the exposed conditions of the street; has no or little parental supervision or other social protection; has either intermittent or no family contact at all; is vulnerable to the hazards of urbanization and urban living conditions." Therefore, this study uses Agrawals usage of the term street children because it takes into account the definitions, descriptions and criticisms mentioned above.

2.4 Magnitude of the Problem

It is inevitably accepted that the phenomena of street children living, working and surviving on the street of cities are a global agenda observed in the developed and developing countries (Emebet et al, 2000:2)

Street children, for all their visibility on urban street corners, have proved elusive to statisticians. There are two main obstacles to counting street children: definitional difficulties and children's fluid circumstances. Children's use of public spaces is fluid and may be undetected. Sleeping, working and recreational places may be highly insecure and children may keep out of sight

to protect themselves. They are on the move at work or change base camps, whether to avoid police or other street inhabitants or to improve earnings which in turn lead to both double counting and under-counting. Working hours during the week, month and year are variable, changing with agricultural seasons, school holidays, public demand, police tactics, friendships, family situations along with other personal and societal factors. Meanwhile, fluid lifestyles make observation and maintaining contact with individual respondents over time complex undertakings (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003).

Distinguishing children from young adults by observation or even in interview can be problematic. Counting (visible) street children in any given day or night, week or month, can yield dramatic variations in numbers. The lack of fixed locations for sleeping, working and hanging out also presents difficulties for assessing trends in numbers over time: street children counted in one location in one month/year may be quite different in another month/year, as particular children move around and as locations become more or less attractive collectively to children in the streets (Ibid).

Definitional problems, children's elusiveness and other difficulties in distinguishing 'street children' from other inhabitants of public spaces are compounded by the non standardized use of data collection methods. Some studies for example count children only found in public spaces, others include street children resident in welfare shelters. These also undermine data reliability (Hecht, 1998).

In the 1980s, UNICEF estimated that the number of street children in the world had reached 80 million, and that 40 million of these were living in Latin America (Tacon 1981, 1983 in Aptekar 1994). These numbers have been questioned and said to be an over-estimate by some analysts. The anthropologist Tobias Hecht (1998), doing research on street children in Recife, Brazil, speaks in further detail of the confusion of numbers of street children. Hecht sees this confusion as a process where numbers are uncritically used and treated as facts, without investigating their source (Ibid: 99). One person cites another, who already cited another and the numbers end up living a life of their own. One of the reasons behind the allegedly misguided numbers of street children is said to not only stem from definitional disagreements, but also due to organizations manipulating numbers in order to receive external attention and funding for their projects (Ennew 1996).

The latest estimates put the numbers of these children as high as 100 million' (UNICEF, 2002: 37). And even more recently, the exact number of street children is impossible to quantify, but the figure almost certainly runs into tens of millions across the world (UNICEF, 2005: 40-41). It is debatable whether numbers of street children are growing globally or whether it is the awareness of street children within societies which has grown. While there are understandable pressures for policies to be informed by aggregate numbers, estimates of street child populations, even at city levels, are often hotly disputed and can distract rather than inform policy makers.

When we look at the geographical distribution of street children, it is estimated that 40 million children in Latin America, 25 million in Africa, 35 million in Asia live and work on the streets of cities and towns (UNICEF, 2006). To help us grasp the reality of how many children are living on the streets, various comparisons have been made: “Twice as many street children in Latin America as there are people in Canada; or more street children globally than the population of France and Britain combined” (Kilbourn, 2001:13).

In Ethiopia the problem of street children has become a countrywide problem with over 100,000-200,000 children living and working on the streets of cities and towns (FSCE, 2003:2). Since 1980s, the number of street children in major towns of the country has been increasing. This is also true for the study area, Hawassa (Ibid).

Though there are no accurate and recent data indicating the number of street children in SNNPRS, it is estimated that 2.500 street children are living and working in Hawassa town (FSCE, 2003:17).

2.5 Factors contributed to street life

Multiple factors can be identified in making the life of a child difficult at home and contribute to a child’s decision to join the street. Some of these causes that spur a child to streetism seem to be universal, while others are culture specific. The following factors are some of the reasons why street children live on the street, as found out by different researchers.

2.5.1 Economic factors

Many studies in developing countries relate economic poverty as the main, and sometimes the only cause leading children to join the street. Poverty has been presented both as a direct and indirect factor that pushes child onto the street. It is argued that children move out of the household as a direct coping strategy, to diversify the household's portfolio of income generating (UNICEF, 2002). It is also indicated that most of the impoverished families cannot fulfill the basic needs of their children and thus push their children to work on the street to supplement family income (MOLSA and Barnen 1995:98).

UNICEF, states that “relatively few industrialized country children and adolescent claim to work on the street in order to contribute to the families but developing country children show much more interest in helping to maintain family solidarity and economic viability. Typically, they also claim to receive emotional satisfaction from contributing to the family income” (UNICEF, 2002:15).

Furthermore, the push effect on children of low income generating parents could be manifested by parents who encourage their children to earn additional income for the family because of parent's failure to fulfill basic needs of children in which case the children themselves are inclined to satisfy their personal needs (MOLSA and Radd Barnen, 1995:98).

A study conducted by FSCE (2003) in eight major towns of Ethiopia, including the study area, found out that the majority of children left home and were on the streets to work due to lack of basic necessities at home conditions of

chronic poverty rather than other things (FSCE, 2003:4). Similarly, Emebet (2005:161) in her study on street children said, "Though, the reasons that pushed or pulled children to live and work on the street were various, poverty is the common denominator in all cases."

2.5.2. Social factors

The majority of street children are being in the street worldwide, because of the socio-cultural situation of their families. Social factors like family disintegration, violence and abuse at home, as well as certain cultural practices are identified as some of the factors which force children to join street life in different parts of the world.

In line with this family disintegration, Veale stated that the families of street children are mostly disorganized and chaotic with a predominance of broken and single parent. Streetism is higher when children live either in step parent families or with related adults than when they live with parents" (Veale, 1996:23).

Brannen and O'Brain explain that:"It is also common to find separated/single parents establishing a stable relationship with another partner. This implies that a step father (in some cases step mother) and half brother/sisters live within their family nucleus. For the child a new choice from either the mother or the father can bring about major changes and challenges such as moving to another house or neighborhood with his new family or having to accept new younger or older brother and/or sisters." (Brannen and O'Brian, 1996). It is obvious that under these circumstances the child may face some challenges

and look for the street as an alternative place. Although family disintegration affects the whole family the most vulnerable groups are particularly children who need care and attention, love and follow up in the development of their personality and learning activities (UNCIEF 2006:41). However, it is true that not every disintegration of the family leads children to go out to the streets. It mainly happens, when disintegration is related or combined with other factors, such as economic problems of the family or domestic violence (Sweta et al, 2005:5).

Violence and abuse at home is another common causal social factor for streetism. Children may prefer street life to life at home because of violence and abuse by their family members. Thus, children who experience physical, psychological and sexual violence at home, choose street life as the alternative.

Carson (1992:549) explained that the family is believed to be the most conventional environment for the physical, mental, social and spiritual development of children. On the contrary however parental rejection, anti social parental model and mismanagement of parenthood exist in the parents of street children. This involves alcoholism, brutality and anti- social attitudes.

Certain cultural practices can make it more probable for children to become street children. "Culture helps not only the different kinds of work children do and the context in which they perform it, but also prevailing opinions about the value of the work" (UNICEF, 2002: 141).

For instance, in most African countries cultural practices such as early marriage, discouraging children from entering in to conversation with their

parents (seniors), and discouraging children from developing their natural gifts, brutal treatment and the like are common socio-cultural practices that expose children to street life (TGE and UNICEF, 1993; 112).

A research conducted by Kebrom in Adama town revealed that some cultural expectations, such as the idea that children should go to work on the streets as soon as he/she is old enough, is stated as one of the cause which contribute certain children to join street life (Kiberom, 2008:69).

2.5.3 Demographic factors

Some writers have claimed that the rural-urban migration is an important demographic factor that contributes to streetism (Veale, 1996; Kilbourn, 2006).

Many children migrate to the urban areas in search of a better way of life, but instead find unemployment and great poverty than they had left behind. They also face a great degree of rejection and lack of support from urban society and as a result; a large number of the children are pushed out to work in the street (Kilbourn, 2006:31).

In the Ethiopian context, many research findings reveal that the plight of urban street children is mainly the result of uninterrupted increase in the rural- urban migration (FSCE, 2003; MOLSA, 2005 Veale 1996). “The rural poor migrate to the urban areas because of deterioration of rural resources for livelihood pulled by the promise of economic and social opportunities such as the possibility of job opportunities, better schooling and better life” (MOLSA, 2005: 7). But, as stated above the urban center rarely provides what they aspire to get, and as a result children have no other choice than to join street life. Another demographic factor that was indicated by researchers is the relationship between large family size and the incidence of streetism among the

poor population in developing countries. A common finding is that children from large families are more likely to work on the street than those belonging to smaller families (UNICEF, 2002). This fits into a broader pattern in which large family size is associated with many hindrances to child welfare and development as well as reduction of parent's investment in schooling.

