

Investigating Child Protection Mechanisms and Service Provision for Sexually Abused Female
Children: In the case of Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)

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**INVESTIGATING CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS AND SERVICE PROVISION FOR
SEXUALLY ABUSED FEMALE CHILDREN: IN THE CASE OF INTEGRATED FAMILY
SERVICE ORGANIZATION (IFSO)**

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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL WORK**

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STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the thesis presented by HERANI KIDANE entitled: Investigating child protection mechanisms and service provision for sexually abused female children: in the case of integrated family service organization, Addis Ababa and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of masters of social work complies with the regulation of the university and meet the accepted standards concerning originality and quality.

Approved By:

Research Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Internal Examiner Signature: _____ Date: _____

External Examiner Signature: _____ Date: _____

STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I, Herani Kidane, hereby declare that this research paper, "Investigating child protection mechanisms and service provision for sexually abused female children: in the case of Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO)," is entirely original work of mine and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of masters of social work complies with the rule and regulation of the University and fulfill the standard in aspects of originality.

Name: Herani Kidane

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Date: 2025_____

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Abstract

This study investigated on child protection mechanisms and service provision for sexually abused female in the case of integrated family service organization (IFSO). Qualitative research method was employed to describe major child protection mechanisms in IFSO to protect the children in the shelter from further abuse and service provision by IFSO. At the beginning, the researcher purposely chooses integrated family service organization for the study, for the reason that IFSO works with children for thirty years by protecting and supporting them. Then, purposive or judgmental sampling technique was used to select the participants. The participants are IFSO staff workers and governmental bodies, a total of thirteen participants were participated in this research and from them eight of them are IFSO staff workers and the rest five of them are governmental bodies. In-depth interview, Key informant interview, observation and document review were used to collect qualitative data. The qualitatively collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Form and signature, child protection safe guarding policy, safety and security and continuous follow-up are the four themes identified. The findings of the study imply that these themes are child protection mechanisms to protect the children from further abuse in IFSO shelter. Moreover, the finding shows that the service provision includes medication, counseling, food, clothes, shelter, training, formal Education, training, re-integration and follow-up. The result of this study have paramount importance for Social Work implications to strengthening the child care services for sexually abused female children through different dimensions. In addition, the findings of the study have an implication for social policy to utilize untouched aspects of sexually abused children's service provision and protection mechanism.

Keywords: *Child sexual abuse, child protection mechanisms, childcare shelter*

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

CBOs: Community based organizations

CIFA: Compagnia Italiana Forme Acciaio

CSA: Child sexual abuse

ECCE: Early childhood Education in Ethiopia

FHI: Family health international

GBV: Gender based violence

HIV: Human immune virus

IL SOLE: Il Sole Onlus

MOWCY: Ministry of women, child and youth

OPRIFS: Organization for prevention, rehabilitation and integration of female street children

PTSD: Post traumatic stress disorder

UN: United nation

UNCRC: United nation convention on the rights of children

UNICEF: United nation children fund

IFSO : Integrated Family Service Organization

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

As to the convention on the right of the child (2008), a "child" is defined as any individual under the age of eighteen who has not reached adulthood and is therefore deemed vulnerable due to their incomplete physical and mental development. Children are particularly susceptible since they rely heavily on others to provide their fundamental needs. Children are vulnerable because they are unable to make decisions for themselves; instead, they depend on others to do so. According to Bagattini (2019), Children are not able to stand up for themselves. They must inevitably rely on adults to provide their needs in order to survive and prosper, which makes them sensitive to adult interaction. These needs can be material, emotional, intellectual, or related to a child's development into independent people capable of making wise judgments on their lives. Children are legitimately vulnerable to paternalism since they lack complete agency, and adults have a moral right to rule over them. Furthermore, while paternalistic adult behavior is necessary for children to flourish, adults also have a duty to exercise authority over them (Gheaus, 2018). As a result, child vulnerability requires child protection. According to UNICEF (2008), child protection works to stop and address acts of violence, abuse, exploitation, and other detrimental behaviors.

Ethiopia is now dealing with a number of child-related issues, one of which being child sexual abuse. Alemayehu, Tafesse and Chanyalew (2022), stated that when children engage in sexual activity that they do not completely understand and are unable to give informed consent, for which the child is not developmentally ready, or else that transgresses social norms or legal restrictions then it is considered as child sexual abuse. The phrase "child sexual abuse" refers to a

variety of behaviors that can be committed by people of any age, such as having sex, trying to have sex, touching the child's genitalia, showing off, exposing the child to adult sexual activity or pornography, and using the child for prostitution. As per UNICEF's report on child sexual status, from 217 studies, one in eight children worldwide twelve point seven percent have experienced sexual abuse before becoming 18 years old. According to (UNICEF, 2020), one in 20 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 (or about 13 million) has gone through forced sexual experiences throughout their lifetime. The results of this study suggest that a history of childhood sexual abuse negatively impacts women's psychological wellbeing in the future. In particular, it was discovered that women who had experienced sexual assault were more likely to experience sadness, panic attacks, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than women who have not been abused (Alemayehu, 2013). This study will elucidate the child protection mechanisms from further abuse and provided services in the organization for sexually abused female children in specific organizations called integrated family service organization. So that, this research will try to evaluate the program given in IFSO.

As defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2008), children are individuals under the age of eighteen, still in the process of developing both physically and mentally. Due to their incomplete development, children are particularly vulnerable and depend heavily on others for their fundamental needs. As (Bagattini, 2019) points out, children lack the capacity to stand up for themselves and must rely on adults for their survival and well-being, which makes them especially sensitive to adult interactions. These needs encompass not only material and emotional support but also intellectual and developmental guidance, shaping them into independent individuals capable of making informed decisions. As (Gheaus, 2018) emphasizes, while adults have a moral right and responsibility to guide children, this paternalistic role is

essential for their growth. Vulnerable by nature, children require robust protection mechanisms to safeguard their well-being.

In Ethiopia, one of the most pressing issues concerning children is sexual abuse. As outlined by (Alemayehu, Tafesse, and Chanyalew, 2022) child sexual abuse occurs when children engage in sexual activities that they cannot fully comprehend, are incapable of giving willingness, or that violate social and legal norms. This form of abuse encompasses a range of behaviors, including but not limited to sexual intercourse, genital touching, exposure to adult sexual content, and child prostitution. According to a UNICEF report, approximately 12.7% of children globally, or one in eight, have experienced sexual abuse before reaching adulthood. In Ethiopia, like many other countries, the consequences of such abuse are profound, with long-term psychological impacts, such as depression, panic attacks, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Alemayehu, 2013).

This research seeks to investigate the child protection mechanisms in place for sexually abused children, focusing on services provided by organizations such as the Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO). Through evaluating the programs offered by IFSO, this study aims to assess the child protection mechanisms and the support services available to sexually abused female children, with the ultimate goal of enhancing strategies to prevent further abuse and support victims in their recovery.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Numerous studies have explored child protection mechanisms within childcare institutions, particularly focusing on child sexual abuse. The difficulties that allegations of sexual abuse in daycare settings present to investigators, legislators, and communities are highlighted by (Bybee and Mowbray's, 1993) investigation into the community response to child sexual abuse in daycare settings. They recommend strengthening local capacities to stop, identify, look into, and respond to claims of sexual abuse in daycare centers. According to a study on the treatment, misinterpretation, and mismanagement of they understand how mistreated children's behavioral manifestations are misinterpreted and mismanaged (Kools & Kennedy, 2001). Seth and Srivastava (2017) researched managing, preventing, and shielding children from sexual offenses. According to the findings, child sexual abuse is a particularly heinous criminal conduct, and complete management that includes psychological support for the victim and family requires multidisciplinary intervention. Finkelhor (2009) conducted research on the two main approaches offender management and school-based instructional initiatives for preventing child sexual abuse. His conclusion said that further research is necessary to identify more effective methods for preventing child sexual abuse because none of the programs or tactics he found to be scientifically supported in preventing sexual abuse.

A study from Tanzania investigates the effects of community-based child protection mechanisms on reducing sexual violence against children in the Rombo District. It was conducted by (Reuben, Mohamed, and Mutasa, 2022) suggests that when child protection strategies are integrated within the community, they can significantly mitigate means of sexual

abuse. This underscores the importance of community involvement in safeguarding children and the effectiveness of localized approaches in tackling such pervasive issues.

Some studies try to show service provision in childcare institutions including in Ethiopia. For example, (Baynesagn and Abebe, 2021) conducted research on the protection and support services for sexually abused female children in the Organization for Prevention, rehabilitation, and Integration of Female Street children safe home. Their finding explained how significantly more effectively the emotional, social, and spiritual needs of sexually abused female children in the safe house could be met when protection and support services were also provided. The finding of a study indicate that efforts to establish a platform at the Jimma University Medical Center's one-stop shop to offer victims of child abuse a variety of services, including free legal assistance, psycho-social support, and medical care, were off to a promising start. Additionally, the child protection program works to increase children's social protection through raising awareness (Gutema Chimdi, Gudina Abashula and Diribe mekonen, 2020).

The motivation behind my study on service provision in childcare institutions stems from the understanding that effective child protection is inherently linked to the quality of services provided. Recognizing that service provision plays a critical role in safeguarding children; I have chosen to assess the specific services offered by the integrated family service organization (IFSO). This assessment aims to identify how well these services contribute to the protection and well-being of children in care, highlighting the importance of comprehensive support systems in promoting a safe and nurturing environment for vulnerable children.

Several studies examine child protection mechanisms for sexually abused children within care institutions. One notable study conducted in Scotland focuses on survivors of institutional abuse within long-term childcare settings. The findings reveal that these survivors often

experience negative outcomes related to their mental health, psychosocial adjustment, and physical health, as outlined by (Carr et al., 2019). (Levi, Crowell, Walsh, and Dellasega, 2015) carried out additional research on the interpretation of "reasonable suspicion" of child abuse by child caretakers. The results support the notion that there is no universally acknowledged interpretive framework for "reasonable suspicion," which is necessary to help childcare personnel determine when to disclose suspicions of abuse.

(Gallagher, 2000) conducted a research at the number and kind of documented examples of sexual abuse of minors in institutions. His research supported the assertion that the implementation evaluation conducted over the previous ten years had reduced the risk faced by children residing in institutions; however, given the multitude of problems that remain unresolved and need to be addressed, much more is anticipated.

To sum up, there are studies conducted on cause, consequence, features and nature of child sexual abuse. However, as far as my assessment is concerned, existing literature lacks detail on child protection mechanism in childcare institution from further abuse and also literatures recommend further studies regarding child protection in childcare institution concerning child abuse. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to examine the child protection mechanisms in childcare institution, particularly focusing on preventing further abuse and assessing the overall service provision.