2.6 Street life

Several studies on the life situation of street children revealed that street children are facing abusive actions dangerous and difficulties while living and working on the streets. Street children are globally recognized as children particularly at risk of violence and UNICEF's annual State of the World's Children reports have for many years highlighted the extremely difficult circumstances in which children work and live in the streets of different towns and cities (Pinheiro, 2006: 13). These children undergo a variety of social evils as children in general and street children in particular. For instance, Kopoka (2002:7) clarified that: "everywhere, children living and working on the street are ignored, scared, misunderstood by the society and the governments. They signify some of the most helpless social groups in the world".

Studies from Africa, Latin America and Asia found out that violence, sexual exploitation, physical and psychological abuse, are the major manifestation of street life. "Most of the street children show an image of misery, suffering, neglect, deprivation and even torture" (Ali et al 2004: 32).

They further explained that street children are considered as inactive and violent persons and thus, liable to discrimination and harassment by the police

and members of the public. As stated by Africa Child Policy Forum (2006), street children have accumulated experience of violence in many areas of their daily lives. Each street child has a unique story of violence. Sex, age, and disability influence the risks of violence to which street children are exposed and their responses to violence. For example, girls also tend to be vulnerable to additional forms of violence in crisis situations when compared to boys. Younger children's relative physical weakness can expose them to violence from older children and adults, although they can also attract protection. These and other variables interact, while each child's risks and responses change over time.

Street children are typically portrayed as excluded by society. Such portrayals are in danger of ignoring children's abilities to plan, control their actions and navigate within their environments - in other words their agency. Evidence from countries around the world demonstrates that street children regularly plan and put into practice survival strategies, navigating risks and taking opportunities presented within on-street (Evans, 2006).

Similarly, studies in Ethiopia revealed that, street children are vulnerable to different forms of abuse and violence (FSCE, 2003; Heinonen, 2000) .They are more frequently at risk of abuse than other children, because they are young, often small, poor, and ignorant of their rights.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

2.7.1 Structuration Theory

The theory of structuration comes as a way of resolving the difference between the structural determinism and possibilism at the second half of 20th century. Structuration theory as presented among others by (Bourdieu, 1977, Bhaskar; 1979 and Giddens 1979; 1984), aimed at such a resolution as it requires theories and analytical mediation (cited in Cohen, 1998). Among these authors, however, it is the work of a British sociologist Anthony Giddens that had a most profound influence. Giddens' structuration theory tries to bridge the gap between structural determinism and possibilism especially by criticizing both approaches for lacking an adequate notion of the acting subject or theory of practice. In concepts of structural determinism, individuals are often portrayed as completely determined by structural constraints that left little room for the autonomy of consciousness (ibid). In the structuralist tradition the emphasis is on structure as constraint, whereas in the phenomenological and hermeneutic tradition the human agent is the primary focus. Structuration theory attempts to combine the two principal thinking as a mutually dependent. Structure has no existence independent of the knowledge that agents have about what they do in their day-to-day activity. Giddens argued structural relations should not be equated with constraints, since they are also enabling. In Giddens' model, the agents are not puppets they interpret and transform the empirical world, but this interpretation and transformation in turn is constrained and enabled by the structures at the real level. Structuration theory is an approach to social theory concerned with the

intersection between knowledgeable and capable human agents, the wider social systems, and structures in which they are implicated (Cohen, 1998). Thus, this theory attempts to place equal importance on both the societal structures and human agents.

Giddens explained that human agents produce, reproduce or modify social structure via their actions; and social structure enables or disables human actions. In order to understand Giddens theory of structuration, the following key concepts must be addressed and defined. These are : agency, structure, power, and time/space relations (Giddens 1984:374). In the following these key points will be discussed and elaborated in detail.

2.7.1.1 Agency

In Giddens' structuration theory, the agent (an individual) plays an important role. The agent is a "knowledgeable and capable subject" in that the agent knows what he or she is doing and why he/or she is doing it. According to Giddens, all actions are "intentional or purposeful (Giddens 1979:56). The concern that agents are knowledgeable and their actions are intentional is one of the bases of structuration theory.

Therefore, in the process of decision making, according to Giddens "an actor may calculate the risk involved in the enactment of given form of social conduct, in respect of the likelihood of the sanctions involved actually applied, and may be prepared to submit to them as a price to be paid for achieving a particular end" (Giddens, 1979: 87). In Giddens theory, people use a cost-

benefits analysis in order to make a decision. If the benefits for undertaking an action are greater than the costs, the action is undertaken. The costs also include the possibility of suffering negative sanctions. Therefore the decision includes not only immediate cost of the action but also the negative consequences. If the benefits for an action outweigh both the costs and the sanctions of the action, it is undertaken.

The idea of the individual and knowledgeable agent in structuration theory gives a new perspective on the lives of street children. According to Giddens theory of structuration, the agent performs both intentional and unintentional actions. The intentional action taken by children could be as immediate factors to join street life. These could be economic prospects, family background and the like. Unintentional decision making could be as a result of family or peer-influence.

Giddens thought of the concept of intended and unintended actions of the agent that are very essential to the purposes of this research work in explaining up the reasons for a being a street child in the study area.

2.7.1.2 Structure

The second element in Giddens's structuration theory is the role of structure in social change. This concept applies to rules and resources directly implicated in social reproduction. Rules cannot be conceptualized apart from resources that refer to the modes whereby transformative relations actually incorporate into the production and reproduction of social practice (Giddens, 1984:377). In

other words, structure includes the rules that govern the society. Societies have certain laws and resources that influence social change. "Structure is both, the medium and outcome of social practices constituting social systems." (Giddens,1979:69). This implies that, human agents, produce and modify social structure through their actions and in turn social structure enables or constraints human actions. The structure is both influenced by and also influences social change (Ibid).

In the study of street children, structural determinants represent the influence of structure in the decision to join street. It helps to explain how street children employ or produce mechanisms in the social structure through their actions and how the social structure enables or constrains them to get their livelihood in the streets. Moreover the concept of structure is decisive to conceptualize the socio-economic background that forces children for street life, their livelihood, why they opt for street life as well as their lived experience.

2.7.1.3 Power

Power is an essential element of structuration theory. In structuration theory, all actors have some power in influencing the structure of the society. "If a person has no power, then the person ceases to be an agent." (Giddens, 1984:149).

Power is available to all agents and agents need to know their power source and how to use it. In order to know the power of agents, it is necessary to understand resources available to them. Giddens defines resources as "the media whereby transformative capacity is employed as power in the routine

course of social action, but they are at the same time structural elements of social systems, as systems, reconstituted through their utilization in social interaction (Giddens, 1984:92).

According to Giddens's structuration theory, all agents have power, since all agents have the ability to influence social change. This has sounding implications to examine the life situation of street children in this research work. It is when the agent or street children lose their power to act as actors that they cease to be agents and may consider movement into the street in order to gain better position as agents. The concept of power is important to conceptualize the factors that force children to drift away from home and join the streets. It is also vital to realize the power relation among street children, their family and the society.

2.7.1.4 Time and space

All social life takes place in and is constituted by, junction of presence and absence in the context of time and the shadow of space. The idea of time-space provides an important mode of notion of the interrelation in day to day activity (Giddens, 1984:2). Structure gives systematic form to social practices across space and time.

The interaction of street children, moving in time and space composes a definite time-space locations within bounded regions (home, street and etc). The children freely join into the street and strive to generate their livelihood on the bases of time- space dimension. In this study it is necessary to look at the life experience activities, in relation with time and space. The concept of time-

space is also important to explain the characteristics of the children at the origin and his/her lived experience in the street. Therefore attempt to conceptualize and explain the activity of children depend on time- space concept.

To sum up, the basic concepts of structuration theory are employed in this study to analyze and realize the life situation of street children in the urban social system. This study assumes children as competent social actors who have certain freedom of choice and action. Structuration theory is also important to understand the extent that street children are integrated or marginalized with the structure and the way they influence their life. Furthermore, social life is constituted through social practice. Structure gives form and shape to social life. Social practices link agents to structures. Social practices enable street children to develop skills for transformation of rules and resources over time and between various locations. Consequently, social practice is a mediating concept between agency and structure; individual and society. Through it, it is possible to see the relationship among street children and the urban society.

Finally, structuration theory is used for this study to be more pragmatic to understand and interpret the factors that force or motivate children to join street, their livelihood situation and survival mechanisms, social network as well as an overall situation of street Children in general in the study area.

CHAPTER THREE

PROFILE OF SELECTED STREET CHILDREN AND CAUSAL FACTORS FOR STREET LIFE

3.1 Profile of Selected Street Children

Children who took part in this research comprise a variety of characteristics. These differences arise from the variation in age, sex, ethnic background, educational status, family conditions and others. Therefore, in the following section attempt has been made to analyze socio-economic aspects of selected street children.

3.1.1. Age and sex

Studies conducted in developing countries like Brazil, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Colombia show that mass of the street children range from 10 to 14 years (Lalor, 1999). All selected street children in the study area were asked their age. Accordingly the largest groups of children, 19 are within the age range of 13-14 years. The second largest group, 11 children are within the age range of 15-17 year and 7 children are within the age range of 7-12 years. Only 3 children are 18 years old.

Therefore, results from guided interview revealed that most of the selected street children in this study were characterized by the age group of 12-15 years. This shows that most children in the study area join street life as teenagers which are nearly similar with age range of street children in the rest part of the developing countries.

This study considers both male and female street children to be part of the study. From the selected participants 31 are boys and only 9 are girls. According to Meseret, a social worker, from the women and Children Affairs Office of the Town, the presence of small portion of street girls could be due to the following major reasons. Firstly, girls are expected to do household works as compared to boys. Secondly, there is little chance for girls to participate in the street jobs except selling some food stuffs. Thirdly, fear of sexual abuse and exploitation of girls in the street were stated as major factors that hinder them from choosing life on the streets. On the contrary, boys are usually perceived to have very little contribution in reducing the work load of their family at home and hence parents usually expect boys to participate in income generating activities outside of the home.

3.1.2. Ethnicity and Origin of Street Children

Most of the street children who partook in this study are born out of Hawassa town. They came to Hawassa from different parts of the SNNPR states as well as out of the region. Those who come from the SNNPR are mainly from Wolayita, Gurage, Hadiya and nearby rural vicinities and towns of Sidama zone. However, those children who came from outside of the region migrated from Amhara and Oromia regional states.

Regarding their ethnic background, the research participants belonged to different ethnic groups. Of all 40 selected participants of this study 23

belonged to Wolayita ethnic group and 11 are to the Sidama ethnic group. The remaining 6 belong to Amhara, Gurage, Oromo and Hadiya. From this, one can easily understand that these children were composed of different ethnic groups, coming from various geographical areas.

3.1.3. Education

All except 3 of my respondents had attended formal education. That means 37 of them joined school and have different grade levels. Out of these, 28 have elementary education, 5 have primary education and 4 have high school level of education. The lowest level attended by these children was grade 3 while the highest grade level was grade 9. From interview results, it was found out that children working and living on the street has a dual effect on their schooling. In some instances, it gives them a chance to go to school and exposes them to wider horizons and opportunities. For the majority, on the other hand, it leads them to drop out from schools as most of them were attending school prior to coming to join street life. Those children who did not continue further their schooling frequently mentioned lack of financial support to fulfill necessary materials to pursue their education. In this case, the household resources are diverted away from education and are used to secure daily subsistence. Hence, in the time of economic hardships children are often obliged to quit school and joined the streets in search of employment. It is also found out that street children who live on the street were the less educated than children who work on the street. Similarly children of rural origin were less educated than children who came from urban areas.

3.2. Family Background

3.2.1 Family Composition and family income

All selected street children were asked about how many sisters and brothers they have at home before they join street life. Accordingly, the results of the data gained through guided interview showed that 25 of the children had between 5 to 8 brothers and sisters. Whereas, 14 of them had 3 to 4 brothers. Only one child had only one sister. The above information indicates that the large majority of children who took part in this study may come from large family size which in turn may indicate the relationships that exist that exist between large family size and streetism. The finding concerning parents' employment status and income indicated that, the parents of these children do not have regular income. Formal employment sectors like working in organizations are hardly to be an opportunity for the families of street children.

Regarding their families income, participants of this research reported that the principal bread winners of the family were working as farmers, daily laborers, petty sellers, domestic servant, beggary, ex-soldiers. These children were not able to indicate the specific amount of income or salaries of their parents due to the irregular pattern of such incomes. However, it can be concluded that these children belong to the family with a very low income level which obviously led to destitution and poverty.

3.2.2. Status of Biological Parents

Children were asked about the status of their biological parents and 23 replied that both biological fathers and mothers were alive. On the other hand, 5 of

them have only their biological father alive, of whom 3 of them have step-mothers while 2 of them do not have a step-mother. Besides, 6 children have only their biological mother alive of whom 5 of them have step-fathers while only one child does not have a step mother. The remaining 6 children were orphans who lost both biological parents. The above data revealed that more than half of the street children considered in this study have both biological parents alive. However, the availability of both parents does not seem to guarantee to keep children at home.

3.3. Reasons for being a Street Child

In the study area, children have drifted from their home to the street due to multifaceted reasons. At the same time, every street child has a reason for being on the streets. Therefore, in the following section attempt has been made to discuss the major causes for being a street child.

3.3.1. Poverty/Lack of Supportive Family

Data obtained through in-depth interview revealed that most children work and live on the street due to the fact that they are from impoverished families. They stated several factors associated with the poverty of their families in one way or the other like family's inability to provide their basic necessities (food, cloth and education fees, etc), inability to sustain the life of their children and themselves. They also stated their families are found in poor economic condition, in which some even do not secure fixed income to feed their family due to the increasing market price or increases in the cost of living.

My father died while I was in grade 7. I grew up with four siblings (three brothers and one sister). I am the older of my siblings. My mother earns little income by washing clothes of our neighbor. But it was so difficult to feed all of us with the little income she is earning. As a result, I quit my education and joined street to look for a job in order to help my mother, my siblings and myself too (Asrat, 14 year old boy, street vendor).

As we can understand from aforementioned quotation, poverty forces children to shoulder major household responsibilities. Children join street life to fulfill their needs and to contribute something to the house hold by taking part in some income generating activities of the street without considering its effect on their life.

My father is bread winner of our family. He is a farmer. He earns little income from small plot of land and with that he couldn't fulfill our basic necessities. Thus, my father sends me to Hawassa and I started working as a lottery vendor on the street to assist my family. Now, I am sending back home certain amount of money from my daily earnings (Adamu, 16 year lottery vendor boy)

As the above narrative shows the main intention of children involvement to street life was either to subsidize their families' agricultural income or to ensure their economic independence.

My mother is very poor and doesn't have any sufficient income source. She bakes "enjera" in different houses of our neighbors. At the same time, she prepared "Kolo" (roasted cereals) every night and I sell it always during the day to fulfill my needs and to assist my mother too (Lidet, 14 years old girl street vendor)

From the above quotations it can be realized that, because of low income in their family or because of the inability of families to earn sufficient income, children are forced or initiated by their families to live and work on the street. As a result, children belonging to such a family are forced to join the

streets in order to contribute the family income as well as to support themselves.

FGDs with male and female children on the factors contributed for being a street child also mentioned that poverty/lack of supportive family come at the front in inducing many of them to join street life. As they pointed out, children joined street life in order to contribute to the family income as well as to support themselves.

In sum, these children were triggered to work and live on the street because they were obliged or forced to generate some sort of income in order to help their impoverished families and themselves too.

3.3.2. Family Disorganization

The disintegration of family due to divorce or death of one or both parents is identified as one principal factor that pushes children to street life. Some interviewees revealed that they started living or working on the street after they lost one or both of their parents who were the bread winners of the family or primary care givers. The experience of Tonja, a 12 year old boy attested such a case.

My mother died when I was 8 years old. I don't know my father. After I lost my mother there was no one responsible to care and support me. Such sudden situation forced me to start street life.

FGD, participants (both male and female street children) requested to notify the reason why they join street remarked that, children come to the street when they had lost one or both of their parents due to divorce or death. It is also vital

to note that, in such incident some children have to take care of some members of their families. Some of them affirmed that they were not working and living for their own benefit, but rather family members who are expecting from their income. This situation is more clearly visible on those “on street children” who lost their parents because of death. These children in many cases have taken the responsibility of saving the life of the remaining family members either younger or older. In this regard, Tigist, a 15 years old girl street vendor, said:

I lost both my father and my mother three years ago. I have one younger brother. So, I have a responsibility to fulfill basic necessities of my little brother and myself from what I get.

Some others opted for street life rather than staying within step-parents settings or extended family setting after they lost their biological parents. This was especially true for children “of street”. According to these children, step-parents or extended family members frequently abuse them before they decide to move to the street. The experience of Sara, a 15 years old girl, was good example in this regard:

I got to the street in 2008, a year after my mother and my father divorced. One year later my father married another woman. The new wife treated me violently and cruelly. She hated me extremely without any reason. The maltreatment and hatred forced me to run away from home to join street life.