Given IFSO's thirty years of experience in supporting and protecting children, my research assesses its child protection mechanisms and service provision. The study aims to provide insights into the adequacy of current services designed to protect vulnerable children from harm. This investigation will enhance understanding of child protection practices and guide future interventions and policy improvements in childcare institutions in Addis Ababa.

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess child protection mechanisms and service provision for those sexually abused female children in IFSO which is found in Addis Ababa, yeka-subcity.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To assess the child protection mechanisms to protect sexually abused female children from further abuse in IFSO
2. To examine the service delivery, in IFSO, for sexually abused female children
3. To investigate the challenges of IFSO in implementing child protection mechanisms and service provision.

1.4. Research Question

1. What are the child protection mechanisms or systems to avoid further abuse in IFSO for sexually abused female children?
2. What kind of services is delivered for sexually abused females children in IFSO?
3. What are the service delivery and child protection challenges of IFSO in implementing the mechanisms to avoid further abuse of sexually abused female children?

1.5. Significance of the research

By highlighting critical challenges, this research serves as a foundation for academics to explore innovative solutions, assess the long-term impact of child protection mechanisms, and

examine cultural and systemic influences on their effectiveness. It also provides actionable insights for policymakers, emphasizing the need for systemic reforms, better resource allocation, and specialized personnel to strengthen child protection frameworks. This dual focus on academic inquiry and policy improvement makes the study a vital step toward advancing child protection in different child care organizations.

1.6. Scope of the study

The main purpose of this study is that, investigating on child protection mechanisms to protect the abused female children from further abuse and service provision. This study focused only on the program evaluation of child protection mechanisms and service provision. The study is delimited only in integrated family service organization (IFSO). The study conducted in Addis Ababa city, yeka sub-city.

1.7. Limitation of the study

In the research process, I have faced a limitation regarding the sexually abused female children. In IFSO, it is not allowed to interview the children with or without an assistant. And it is their working system, and the reason why they don't let clients meet the children is that the children are traumatized and needs psychosocial support, so it is recommended not to meet with new faces and also in aspect of their safety and security. It is not allowed to visit the children and see their safe home (shelter) however they allowed me to visit the safe home with some restrictions and without contacting the children, due to the reason that I have a letter from Addis Ababa University, department of social work. Since, this research only focuses on integrated family service organization (IFSO). And the finding of the study is only targeted in IFSO and the other childcare institutions experience is not seen.

1.8. Organization of the study

There are six chapters in this study. The first chapter contains introduction, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions. The second chapter covers reviewing related literatures that are relevant to the study. The third chapter deals with the components of research methods that were employed. It includes research approaches, data collecting, analyzing and sampling. The fourth chapter consists the finding of the study. Chapter five illustrates the discussion part and chapter six includes conclusion and implication of social work of the study.

1.9. Operational definition of terms

Child: means every human being under the age of 18 (UNCRC, 1989)

Child protection: refers to prevent and respond to children violence, abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, 2008)

Child Vulnerability: is a child's exposure to poverty, natural disasters, conflict, and epidemics, which can ultimately have an impact on the wellbeing of the child (Landgren, 2005)

Childcare Shelter: is a temporary facility that provides housing, safety, and care for children in crisis, such as those experiencing homelessness or abuse (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017)

2. Literature Review

2.1. Child Sexual abuse

According to UNICEF's (2022) report, child sexual abuse contains several actions of abuse, in various set-up and interaction. Condition like sexually abused by near family, relatives, neighbors, pastors in religious organization, home care givers and close partners. Children and adolescents with low-income in the world are the vulnerable groups for sexual abuse and exploitation. Why? Because they move away from their families due to insecurity, and armed conflict. Children are vulnerable in all settings for sexual abuse where they spend their time and mostly it is happening in their home. Child sexual abuse is a difficult subject to deal with since the victims of such abuse are often very afraid to disclose what occurred to their own bodies, and if they do, it can lead to further insecurity and even death. For the reason that reports of incidents come from other sources other than the victims. The starting point for child sexual abuse could be divorced family, street children, child sex worker and child labor (Gupta, shalini & Garg, 2020).

As stated in the handbook for parents and care givers regarding child sexual abuse, published by UNICEF (2003), a child sexual abuse refers to using power which is an action of sexual against children under 16 ages. It is an illegal attempt that can be defined as statutory rape. It includes genital touching, verbal sex, masturbation, fingering and non-verbal sexual practices (Fox & Nkosi, 2003).

Save the children reported focusing on the ways to enhance the international community's response to sexual abuse and exploitation for children by aid worker, peacekeepers and others acting on their behalf in emergencies. Child sexual abuse is not a new issue to discuss

but since 2002, the problem's existence has been generally acknowledged and several actions are taken to overcome the problem. A standard conference that was held in New York in December 2006, in the presence of UN secretary general, reaffirmed the commitment of UN agencies and other international actors to strong action against Child sexual abuse.

2.2. Features of Sexually Abused Female Children

The study explores the characteristics of sexual abuse cases within a nationally representative sample of children and adolescents in the United States, ranging in age from 0 to 17 years. The findings highlight that children who experienced sexual abuse exhibited heightened levels of fear, a condition that contrasts sharply with other traumatic childhood experiences (Gewirtz & Finkelhor, 2020). Compared to other adverse childhood experiences, sexual abuse is shown to have a more significant negative impact on the victims' quality of life, underscoring its severity as a form of trauma.