Meseret and Mulegeta, social workers, from Women and Children Affairs Office also attested that breakdown of family and inadequate care and support of step-parents led certain children to street life. This is mainly happening when children were left without support to survive. Therefore, there is high tendency

to be involved in street life where there are no parents for better care and support.

3.3.3. Violence and Abuse

In the literature it is indicated that parental rejection, anti-social parental model and mismanagement of parenthood exist in the parents of street children. This involves alcoholism, brutality, anti-social attitudes and the like (Carson, 1992:549).

Likewise, in this study, domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation create conditions under which children decide to leave their homes and start street life. Some informants revealed that they suffered various forms of violence either from their step-parents or their biological parents when they were at home. In such circumstances, children envisage street life as a means to gain “freedom” and “liberation” from family violence and abuse of any form.

I lived with my father and my mother in Laku (10km away from Hawassa) before I started street life. Like all other rural children, I was expected to do different things to help my family. One of my daily duties was fetching water from a river which is far away from the village. Unfortunately, one day I forgot my duty while I was playing with my friends and got dark before I fetched water. My mother got upset and she beat me severely and warned me that she would kill me. Then I felt insecure and ran away to Hawassa and got myself on the street. (Elalo, 13 years old boy).

From this appalling experience of the boy, it could be said that physical punishments and unequal power relationship that existed between parents and children are one of the factors that drive children out of home. Bereket, a 15 years old commercial sex worker, reiterates this fact as well.

I was attending my morning class when my best classmate received the order to hurry back home because her father was about to die. My friend was extremely sad and I decided to go with her to her village and stay with her and her family all the afternoon. Before the sunset I decided to go back home because my parents could have been worried. When I arrived at home my father was furious since he did not know where I was and he thought something bad had happened to me. He beat me as hard as he never did before. On the next day I run away from home and join street life.

Therefore, while different children stated their exposure to violence and the risk of violence differently, their decision to leave home was mainly driven by the desire to find a safe environment. During FGDs with both male and female street children on the major cause for streetism, it was also indicated that quarrel between children and their family members was one of the contributing factors that put children at high risk to assume street life. Besides, children mentioned some factors that aggravated different forms of abuse and violence in their home. For instance, alcoholic addiction of father, mother or other members of family was indicated as a cause of conflict and disagreement among the members of family. When such things frequently happen, parents vent their anger and disappointment on to their children through physical or psychological abuse. Lemlem, a 12 year girl explained her experience during an FGD.

My father often quarreled with me and my siblings whenever he came home intoxicated. He beat us for any minor mistake. Whenever evening came we started to be worried since our home might not be safe. Our house was always filled with fear and anxiety. As a result I left home, as I afraid that he would kill me.

The above piece also underlined the fact that the home environment could be a potential aspect that instigates children to look at street life as a retreat. Therefore, it is common to find children on the street due to some sort of disagreement/conflict between the child and family members. Faced with violence, abuse and brutality in their home, these children run away from home and view street as a better alternative.

3.3.4 Peer Group Influence

Result of in-depth interviews indicated that one of the factors that pull children to live and work on the street is the influence of peer group/friends. The following story is a typical example in this regard.

I started working on the street in 2009, after my friend who was a neighbor motivated me. She told me that I will be self-supportive rather than dependent on my family if I engaged in some activities of the street. But now I realized that what I was informed by my friend and what I come to see in the street is completely different. However, I don't want to blame anyone, because all of this was happened because of my immaturity (Tringo, a 12 years old girl)

According to the above narrative, some children join street life by the motivation and encouragement of their friends without realizing the possible costs and risks of street life. The fact that these children were in their developmental stage where they could be emotionally driven made them vulnerable to such influences. The following excerpts also strengthened this notion of peer influence.

I saw my friend dressing better when we went to school. I was curious to know how he dressed like that. He told me that it is as a result of work in the street. He advised me to start

working with him promising that he would help me. Then I started working as a shoe shiner. (Alemu, 13 years old boy)

Similarly, findings of FGD with male street children attested that a number of children started street life by the agitation of their friends. The story of Miteku, a 12 years old boy illustrates such a case.

I started street life by the initiation of my friends. My friends who are already in the street told me that it is a place of "freedom" and "independence" where there is no one that orders you to do or not to do something. Then I am attracted by them and joined my friends in the street.

Hence, per-influence of friends backed with immaturity in combination with problems at home such as; poverty, violence and abuse encourage or forced these children to engage on street way of life.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. LIVELIHOOD AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN

4.1 Livelihood Activities

Street children have different activities through which they generate and sustain their livelihood in the study area. Although the portfolio of street children is typically characterized by diversified economic activities, it was clearly observable during the field work that their occupational mobility towards the formal sector is very limited because of lack of education, training skills, lack of finance and capital.

Most economic activities of street children occur where there are concentrations of people such as in market places, at bus station, at car and taxi stops and around hotels. Even though both sexes participate in different types of work, there is a major difference on the type of job that male and female street children perform. Shoe shining, carrying goods, selling news papers, lottery vending and *Woyalla* (serving as taxi assistances) are the major types of activities of male street children. On the other hand, commercial sex work, selling fruits and vegetables, sweets and home processed food stuff are the main areas of business in which female street children engage in.

4.1.1 Carrying Goods and Luggage

This is an activity that most male street children involved in as spring board to eventually make way to other activities. Carrying goods does not require initial capital and skill. So it naturally follows that most new street children become

engaged in this activity. Street children mostly hang around the bus station in the town where many passengers make arrivals and departures and in the market to render carrying service. Individual interviews with male street children attested that they carry goods to and from mill house and construction sites. At the bus station and the market place street children sometimes suffer mistrust from passengers and inhabitants who stereotype these children as thieves and pick pockets. In effect the passengers choose to carry their goods by themselves. Hence, it narrows children's opportunities to get jobs to earn their livelihood. In fact, small children are often preferred to old children and adults for this activity because they are cheaper, less threatening and easier to manipulate.

4.1.2 *Listero* (Shoe shining)

I have observed a number of male children who were shining shoes in various parts of the town. The shoe shiners are concentrated around bus station, offices, higher institutions and other public areas. Street shoe shiners are almost all practicing their day to day activity in fixed places.

During individual interview children who engaged in this economic activity reported that shoe shining business is not an easy task that someone could join and do as soon as he has come to the street. This is because in the beginning shoe shining demands some kind of shining and washing skill as well as choosing an appropriate work place. It has also to do with the fact that starting the business of shoe shining demands capital to buy the shining accessories. Moreover, it is also found out that shoe shiners who come from

similar places occupy and work together as well as share shining materials like brush, soap, and chair and like.

4.1.3 Lottery vending

Lottery vending is a task for children who have acquired some level of literacy. They are by far the most mobile groups compared to other street based activities, because it is competitive business for children and the vendors cannot be concentrated around certain locations. Adamu, 16 years old boy stated how he spend a particular day as a lottery vendor:

I came from Wolayita. The moment I got here I engaged in lottery vending. But I found this work is very tiresome. For instance, today I woke up as early as 7:00 AM and I come selling lotteries all the way from piassa to the bus station, Alamura to Arab sefer. Then I got back to sefere selam. Do you understand how much distance I traveled? It is a really tedious job.

According to the information obtained from lottery vendors, children buy lottery tickets from the lottery office in Hawassa town and sell it back to the public with a trivial profit. From every instant and regular lottery ticket sells, lottery vendors receive a profit of 0.10 and 15 cents respectively.

4.1.4 Petty Trade

The researcher observed children selling different commodities in the streets of town. The type of petty trade that street children engage in include selling magazines, news papers, sweets, cigarettes sugarcane ,natural tooth brushes, religious and secular books and roasted cereals. Individual interviews with children engaged in street petty trade indicated that there exist two categories of petty traders. The first category children were mobile to move around

different places by carrying their selling goods on their shoulder or hands. The second category consists of street children who sell goods and commodities on relatively fixed places. The researcher also observed that street children provide service like checking weighs of passerby and exchange of paper money into coins at commission for taxis and public phones users.

4.1.5 Washing and Guarding Vehicles

The interviewees and the researcher's observation attested that street children are involved in a range of income generating activities in relation to Vehicles: washing, watching and parking. They watch cars in the restaurants and hotels after getting permission from owners of cars. According to these children car washing is a more rewarding business than car watching, but is competitive to find car to wash. Street children also work as "*woyalla*" (taxi assistants) i.e they call passengers for taxis. They earn at least 1-3 birr for single trip to call passengers. As observed in the study area any business activities related with vehicles are mainly dominated by male street children. But these does not mean that street children engaged in this activity have fixed parking and washing place rather they move around hotels and office to do the business if they get by chance.

4.1.6 Begging

During the fieldwork, the researcher observed female and male children engaged in begging in the streets, market areas, and around hotels and churches. However, in all selected study sites, young street kids between the age ranges of 7-10 years were more engaged in begging than older ones.

Street children adopt different skills, abilities or special talents to draw the attention of sympathizers. They narrate as to why they are on the street and express their immediate problem. For instance, they narrate the death of their father or mother or both, by disease, war, drought or any other cases.

FGDs held with male street children attested that children engaged in this activity hold diversified attitudes towards begging. Some of them consider begging as a shameful act, but others considered it as a means of survival to solve immediate needs like hunger. Still some others prefer to beg because begging does not require hard labor, as indicated by Markos, 9 years old child engaged in this activity:

I prefer to beg, because begging doesn't require hard labor. Sometimes I make good money from foreigners who often come to visit Lake Hawassa and surrounding areas. I also get a good amount of money during religious days.

On the other hand, individual interviews with social workers of Women and Children Affairs office revealed that children who are in the street for begging were dominantly assisting of disabled or elderly people engaged in begging. They further explained that, young street kids have better chance to get understanding of alms givers because their needs are emotional which provokes immediate sympathy, other than the older children.

4.1.7 Commercial sex work

Individual interviews with female street children show that, female children join commercial sex work when they are unable to get jobs as house maids,

barmaids, and baby sitters. They may not be able to get these jobs due to some skills required in cooking, child care and lack of guarantee. Some are also involved in commercial sex work being influenced by peers who tell about the potential income they could earn. In both cases, however, female street children involved in commercial sex were not happy to be involved in this activity.

I come from Yirgalem. I stayed working as a house maid for about two years here in Hawassa. However, life became difficult to me with what I earned through this work. I tried my best to get another job but unfortunately I couldn't get any better job. Finally, I decided to involve myself into commercial sex work to get enough money in order to fulfill at least my basic needs. (Hana, 16 years old commercial sex worker)

Similarly, FGD held with female street children on their survival strategies revealed that girls accept being a commercial sex worker when they felt that they had no real choice but resort to commercial sex work. It was also found out that female street children who were living and working on the street are more involved in this activity rather than street children who only work on the street. But there were some 'on street female children' who use commercial sex work for survival in terms of supplementing their income. However, both 'on and of street children' indicated that commercial sex work is a temporary alternative to economic suffering and is not an occupation that one is willing to declare and depend on in the future. The results of interviews with male street children showed that there are also some male street children who draw their earning from commercial sex work. In this case, the street children engage in this activity by acting as middlemen i.e. pimps. The children told the

researcher that they connect female children with men and these children earn money from both sides though varies in amount.

4.2 Social network among street children

Street children interact among themselves through various social networks to deal with or share their street life experience. The researcher observed that street children often live in groups and establish strong friendship and reciprocity among themselves.

4.2.1 Cooperation

During individual interviews street children stated how they interact and help each other. For instance children that have recently entered street life and those who have been on the street for a long time have different needs. As a result they establish some kind of reciprocal relationships. The newcomers need knowledge and protection in order to learn about the survival strategies necessary for street life. On the other hand, the new comers are also expected to contribute something from their daily earnings for older ones for the help and protection rendered. Similar reciprocal relationships are being formed between older children and younger ones. The older children push younger children to beg for them, since smaller children are believed to have better luck in obtaining money from alms givers. In turn, the older children might feel an obligation to protect the younger children.

As stated by many children, the social network of street children are formed by virtue of socio-economic activities, personal characteristics, their similarity in place of origin, street occupations and proximity of places in which they sleep.

Also the information from in-depth interviews indicated that children who inhabit similar places of occupation and those coming from similar village or ethnic groups exhibit a given interaction and support among themselves. The following experiences are a typical example of such a case.

I lived with other 5 boys in a single rented room. Though we have come to Hawassa at different time, all of us come from Gurage area. As a result, we are helping and consider each other as family members. We sit and talk about our daily routines after work, late in the evening. We share ideas how to improve our life, and we encourage each other. We also help each other when one of us gets sick, stressed and annoyed.”(Zeberga, a 16 years old petty trader boy)

Lole, a 16 year old boy also explain that:

If one of us get sick or injured we would try to give him/her a sort of first aid. We also pass information when police come to arrest one of our friends. We continuously exchange information to capture new events relevant to our lives.

As the above case shows, social networks established between street children is based on trust is more vital to survival. They are constantly exchanging information, assessing local opportunities and spreading news of potential hazards.

FGDs with male children on social relations show that the social interaction among themselves is very important to helping each other, avoiding fear and loneliness, ensuring security, sharing food, shelter, cloths and working tools, getting guidance and care from one another. Similarly, during a FGD with female street children asked about their social interaction and cooperation among and between them confirm that they assist each other in a number of

ways. These include: helping a friend, fighting with a stranger and supporting a friend who is sick. Besides, the street network of friendships can reduce the real and perceived feeling of vulnerability and social exclusion, and raise the well-being of children in street situations. This is achieved mainly through the development of a “collective identity” and feeling of belonging.

4.2.2 Competition

Individual interviews with street children attested that though there is cooperation and interaction that prevail among street children there are also areas of conflict and tension which damage their cooperative spirit.

The street is the source of livelihood for these children. However, the street offers only very limited opportunities for all who draw their income from street based activities. Therefore, the limited opportunity of the street and children’s interest to take advantage of it leads to stiff competition and conflict among themselves (Heinonen, 2000).

For example, in the study area newcomers are usually affirmative for orders coming from seniors and they rely on the instruction of their seniors until they get used to it. Their relation is mutual in the sense that newcomers and seniors draw benefits from their interaction. However, since street life demands competition, seniors avoid newcomers and deny them access to the limited livelihood opportunities available in the street. In principle, it seems that the specific place belongs to those who usually work there. The new ones will face problems to being accepted of work on that specific place and this becomes challenging until they get used to it.

Certain groups of children define their living and working place and claim to use all opportunities that their place offers or entails to them. For instance, Lole, 16, shoeshine boy works around Piassa for long time since this place is a center of the town, which enables him and his friends to get many customers. As a result Lole and his friends did not like those who want to work on the “territory” already occupied by them. Similarly, Meseret, 16, and her friends who were involved in commercial sex work often hang around Bermuda to be picked by the customers because this area is known for the concentration of small Bars and Hotels. Therefore Meaza and her friends often quarreled with other commercial sex workers whom they are considered as newcomers. All of the above cases show that accessing a given territory means accessing a better livelihood opportunities, which in turn often requires high competition and defending one’s territory from other street children who are labeled as outsiders. Besides, children’s occupation of a certain area (“territory”) is better explained in terms of the series of chains and networks that have been established for being in a defined place or corner of the street for long by default.

Further, female FGD participants asked about their social interaction confirm that sometimes female street children fight among themselves for petty matters such as exchange of words, insult, stealing of each other’s belonging, cheating, and competition to securing working place.

4.2.3 Power Hierarchies

It is also vital to notice that, within given group or social network children do not have similar or equal power. During individual interviews street children stated that usually elder street boy have power to exploit and abuse female and teen age street children. Furthermore, senior street children prevent new comers from getting access to the limited opportunities available in the streets.

Lema , a 11 years old child from Bermuda site told me that:

We have a group leader who stayed on the street for a long time. Anyone can not be allowed to be a group member without the permission of our group leader. Everyone should be obedient and serve him. The group members are also expected to contribute some amount of money. They did this because the group leader protects them from other gangsters out of their group.

Bereket, a 15 years old commercial sex worker during an FGD on social relation stated:

It seems good to be part of a group on the street. But I have encountered a lot of problems. For instance street boys in our group usually need sexual favors in exchange for granting protection against others. I am also expected to buy cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, 'chat' and food for them. If I refuse to cooperate or fulfill their wishes, I will be harassed and forced to leave the group.

From the above information one can understand that street children of widely different ages and sex live in groups characterized by hierarchies and power relationships among themselves. The existence of hierarchies among themselves is partly the result of age, sex, length of stay on the street. Especially sex difference is one of the main factors for the creation of power hierarchies among street children. Thus, living in the street requires interaction, support, and in one hand. On the other hand their social network

results in conflict, exploitation, abuses and harassments as a result of hierarchies and unequal power relation between and among themselves.

4.3 Access to Basic Necessities

Street children have their own survival strategies to fulfill their basic necessities and to cope up with urban vulnerabilities. They adopt various mechanisms to fulfill their basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing essential for their daily existence.

4.3.1 Food

Getting daily meal remains the major priority for many street children in the study area. Their daily meal depends either on the money they earn from different activities and begging or food offered to them from alms givers. As it has been identified during the individual interview session, these children do not get regular meals of good quality with nutritional content. Some even do not get any regular meals, as Ayele's case shows:

Every morning, when I get up from my bed I am worrying about my daily meal. I don't get enough food many times. If I eat lunch, I may not get food for dinner; even I often do not eat for a day. In such instances I move around individual residence, hotels, restaurants and church yards. (Ayele, 10 years old boy)

Almost all of the interviewed street children reported that they make an attempt to meet their daily meal requirement from different sources. Some buy food usually from street vendors, street cafes and small tea houses. Most of them usually feed by buying cheap food (e.g. pieces of bread, cooked potato,

roasted cereals etc) from street vendors. There are also those who often eat left over from restaurants, hotels and cafeteria.