Moreover, studies that shows self-reported data recommends that the sexual abused survivors play a vital role in impacting on their mental health outcome and involvement in deviant behavior. While both men and women experience varying effects into early adulthood, child sexual abuse notably increases the likelihood of developing mental health issues and engaging in delinquent behaviors. These effects may differ between genders, but the long-term psychological consequences remain severe for both (Maciel & Basto-Pereira, 2020).

In a research targeting on psychosocial consequences of child sexual abuse in Ethiopia, a case-control comparative analysis found that survivors of child sexual abuse shows significantly higher symptom levels than the control group. These survivors exhibited low feelings of empowerment and social support, heightened feelings of guilt, and grows a tendency to perceive

danger in the external world. Furthermore, when compared to their peers who had not experienced sexual abuse, survivors reported lower levels of positive self-worth, highlighting the profound impact of sexual abuse on their emotional and psychological well-being (Wondie, Zemene, Tafesse, Reschke & Schroder, 2011).

This body of research collectively illustrates that the effects of child sexual abuse are wide-reaching, with long-term consequences for mental health, social interactions, and overall quality of life, further emphasizing the need for comprehensive support systems for survivors.

2.3. Childcare Institution

Childcare institution is a formation by governmental, non-governmental or religious organizations for the purpose of caring for all alone children. It also implies to children without family, children home or village. Unique feature of child care institution is that there are care givers which are paid and children live in a group in the compound (FHI, 2010).

According to the convention on the rights of the child, Article 20(1&2), children who are deprived temporarily or permanently from their family have the right for access to special protection and assistance provided by the state and also alternative care (UNICEF, 1989). Children have the right to grow up with their families but over 2.7 million children move to institutional care because of poverty, disability, migration, conflict and natural disaster (UNICEF, 2022). Child care institutions were established in order to protect children from complex and harmful situations. They are regarded as one of the best ways to meet the needs of children who, for various reasons, are not under the care of their parents and require a safe haven, support, and care, which can be provided for a short while or a long time, depending on the needs determined by the appropriate authorities (Hrishika, 2020).

2.4. Global trend of child care for sexually abused female children

The Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2009) highlights the extensive efforts required to address the issue of child sexual abuse and exploitation. It emphasizes that there are so many issues to be done to provide sufficient protection for children globally. Regarding this, UNICEF has recognized a significant problem in aspects of comprehensive guidance on how policies and programs can appropriately address and prevent these kinds of abuse.

The UNICEF handbook's focus is to evaluate the existing literature on child sexual abuse and exploitation. It aims to provide a clearer understanding of the problem's nature and scope while also identifying actionable steps to prevent and respond to incidents of abuse. To support this process, UNICEF commissioned the report as a means of generating reliable, data-driven insights into what works in preventing and addressing these grave violations of children's rights.

The primary goal of the report is to provide core, information-based suggestions for programs and policies that can make meaning in preventing child sexual abuse and exploitation. This holistic approach is provided to guide governments, organizations, and other stakeholders in their efforts to protect children and uphold their rights more effectively.

According to article 39 of the convention on the rights of the child, the state has the responsibility for recovery and reintegration of victim children (UNCRC, 1989). As it is recognized, child abuse becomes a massive trouble for public health, social justice, human rights, gender equality and science. As a result of this, children are suffering from stress, unwanted

pregnancy and HIV. The international and national community's give recognition towards an immediate need from the government and policy makers to work on preventing, identifying, and responding correctly to child sexual abuse. One way that must be addressed for child sexual abuse is that the need to develop awareness and determination for progress, awareness must be promoted for children's themselves, parents, care givers and professionals that have interaction with children. The other issue is implementing empathy. It refers to feeling the other person's situation, status and need, and also act affectively inspired actions that are right with the current status of the sexually abused child (Mathews & Vezina, 2016).

2.5. Child Care Practice in Ethiopia

Early childhood care and Education in Ethiopia gives attention for children's future life that is structured through quality of learning and growth. Its focal point is on recognized quality indicators for ECCE and challenges that Ethiopia is going through. (Diale, Boitumelo & Abatih, 2021).

According to the Ethiopia Child Protection Area of Responsibility and Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility Strategy (2021-2022), 56% of the total population in Ethiopia requires humanitarian aid, and a significant portion of these individuals below the age of 18 are children. Due to difficult circumstances, many children are forced into harmful practices such as sexual exploitation, child marriage, and child labor as they struggle to support themselves and their families. This strategy aims to ensure protection, the elimination of risks, and the provision of essential services to children and women affected by emergencies. The focus is on safeguarding their rights and providing necessary aid to prevent further harm and assist those impacted by crises.

Protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation, physical and humiliating punishment, neglect, harmful practices, and child labor exploitation are critical concerns of various organizations. These efforts focus on preventing different forms of abuse and violence that affect both girls and boys. Through awareness creation, coordination, advocacy, and the establishment of support mechanisms, these organizations work within multiple sectors such as families, communities, schools, the health sector, and the judicial system. They also focus on law enactment services that provide essential psycho-social treatment, family tracing, reunification services, and family-based care and support. Additionally, these organizations aim to ensure access to social protection services to safeguard children from exploitation and abuse (Save the children, 200).

The term "child protection" refers to a broad category of elements that are necessary to guarantee children's survival, the fulfillment of fundamental human rights, and equal chances for boys and girls. For example, birth registration allows children to exercise other rights guaranteed by national legislation and the constitution as well as to access fundamental services (Ministry of women, children and youth, 2019). A study conducted in Hamlin fistula hospital and Mother Teresa charity missionary's children home regarding psychosocial problems of sexually abused children and their coping mechanisms elucidate that children who are abused shows problem in physical, social, behavioral and emotion. The coping mechanisms are different for different abused children such as going to the church, disclosing the issue for others, hide their feelings and stress, and attacking others gives a relief from their stress.(Haileselassie, Wassie, Kahsay & Fisseha, 2014).

Several actions are carried out in the investigation of the contribution of the community-based multi-stakeholder approach to child protection. The community-based multi stakeholders

implemented a number of intervention strategies, such as a community conversation program, care and support methods, the establishment of an IGA for at-risk children and their families, access to education for at-risk children, training in model parenting skills for guardians, parents, family members, and teachers, enhancing the ability of the Iddir Coalition and religious institutions to provide general services, peer-to-peer education on a range of child protection issues in schools, and preparation of workshops and sanitization programs for the community (Abose, 2015).

2.6. Childcare practice in shelter

Childcare shelters, often associated with foster care, are critical for children who face unsafe living conditions. According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, these shelters make preparation for safe and condensed Environment where the children basic need such as shelter, food, cloth and health care are met. The ultimate goal of these shelters are to make certain the children comfort and safety, with an attention on reuniting the children with their families or arrange consistent living Environment. Also these shelters provide temporary living arrangement until their cases resolving or prepare long term placement (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016).

The National Network for Youth emphasizes the need for specialized care for homeless youth, which includes access to childcare shelters. These shelters provide not only physical protection but also educational support and emotional care. Youth in these shelters often experience trauma and need counseling and social services to address mental health issues. The National Network for Youth also highlights the importance of shelters offering resources for continuing education and personal development, helping children and young people cope with their experiences and build a path forward (National Network for Youth, 2020).

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) stresses the vital role of childcare shelters for children and families experiencing homelessness. These shelters not only provide temporary relief but also help reduce the risks associated with homelessness, such as housing instability and long-term trauma. The NAEH explains that these shelters act as a network that creates a linkage with other significant services, including legal support, mental health counseling, and housing assistance. These shelters help families and children navigate complex systems and provide much-needed support during times of crisis, ultimately facilitating better long-term outcomes for children by addressing immediate needs and supporting the transition to permanent housing and stability (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2021).

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) highlights the importance of childcare shelters in supporting children who have experienced trauma. These shelters provide a safe and stable environment where children's immediate needs are met while they begin to recover from the trauma they have experienced. According to NCTSN, childcare shelters often incorporate trauma-informed care into their activities, which helps address the psychological and emotional needs of children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or other traumatic events. This type of care involves understanding the widespread impact of trauma and integrating that knowledge into every aspect of shelter operations, from the physical environment to the services provided. The goal is to decline further stress and help children heal in a supportive and nurturing setting (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2018).

2.7. Ethiopia childcare practice in shelter

In Ethiopia, child abuse in shelters, especially those housing displaced or vulnerable children, remains a critical issue. These shelters often accommodate children who have been affected by conflict, displacement, or poverty, placing them at high risk for various forms of

abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional mistreatment. Efforts to address this issue involve both government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Ethiopian government, through the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth (MoWCY), has worked alongside international bodies like UNICEF and UNHCR to implement child protection services, which include hotlines, child protection committees, and regular monitoring by social workers to identify and address abuse (MoWCY, 2020). Shelters provide training for caregivers and staff on recognizing the signs of abuse and offering non-violent discipline.

Additionally, shelters offer psychosocial support to help children process trauma, which can mitigate emotional and psychological abuse (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2020). Despite these efforts, challenges such as overcrowding, limited resources, and cultural barriers persist, complicating the identification and prevention of abuse. Overcrowded shelters, particularly those in refugee camps, often lack the supervision needed to ensure every child's safety. Additionally, some cultural norms may contribute to underreporting of abuse, as corporal punishment is sometimes seen as acceptable. To mitigate these issues, ongoing education and community awareness initiatives aim to empower children and caregivers to recognize their rights and report abuse, while efforts to trace and reunite separated children with their families' further help protect them from harm (MoWCY, 2020; UNICEF Ethiopia, 2020).

2.8. Challenges of childcare shelter in providing various services for children

There are various challenges that child care shelters are facing, specifically on finance and resource restriction. Numerous child care shelters are working with inadequate economic resources affecting to hire staff workers, supply Educational programs and provide sufficient facilities. The problem often reflect to overcrowding, further exacerbating the tension on

accessible resources and hindering appropriate care delivered to the children (Children defence fund, 2019). Moreover, limited staff worker and high rate turnover are prevalent in child care shelter, outcome in instability for children who acquired compassionate care and consistent. The turnover rate makes it problematic to balance consistency of care, which is important for children who have experienced trauma (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, 2018).

Furthermore, many children in shelters have complex emotional and behavioral needs due to past abuse or neglect. Shelters may lack the specialized resources necessary to provide trauma-informed care, leaving these children without the support they need to heal and thrive (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2021). The challenge of providing sufficient educational opportunities is also significant, as children often face disruptions in their schooling due to frequent moves between shelters. These interruptions can delay their academic progress, further hindering their long-term development (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017). Addressing these issues requires systemic improvements in funding, training, and access to specialized services for children in care.