During the FGDs with male and female street children on survival strategies it was confirmed that most of them are meeting their own food requirements through purchase from own earnings or through scavenging. They complained about the incompatibility of food price with their small income. As a result, these children developed the habit of sharing their meal with friends to minimize cost of food.

4.3.2 Clothing

With regard to clothing, as I observed, most street children usually go barefoot or wear mainly open rubber slippers. One can easily identify children by their cloth style. They do not have proper or sufficient clothes to fit all weather. They wear one cloth until it is quite faded, torn and stained. Almost all of them said that they do not have alternative and clean clothes. Kakush, a 13 years boy excerpt illustrates this fact.

I do not have spare clothes. So I have to wash my cloth in the Hawassa Lake and wait till it dries. I can't use soap because I can't afford it.

The above quotation and FGDs with street children confirm that most of children wear one and same cloth day and night. They also do not get new clothes even in a year. But some street children, who engaged in petty trade or relatively better street economic activity, wear clean and colorful cloths than others.

4.3.3 Shelter

For most of the children who live and work on the street getting shelter represent genuine problem. The main problems of the children who sleep on street were abuse and fear of dark. Insecurity and temperature conditions also make the quality of sleep worse. To feel safe the sleep is usually organized with group. Field observation and individual interview with street children attested that street children sleep in areas where they feel safe. These among others include: church yards, along bus stations verandas of hotels and shops, along main roads and around offices where there are night guards. This is mainly true for those "of street children" who spent day and night on the street. Besides, these children do not confine themselves to a single territorial space to find shelter, rather they wander from one corner of the town to the other to get safe place to sleep. According to these children, mobility between spaces in search of shelter usually depends on security, weather condition, relation made with different friends and other people.

On the other hand some street children with relatively good income rent rooms. They rent a single room in a group of three or four and share the cost.

4.3.4 Health

During individual interview on the issue of the status of health, street children complained that their existence on the street exposes them to a number of health risks, due to the unhygienic environment, poor quality and/or inadequate food, low access to medical care, exposure to the elements, exposure to acts of violence and sexual risks.

Similarly, both male and female FGD participants agreed that they are exposed to various health problems because of lack of sanitary facilities, unhygienic sleeping and working place, over exposure to the cold or heat while they are living and working on the street contributes to be infected by various diseases. Moreover, they mention repeatedly they suffer from heart problems and Malaria, since Hawassa is malaria infected area. Mulegeta, a social worker, from Women and children affairs office also clarified that, since street children are exposed to many detrimental conditions as a result of living on the street, their immunity is lessened and they become more vulnerable to many diseases.

Some respondents mentioned that usually they do not receive any medical treatment when they get sick. They have no access to receive an appropriate diagnosis or treatment, even if some health problems are easily curable. In the following excerpt, a boy expressed his experience in grief:

A year ago, one of our friends was seriously sick. The incident was very difficult for him and for us too, because we did not have enough money to cover the medical bills. We went to the nearby public clinic and asked them for free medical services. But they refused to provide him any treatment by telling us we have to bring a letter from Kebele administration. However, we could not bring a letter because we were not registered as residents of the Kebele since we were homeless. Unfortunately, one week later our friend has passed away without getting any medical treatment. (Tonja, 13 years old boy).

This clearly stipulates that street children encountered a wide range of problems which they cannot afford by themselves. To make matters worse, the system available in their environment is not arranged in such a way that it extends, its services to street children.

4.4 Challenges/problems encountered

“When considering violence against street children what is not said is probably as significant as what is said.”(Hecht, 1989:145). Children working and living on the street are exposed to various forms of challenges. Most of them have traumatic experiences and are subjected to extreme physical, psychological, sexual, substance abuse. Part of the abuse is related to their work; part of it stems from life on the streets.

4.4.1 Substance Abuse

Many children who participated in this study have consumed some kind of drug while living and working on the street. Most of the interviewees have developed a habit of taking different drugs as they stay longer in the street. The children considered drug use as something fun and excitement, especially in the early phase of street life. Temesegen, 16 years old boy explained how he started consuming various types of drugs:

Before I came to Hawassa I never used to consume any drug. I mean, I didn't smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol and chew 'chat', but gradually I learned these things from my colleagues after having stayed longer on the street.

FGDs participants of both male and female street children asked about the challenges and problems of street life reported that especially 'of street children' were addicted to different substances than 'on street children' since this group of children are far away from parental supervision and control. However, some 'on street children' were also found to be drug consumers while they were engaging in various activities on the street. According to these children the addiction to different drugs and alcohol is due to various reasons.

Lole, a 16 years old boy from Bermuda area explained the reason why he has been consuming drugs as follows.

I often stay most of my day time chewing 'chat' with other street children. We also smoke cigarette. I did this for two reasons. Firstly, I have to do this to be member of a group. Secondly, it gave me pleasure and kills most of my boring time. It also helps me to forget the real nasty situation of my existence on the street. (Lole, 16 years shoe shiner boy)

The preceding information indicates that, children used drugs while they are living and working on the street as a coping strategy, i.e to escape their anxiety. They often rely on these drugs to forget cold, and their daily despair. Taking drugs was also something the children would do to keep hunger away, or to keep the cold away. They also use drugs to be accepted as a member in their groups as indicated in the above quotation. The use of drug results in long-term and short term physical effects. Drug using children experience different kind of health problems such as loss of weight and respiratory problems are among the most repeatedly mentioned health problems.

I used to sniff benzene when I felt hunger. But gradually I become addicted and I couldn't walk if I didn't use it. Now I feel sick even after I have stopped to use it. (Tonja, 12years old boy)

Meseret and Mulgeta, social workers from Women and Children affairs office also added that one of the negative consequences of street life is being addicted by various drugs and chemicals that hinder their moral and mental development.

4.4.2 Physical Abuse

One of the major problems that street children face in their daily life is physical abuse. As stated by many children, physical abuse like slapping, kicking, battering, hitting and injuries resulting from violence are common. Such physical hazards children face come from older children, clients, and the police. Especially, abuse by the policemen when the children are found working on the streets without permission is common and expected. Zeberga, 16 years old boy indicated bitterly how they are abused by the police:

They (the police) randomly rounded up and detained us when something goes wrong along the street, simply because we are homeless. Whenever there is regional or national conference in the town, police intimidate us to leave the street. They always worry about the image of the city rather than their fellow human being.

Similarly, abuse and beating by clients for making a petty mistake at work are very common. For instance, individual interview with shoe shiners revealed that some clients harassed, kicked and in some case refused to pay for the service rendered. This usually happens when the children have committed minor mistake like being slow in performing their tasks.

Abuse and beating by older children is also other problem, especially for the younger children. Further, the children explained that they have been beaten by some drunks, especially in the late evening. Miteku, 11 years street boy from piassa said:

Older street boys beat us asking to give them money. They make us feel insecure sometimes they take away our cloths and beat us while we are sleeping.

4.4.3 Sexual Abuse

The data obtained through individual interviews with female street children indicated that female street children were forced to do sex against their will. Many have been raped by different groups of individuals through the use of physical force, intimidation and deception.

I have been living in a group of street children after I joined street life. Under normal condition, street boys in our group consider me as their sister. But when they were addicted by some kind of drug, they forced me to do sex without my willing. (Sara, a 15 years girl commercial sex worker)

My client and I negotiated to spend a night together in his home. As we get on the bed he demanded to have sex without condom, but I refuse. Then he tried to use force and slapped me on my face, then I was scammed and the police around his home came to us. As we reached the police station, my client reported that I had stolen his one thousand birr. Even though I tried to tell the police man he couldn't believe me because of the mere fact I am street child. He then released the man and made me stay at police station for five days without any charge. (Bereket, a 16 years girl commercial sex worker)

These narratives show that, sexual abuse is very common among street children as a result of their working and living condition. However, it is also found out that it is more pervasive among children who live and work on the street due to the fact that little or no security. This group of children has been sexually abused by both non-street boys and street boys of their groups. Despite the fact that female street children who live and work on the street are

more vulnerable to sexual abuse, some female street children who are only working on the street were also found to be victims of sexual abuse.

It was late evening. I returned home after I sold lemon. On my way home, one street boy came to me and snatched the money I got. Then he took me to the area out of sight from the public and raped me forcefully. (Tigest, a 15 years girl street vendor)

Female FGD participants also mentioned some of the averting mechanisms of sexual abuse while they are living and working on the street. These among others include: waking in groups and teaming up, shouting and screaming, giving some money and materials to street boys who offer them protection, changing places of operation from time to time so that they will not be targeted. Therefore, depending on encountered circumstances, street girls use multiple strategies at a given point of time or when one strategy fails, they may shift to the other hoping that there may be a chance of escape from sexual abuse or other forms of violence.

4.4.4 Discrimination and lack of fair treatment (Psychological abuse)

“Street children are associated on the public mind with crime, being popularly regarded as youthful delinquents in the process of becoming hardened criminals as adults” (Glauser, 1990:34). Aptekar and Heinonen also stated that local words in various countries used to express street children signify how the public perceive them. For instance in Rwanda, ‘Mayibobos’ in the Kinyarwandan language harbors connotations of ‘filth’, ‘drug use’, ‘criminality’, and ‘aggressive behavior’

when used to refer street children, in Egypt, a street-living child is a 'sewas', an Arabic word for a small insect that destroys crops, 'throwaways' is a common term in USA for children who have run away from home, 'Chokora' or 'scavengers' in Kenya and 'Borco' is a collective term found in Ethiopia, which is an adulteration of the Italian words 'porco', meaning filthy/dirty or porco, meaning pig (Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003).

In the study area, most of the interviewees have explained that they were discriminated, hated, and neglected by the urban community. Male and female FGD participants also believe that most of the urban communities think that they are useless, hopeless, hooligans, thieves, delinquents and good for nothing.

People do not see us in the same way they see other children. They undermined, insulted and degraded us. I think people forget why we are here. In my opinion, nobody wants to be on the street but things make us so. But I don't refuse the fact that, there are some individuals who have good attitude towards us and assist with food and clothing. Further, some of our clients encourage us and share their life experience. (Zeberga, 16 year old shoe shiners boy)

However Kebede, a social development and security officer from municipality of the Hawassa town pointed out that, in most cases the negative image raised against street children is due to the fact that some of them are involved in dishonorable activities such as commercial sex work, begging, drug and alcohol abuse. Those street children engaged in such activities labeled 'bad' children and have a marginal position in urban community rather than those children

engaged in livelihood activities like petty trade, lottery vending and shoe shining.

The children were also asked about the image of police towards them. Accordingly, most of them believe that the police portray the negative image given for street children. They complain that the police associate all sort of undesirable activities with street children and see them as vagabonds, thieves and trouble makers. Especially children who were engaged in street based economic activities consider the police as their main threat because there is conflicting interest between the police and street children in the use of public spaces.

As a result of public attitude and distressing life experience in the street, some street children might lose their self-confidence, become desperate and develop negative attitude towards life in general. According to interview results, it could be learned that stress, hopelessness and other related psychological problems might be evoked by the unsympathetic social environment. The following excerpt stressed this fact.

It hurts me whenever I remember about street life. I could not sleep because I did not trust anyone in the street including my intimate friends. I am scared because I saw so many unpleasant things after I joined street life. For instance, one month ago I saw the dead body of street boy who was killed by his own group members and I always think that when would be my turn. (Elalo, 13 years old boy)

Therefore, children living and working on the street developed hopelessness depression, angry, fear and anxiety as a result of their living condition on the street.

4.4. 5 Labor abuse

In-depth interviews with street children revealed that many street children were involved in some work activities beyond their age and capacity. Especially those children inhabited around bus station were involved in carrying and lifting loads for passengers. They were observed carrying heavy loads, over and above their weight and age. These children mentioned some health problems associated with carrying and lifting heavy loads like: backache, chest pain and pain in the shoulder. Similarly, social workers from the Women and Children Affairs office remarked that children engaged in the above mentioned activities likely damage their healthy physical mental development.

4.5 Future Aspiration of Street Children

Children were asked about their plan and future aspirations. The answer depended on the children's socio-economic background. Accordingly, children who migrated from rural areas are more interested to return home and establish their future in their own village. Most of the interviewees aspire to change their present life situation through resuming and or completing their education and supporting their poor families, being employed and self sufficient. This group of children considers their street carrier as a spring board to build their future.

On the other hand, most urban children and few numbers of rural children want to change their life by up grading street carriers. This group of children wants to continue their profession as traders and dream to become business entrepreneurs' and work in a better manner as respected business person. They also aspire to be in a better position to change lives of themselves as well their families. For instance, children like Zeberga, 16 years old street boy consider their street carrier as transition stage to build a better future.

I had a dream. I would work hard and to get enough money in order to help my mother, my brother and sisters.

To the contrary, children like Meaza were very unenthusiastic about their future because of traumatic experience of street life.

I don't feel that I will be a better person in the future. If I can, I will be very happy but it will not be possible, because now I have completely changed. I can't go back to what I was before. Now I am commercial sex worker. Therefore I prefer to live as a commercial sex worker and I don't need any more. (Meaza, 16, commercial sex worker girl)

In general, most of the interviewees seemed to be positive about their further, regardless of their degree of involvement in the street as well as the type of street activities they are presently engaged in. However there was slight difference between 'on street children' and 'of children' when they are speaking about their future, in which the former was more optimistic about their future than the latter ones. Similarly, street children engaged in relatively better street economic activities like petty trade, lottery vending and the like have positive outlook toward their future than those engaged in begging and commercial sex works.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The aim of this research was to investigate the situation of street children in Hawassa town from their own perspective. Data pertinent to the study was gathered solely through qualitative methods. Thus, the research implemented a combination of different qualitative mechanisms including interviews, in-depth interviews and observation and focus group discussions. The data obtained through these methods was thematically classified, organized, triangulated and finally analyzed using the qualitative approach. Besides, Giddens's structuration theory was employed to address the research problem as well as to analyze and interpret their situation more in the study area.

This study revealed that the reasons that pulled or pushed children to street life were not related to single factor. However, there are different sets of factors that prompt a child to leave home and join street life. Poverty/lack of supportive family, family breakdown, being orphaned, domestic violence, trouble with step parents, peer/friends pressure found to be interrelated reasons, with different weights for leaving home to street life.

This study also affirmed that street children survive through undertaking a wide variety of activities. Though both street boys and girls engage in various economic activities, it is attested that there is a major gender division of labor that demarcate the type of activities and job available to either sex. In the study area, shoe shining, carrying goods, selling news papers, lottery vending

and serving as taxi assistances are the major types of activities monopolized by male street children. On the other hand, commercial sex works, selling fruits and vegetables, sweets and home processed food stuff are the main areas of business where female street children are engaged in.

While life on the street is obviously very difficult and full of dangers, street children in the study area have developed various forms of emotional, psychological, and physical tactics as a distinctive way of life. Thus, as an integral part of survival strategy street children create new networks. These networks among street children are formed by virtue of socio-economic activities, personal characteristics, and their similarity in place of origin, street occupations and proximity of places in which they sleep. Social networks are very important for the children as they help each other, avoid their fear and loneliness, ensure security, share materials and ideas, guidance and care from one another. It also foster solidarity and belonging among themselves.

However, though the social networks between street children are based on reciprocity and mutual benefit, the social interaction is also characterized by hierarchies and unequal power relations. These mainly result in exploitation and abuse among themselves. Although street children do not lend themselves into a simple hierarchical arrangement, this study has observed some elements of hierarchy formation. The hierarchies are formed based on the virtue of sex, street experience and age.

This study also realized that in the study area, street children constitute a marginalized group. Accessibility to basic necessities like food, cloth, shelter, health care and other services are severely restricted to these children.

Moreover, most of them grow apart from the two most important institutions of children's development which signifies more their marginalization: the family and the school.

Life on the street is a tough reality. The living and working situation make street children vulnerable to various kinds of abuse and violence. They are found to be unprotected and subjected to physical, psychological, sexual and drug abuse. Besides, street girls, relatively young children and newcomers are found to be more abused than relatively older boys and those who have stayed on the street for a long time.

Street children are often seen by the police and the general public as anti-social and criminal elements of society. As a result of this mentality, street children are often subjected to routine arrest for petty crimes, hate and discrimination among the urban community. However, perception from outside about street children is also varied and modulated by street occupation.

This study also revealed that, almost all street children have dreams, goals and things they value even though their existence on the street force them to alter some of their childhood hopes and dreams .

5.2. Conclusion

In the study area, children have drifted from their home to the street due to multifaceted reasons. At the same time, every street child has a reason for being on the streets, since agents are knowledgeable and capable subjects who justify the reason why they engaged in particular practice as Giddens assumed in his structuration theory.

In their day to day survival scenario, time and space provides an important mode of notion and has significant effect on the life and working condition of these children. As evidenced by this study street children who had not spent long time in street were more exposed to various problems and challenges than those who had stayed for a long time, as they had been adapted to “street culture.” Moreover, street children have knowledge of the public space and usually derive benefits out of it. Street children in the study area often have ‘mental maps’ which they follow in their day-to-day life. For example certain groups of children define their living and working place and use all opportunities that the place offers or entails to them. They know what to get where, when and perhaps how to get them which is acquired through experience of street life. Therefore, based on these findings it can be deduced that all social life of street children takes place on the context of time and shadow of space (Giddens: 1984).