2.9. The concept of Child protection

According to child right convention, child refers to every human being below at the age of 18 are categorized as a child (2008). As UNICEF stated, child protection is about preventing and responding to violence, abuse and exploitation in order to safeguard children. Children's case in every country is the major issue for UNICEF to deal with regarding to their safety and provision of service. It focuses on sexual exploitation, child abuse, child trafficking, violence, labor exploitation, building children's resilience, child on street working, poor access to justice,

children's out of parental care, female genital mutilation, children with disability and irrelevant institutionalization (UNICEF, 2008).

It invests its finite resources into protection of child safety and fostering the welfare of the victim children. UNICEF emphasize various strategies with regard to child protection system, strive to grow the system that build up social welfare ministries, policies, local government and other institution reforms; in order to accomplish the goal, UNICEF networks with world bank, European Union and bilateral partners. Some activities of the strategies are national protection system, support social change, promoting child protection in conflict and war, evidence-building, knowledge management and convening or catalyzing agents of change (UNICEF, 2008).

According to Krug et al. (2002) offer a more intervention-focused definition, which highlights the significance of legal, social, and medical care responses in child protection? They define child protection as efforts to prevent and respond to maltreatment, exploitation, and neglect through systemic interventions. Legal interventions ensure that there are laws in place to prosecute offenders and protect children's rights. Social interventions often involve social workers and community organizations that provide preventive services, as well as direct support to families in crisis. Medical care interventions play a critical role in identifying signs of abuse and providing care for children who have been harmed, whether physically, emotionally, or sexually. This definition underscore the coordinated role of multiple sectors like law enforcement, social services, and healthcare in addressing and minimize the harm done to children, ensuring that each sector works together to safeguard the child's well-being.

Child protection is fundamentally linked to the concept of children's rights, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989. The CRC guarantees children a wide range of rights, including protection from harm, access to education, healthcare, and the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives. It recognizes that children, due to their vulnerability, need special safeguards and care, including protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Key provisions in the CRC, such as Article 19 (protection from violence) and Article 34 (protection from sexual exploitation), highlight the dual nature of child protection both preventing harm and ensuring that children's fundamental needs are met. Furthermore, the CRC emphasizes children's right to participation (Article 12), asserting that children should be heard in decisions that impact their lives, reinforcing the idea that child protection is not just about safeguarding children but also empowering them.

2.10. Child Protection Mechanisms

According to (Hoffer, 2018) child protection mechanisms can be understood through the lens of policy and organizational structures, emphasizing how these systems are formalized within governmental frameworks. In this context, child protection is defined as a comprehensive set of policies, procedures, and institutional actions aimed at preventing and addressing various forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. The article highlights the importance of effective legal frameworks and institutional responses to safeguard children, noting that the success of these mechanisms can vary significantly across different countries and contexts.

The author emphasizes that child protection systems must be tailored to local realities; yet also adhere to international standards, ensuring that they are not only robust but also adaptable to evolving challenges such as new forms of child exploitation, socio-economic

disparities, and the availability of resources. By assessing the effectiveness of these mechanisms across diverse settings, Hoffer illustrates that a well-structured child protection system requires both strong policy formulation and efficient organizational execution to be successful in safeguarding children's rights and well-being. According to (Freeman and Detrick, 2017) child protection mechanisms are defined as coordinated policies and actions designed to protect children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect, typically involving various factors such as governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and communities.

Similarly, (Reilly and Stover, 2018) describe child protection mechanisms as the tools and processes employed by governments and child protection agencies to prevent and address child abuse and neglect. Their work emphasizes the importance of case management, child welfare systems, and protective services as essential components of an effective child protection system. Both sets of authors underscore the need for a collaborative, multi-faceted approach to ensure the safety and well-being of children, highlighting that well-functioning child protection mechanisms require coordinated efforts from various stakeholders and a combination of preventive and responsive measures.

(Jones, 2019) assess the role of child protection mechanisms in emergency condition such as armed conflicts, natural disasters, and refugee crises, where children are particularly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and neglect. He defines child protection in these contexts as a coordinated, multi-sectorial response aimed at safeguarding children in high-risk environments. It emphasizes that effective child protection during emergencies requires collaboration between both governmental and non-governmental actors, with each playing a distinct but complementary role in providing essential services.

Governments are tasked with ensuring the legal framework and resources for child protection, while NGOs often provide on-the-ground interventions, including emergency shelter, psychosocial support, and advocacy. It underscores the importance of immediate response mechanisms and the need for adaptable, context-specific strategies to protect children from the immediate and long-term impacts of crises.

Making certain of legal framework and resource for child protection is a responsibility of the government, while NGOs implement various intervention including psychosocial support, advocacy and emergency shelters. It highlights the significance of prompt response mechanism and the need for adaptable, cope-up methods to prevent children from the immediate and continuous impact of crisis. Jones underscores the significance of preparedness, coordination, and monitoring to ensure that child protection efforts are integrated into emergency relief and response efforts effectively.

2.11. Best practice of child protection mechanisms

Child protection in Ethiopia has progressed significantly, driven by legal frameworks, community initiatives, and international partnerships. The Ethiopian Constitution (1995) provides the foundation for safeguarding children's rights, emphasizing their protection from exploitation, abuse, and harmful practices. Ethiopia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, reinforcing its commitment to international standards. The Children's Act (Proclamation No. 330/2003) further solidifies this commitment by outlining the responsibilities of the government and other stakeholders in ensuring children's welfare. The National Child Protection System (NCPS)

enhances these efforts by promoting multi-sectorial collaboration to address child protection comprehensively (Proclamation No. 330/2003; United Nations, 1989).

Community-based child protection mechanisms are among the most effective approaches in Ethiopia, specifically in rural areas where formal systems may be limited. Local Child Protection Committees (CPCs), comprising community leaders, teachers, and health workers, serve as a critical layer of defense against child rights violations. These committees focus on preventing abuse, neglect, exploitation, and child marriage while facilitating the reintegration of affected children into their communities. This localized approach ensures that child protection measures are culturally appropriate and accessible to vulnerable populations (Save the Children, 2021).

Another essential role player in safeguarding children in Ethiopia is schools. Programs to prevent school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) have been implemented in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international agencies. These initiatives include training teachers on child safeguarding, establishing secured spaces, and promoting awareness about children's rights among students and staff. By creating a safer educational environment, these measures aim to minimize vulnerabilities and empower children to advocate for their rights (UNESCO, 2015).

Collaboration with international and local NGOs has been instrumental in strengthening Ethiopia's child protection mechanisms. Organizations such as Save the Children, World Vision, and UNICEF provide technical and financial support to government agencies and communities. They help implement training programs, improve response mechanisms to child abuse, and

address issues like child labor, trafficking, and early marriage. These partnerships enhance the capacity of national systems to protect children effectively (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2020).

In emergencies, such as drought, conflict, and displacement, Ethiopia's child protection mechanisms are adapted to address the unique needs of affected children. Child-friendly spaces are established in refugee camps and conflict zones to provide safe environments where children can access psychosocial support, education, and recreational activities. These efforts also focus on preventing family separation and child trafficking during crises. The Ethiopian National Disaster Risk Management Policy incorporates child protection measures to ensure a coordinated response during emergencies (UNHCR, 2019).

Law enforcement agencies play a crucial role in protecting children from abuse and exploitation. In Ethiopia, the Federal Police and local law enforcement officers undergo specialized training to handle cases involving child abuse, trafficking, and neglect. These initiatives are supported by the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCYA), which coordinates capacity-building programs and monitors enforcement. Strengthening the capabilities of law enforcement ensures a more robust response to violations of children's rights (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, 2018).

Despite these achievements, challenges remain in Ethiopia's child protection efforts. Scarce resources, cultural barriers, and gaps in the enforcement of laws hinder progress. However, ongoing investments in education, community engagement, and legal reform are essential to address these challenges. By fostering partnerships among government agencies, NGOs, and communities, Ethiopia continues to strengthen its child protection mechanisms, ensuring a safer future for its children (Save the Children, 2021; UNICEF Ethiopia, 2020).

2.12. Challenges of child protection mechanisms

In Ethiopia there are a number of challenges to promote child protection mechanisms that diminish the attempt to safeguard children well-being. An important issue stems from in depth cultural norms and traditional activities. Early marriage and child labor are taken as a practice in the communities struggling to implement the law and advocate for child right. Those practices are seen as a social cohesion or financial survival means, particularly in rural areas (Pankhurst et al, 2020). For instance, families marrying their child to survive economically without considering her Education and health status.

In Ethiopia high rate of poverty, it is the major issue to compound the situation. This dependency of Economy drag the children into dangerous labor condition and troublesome their Education and other development chances. The widespread presence of poverty also challenges the government to allocate adequate resources to child protection mechanism (Tadele, 2021)

Additionally to economic and cultural challenges, Ethiopia's legislative framework for child protection, while holistic in theory, there are obstacles in implementation. Legal provisions addressing issues such as child labor, trafficking, and violence are often not enforced effectively due to weak institutional capacity and a lack of awareness among enforcement officials (Pankhurst et al., 2020). These shortcomings are exacerbated by the limited number of trained professionals in child protection services. Social workers, psychologists, and other child welfare experts are scarce, especially in rural and underserved regions, hindering the delivery of critical interventions (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018).

Another pervasive challenge is the societal acceptance of violence against children. Corporal punishment and other forms of abuse are sometimes viewed as acceptable disciplinary measures, both at home and in schools. This normalization of violence makes it difficult to shift attitudes and behaviors, even when legal frameworks explicitly prohibit such actions. These norms perpetuate cycles of abuse and neglect, leaving children without the protection they deserve. (Mulugeta, 2021).

Lastly, the lack of coordination among stakeholders and insufficient monitoring mechanisms further impede progress in child protection. Various governmental and non-governmental organizations often work in silos, leading to inefficiencies and duplication of efforts. Without robust systems for tracking and evaluating interventions, it becomes challenging to identify gaps, allocate resources effectively, and ensure accountability (UNESCO, 2019).

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a holistic approach. Community engagement is essential to shift harmful cultural norms and practices, while increased investment in education and social welfare can help alleviate the economic pressures that drive child exploitation. Strengthening legislative enforcement, training child protection professionals, and fostering better coordination among stakeholders are also critical steps toward building a more effective child protection system in Ethiopia.

2.13. Legal Framework for Child Protection

International Policy instrument for child protection

The United Nations General Assembly ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on November 20, 1989, a landmark human rights treaty drafted by the U.N. Commission

on Human Rights. This Convention addresses a wide range of rights for children, including civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and other aspects, with the primary aim of protecting and promoting the well-being of children globally. According to the Convention, anyone under the age of eighteen is recognized as a child, unless a state's legislation defines the age of majority at an earlier age.