This study revealed that the street can be a place of exclusion and marginalization but also a place for socialization and integration. As an integral part of survival strategy street children create new networks on the street that have emerged in opposition to the exclusion from the mainstream society. In and through their interaction they reproduce the structure and the conditions into their advantage since agents produce and modify social structure through their actions.

Although children are often considered to be dependent on the decision of adults this study realized that children are competent social actors who responded actively to social and physical environment. Their daily life

experience attests that they are knowledgeable agents who act consciously. Children activities in obtaining food, clothing and shelter, and protecting themselves against violence and other forms of abuse depends on the child's continuous action or capability to cope with and survive in the changing and competitive urban environment.

In sum, street children display a wide range of skills, competence, knowledge, and resilience in dealing with everyday life situation. Therefore, it is not possible to label all street children as homogeneous because a multiple identity can be generated in a given street child when we try to understand why he/she is on the street, what problems he/she faces, how he/she handles the problem and what resources he/she has or lacks.

5.3. Recommendations

The few recommendations forwarded by this research are not in any way generalizations on the general situation of street children; but they are framed based on the findings of the study. It is obvious that the problem of street children has various forms and complication based on nature of a certain society. So, this study tries to recommend its own perspectives on how the problems can be alleviated at least to influence respective bodies to be considerate of the present circumstances.

Policy based Recommendations: Government policy through its relevant ministries, especially through Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, should address the issue of street children. Such intervention policies should focus on preventive and responsive (rather than rehabilitative) solutions. A paradigmatic shift from a welfare approach to creative and strategic solutions must be sought. It would equally be imperative to ensure that the interventions are developed with the active participation of children rather than on their behalf by others who do not quite understand and appreciate their situation and the challenges they face. Above all things, while holistic and package approaches are recommended, in designing interventions, the diversity of the children in terms of their age, gender and street occupation among other characteristics must be taken into consideration.

Community based Recommendations: As evidenced by the findings of this study street children are often seen as anti- social and criminal elements of society. As a result, the contrast between the images of the street children and

the reality clearly highlight the need for significant amount of work needs to be done at the community level to deconstruct prevalent negative misconceptions about street children and to strengthen community social networks. This is mainly because, work with street children may not be accomplished on the institutional level alone, but needs to be enhanced and supplemented by support at the community level.

Family based Recommendations: Family disintegration violence and abuse at home are found to be some of the major factors for child streetism. Therefore, parents need to be sensitized about the negative effects of family disintegration and domestic violence. Such activity must involve awareness creation training for the parents dealing with a variety of topics such as their roles and responsibilities with regard to taking care of children and how to handle problems that might surface when raising children. Rather than imparting information such training seek to better equip parents with different ways of resolving problems at home. Moreover, perhaps one of the most important thing is the training of certain selected family promoters from within the community, which may strengthen the community and helps the community look for their own solutions to problems of street children so as not to be dependent on outside sources that may or may not be available to them.

There is a need to initiate family reunification with families who are willing to help their children in every possible way they can. Child-parent contacts can be established through the use of siblings, relatives and other concerned

individuals who are willing to serve as mediators between the child and the parent.

Service Delivery Recommendations: Many of the street children participated in this study are either no longer in school, or have not received much education. As a result, these children do not have the opportunity to engage in better economic activities. Therefore, street children that are still willing to go back to school and need to acquire certain vocational skill should be assisted by the government organizations, non government organizations and community based organizations based on their personal interest.

On the other hand, there is a need to pay special attention to street children who do not have families. The needs of these children can be addressed through the establishment of potential self-help projects where the children themselves can be entrusted with the task of running such programmes. To this effect, it would be important to identify, understand and empower or support the existing informal networks established between street children.

Recommendations for Future Research: This research has provided an initial basis of understanding the general life situation of street children in Hawassa from their experiences. However, this research is the beginning of future research endeavors and only a beginning of a process in providing a holistic picture of these very multifarious groups. Besides, as is the case with any study, this research too had its limitations. Therefore, future research is necessary to provide more insights into the dynamics of the phenomenon in the study area and should focus on the following issues:

- The present study did not investigate the double disadvantage of disabled children and yet we know that they are susceptible to gross abuse and exploitation. As a result, an in-depth, gender responsive, qualitative study of disabled children is recommended.
- A critical assessment of all existing interventions and organizations claiming to be catering for the welfare and protection of street children need to be carried out urgently.
- Finally, one of the limitations of this study is absence of accurate and recent data on street children in the study area. To this end, there is a clear need for a survey on street children issue to formulate effective intervention mechanisms for addressing the problem of street children and its various manifestations.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guideline for Guided Interview

I. Personal Background Information

1. Respondents Name _____
2. Age _____
3. Sex. A. Male ___ B. Female _____
4. Where were you born?
 - A. Kebele _____
 - B. Woreda _____
 - C. Zone _____
 - D. Region _____
5. What ethnic group do you belong to?
6. Have you ever attended school?
7. If your answer to question 6 is no why did not attend school?
 - A. Economic problem
 - B. Lack of awareness of family
 - C. Child labor
 - D. Lack of access to schools
 - E. Other
8. If your answer to question 6 is yes, what grade have you completed?
9. How long did you stay on the street?

II. Family Background Information

10. Are your mother and father alive?
 - A. only father is alive
 - B. only moth alive
 - C. Both are alive
 - D. Both alive but separated/divorced
 - E. Both dead

11. If they are not alive, who supports your formally?

- A. Grand parents
- B. Elder Brother
- C. Elder sister
- D. Relative
- E. others, specify _____

12. Where do your parents live now?

- A. region _____
- B. Zone _____
- C. woreda _____
- D. kebele _____

11. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

12. How do your parents earn their livelihoods?

- A. Farmer
- B. Daily laborer
- C. Petty trading
- D. Craft work
- E. other

Appendix 2

III Interview Guideline for In-depth Interviews

- What made you move into the streets?
- How did you join street life?
- Where do you usually sleep?
- Where do you get your income?
- Do you work on the streets?
- What did you do with the money you earn all together in usual days?
- What are the most difficult problems that you have to deal with in the street?
- How do you usually deal with these problems?
- Where do you usually or other time gets your food and how many times do you eat per day?
- With whom do spend your time in the street?
- How do you maintain you reaction with other street children?
- What kind of relation do you have with the community?
- Have you ever been harassed by the elders, police or others?
- What is your future inclination?

IV. Interview Guide Line for Focus Group Discussions

- What was the reason for leaving home?
- How do you see street life?
- What are the major problems of street life?
- What are risk reducing ways to avoid problems on the street?
- How do you usually deal with the problems?
- What are the possible job opportunities in the streets?

- What do you do with the money you earn?
- How do you find food and shelter?
- How do you maintain social relations among each other?
- What is the significance of these social relations?
- Where do you get support in time of difficulties?
- What do you expect from your future?

Appendix 3

IV. Check List for Observation

- Children areas of operations
- Street children shelter, feeding and working places
- Children physical conditions, clothing and others
- Street children interaction among themselves with other social actors
- How they compute for resources

Appendix 4

V. Interview Guideline for Key Informants.

Name _____

Sex _____

Age _____

Education level _____

Organization _____

Position _____

- How many children live in the streets of Hawassa?
- What are the major causes of streetism?
- What are the major problems of street children?
- How serious is the problem of street children?
- What is your relation with street children?
- How do people perceive street children?

Appendix 5. Age profile of Selected Street Children

Age	Sex		Total
	M	F	
7-12	6	1	7
13-14	15	4	19
15-18	10	4	14
Total	31	9	40

Appendix 6. Livelihood Strategies of Selected Street Children

Livelihood Activities	Sex		Total
	M	F	
Carrying goods and Luggage	5	-	5
Shoe Shining	14	-	14
Lottery Vending	4	-	4
Petty Trade	3	4	7
Washing and Guarding Vehicles	3	-	3
Begging	2	1	3
Commercial Sex Work	-	4	4
Total	31	9	40

7. Appendix 7. Sleeping arrangement of street children

Where they sleep	Sex		Total
	M	F	
At Home with Parents	5	3	8
With Relatives	7	2	9
Along the Street	10	2	12
Rented House	9	2	11
Total	31	9	40

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, and has not been presented for a degree in other Universities, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by

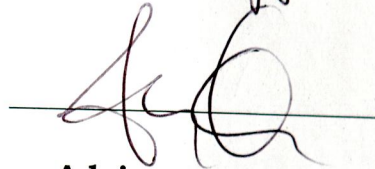
Zenebe Yohannes
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Candidate

Confirmed by

Susanne Eppe 14.7.2010



Advisor