According to convention on the rights of children, article 19(1). Children have a right not to be harmed physically, mentally and sexually by their care givers. Their care givers can be their parents, legal guardian and other responsible bodies. And also they have a right to be protected from injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation and negligent treatment. According to article 19(2). As appropriate, these preventive approaches should incorporate successful methods for creating social programs that offer vital assistance to the child and their caregivers. They should also address preventive programs and protocols for recognizing, documenting, reporting, referring, looking into, treating, and monitoring the previously mentioned incidents of child abuse, as well as, when appropriate, court involvement. Article 27(3), talks that children have a right to have food, clothing and shelter. And also access to Education, article 28.

When a child is in the care of parent(s), legal guardians, or other adults, States Parties shall take all reasonable legislative, administrative, social, and educational actions to protect the child from all types of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment, or exploitation, including sexual abuse (UNICEF,1989). As the united nation convention on the rights of child articulate about sexual abuse and all other abuses will make the criminal accountable for their action.

Regional Policy Instrument for child protection

A key regional policy instrument for child protection is the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), adopted in 1990 and effective from 1999, is a regional instrument focused on protecting children's rights in Africa. It complements the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, addressing both individual and collective rights, such as the right to life, education, health, and protection from abuse and exploitation. The Charter also emphasizes special protections for vulnerable children, including those in armed conflict or facing child labor. It requires African states to implement these rights, with oversight from the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. According to African charter, a human being below 18 years is a child and every child have the right to entertain rights and freedom accepted and guaranteed in the charter without child's or the child's parents or guardians race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status. It also creates the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to monitor the implementation of the Charter and ensure compliance by member states. The ACRWC plays a critical role in strengthening child protection across the African continent (African Charter, 1999).

Ethiopia Constitution regarding child protection

The Constitution of Ethiopia, adopted in 1995, includes several provisions aimed at protecting children's rights. Article 36 practically addresses the protection of children from exploitation, abuse, and neglect, mandating that the state ensure children's rights are upheld and that special care is provided to those in need. In Addition, Article 41 illustrate the right to education, stating that education is free and compulsory for children. The Constitution also prohibits child labor, which is further reinforced by Ethiopia's Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003, prohibiting the employment of children under the age of 14 and regulating their

working conditions (Federal Negarit Gazeta, 2003). These constitutional provisions collaborate with Ethiopia's commitments to international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), both of which Ethiopia has ratified (Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995).

National policy on Ethiopian Children

The National policy on Ethiopia children was adopted in 1996, perform duties as a cornerstone of child protection in Ethiopia. It collaborate with international frameworks such a African Charter on the rights and welfare of child (ACRWC) and Convention on the rights of child (CRC). This policy underscore on giving promotion to children rights to medical care, Education and protection from different abuse and exploitation. It targets on the need for special care for endangered children, like as those affected by poverty or conflict, and integrates child protection into national development strategies. The policy is reinforced by legal frameworks like the Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003, which prohibits child labor and sets regulations to ensure children are not subjected to harmful work (National Policy on Ethiopian Children, 1996; Ethiopian Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003).

National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC)

In Ethiopia, National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) adopted in 2002 which is a strategic framework outlined to apply and uphold children's rights in the country, collaborated with Ethiopia's commitments to international instruments like as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It target on managing issues affecting children, like access to medical care, education, exploitation, protection from violence, and child labor. The framework

set an explicit goal and objectives that contains reducing child mortality, improving literacy rate, preventing child trafficking and assuring child protection. The NPAC is designed to guide national and regional policies, programs, and interventions, planning to collaborate children's welfare into national development plans. It also involves multi-sectorial collaboration, ensuring that both government and non-governmental organizations work together in the realization of children's rights (NPAC, 2002).

2.14. Theoretical frame work

System Theory

This theory refers to a means of revealing highly complicated systems through a continuum that encircle the person in Environment. Understanding the elements and dynamics of client systems through systems theory also helps us identify issues and create well-balanced intervention strategies with the aim of improving the "quality of fit" between people and their surroundings (Friedman, Bruce & Allen, 2014).

System Theory aims to assess the dynamic relationships and interdependencies that exist among the various components within a system, as well as between the system and its surrounding. This theoretical framework is established through the structures and patterns of connections that arise from the interactions among these components. In System Theory, the components are characterized by their interdependence, meaning that the behavior and state of one component can significantly influence others. Additionally, these components are often hierarchically organized, reflecting different levels of complexity and function within the system. This hierarchical arrangement underscores the importance of understanding how each level interacts and contributes to the overall functioning and adaptability of the system as a whole (Lai

& Lin, 2017). In child care institutions, various components such as staff, children, families, and community interact dynamically to achieve the shared objective of fostering a supportive environment for child development. System Theory highlights these interconnected relationships, illustrating how each element influences and is influenced by the others. For instance, the communication or interaction between caregivers (Mothers in the IFSO) and children (In the shelter) can significantly affect a children overall wellbeing. And also there are hierarchal orders, which means, the organization has its own organizational structure. For example, the children directly interact with their care givers in the shelter because the mothers have a responsibility about the children and the children have to obey or submit for their care givers in the shelter because they are in charge or positioned person regarding them. By examining these interactions, System Theory offers valuable insights into how complex organizations function and adapt within their environments, emphasizing the importance of holistic approaches in addressing the needs of children and families.

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological System framework provides crucial understanding to the complex interplay of factors that affect children development and well-being. This framework underscores that children development are predicted by various interrelated system, extending from narrow environment to wider society system. The microsystem, consider the child's direct surroundings such as the shelter and caregivers, plays a vital role in providing immediate safety and support. The mesosystem focuses on the connections between the child's microsystems, such as the interaction between the shelter and external entities like schools, healthcare providers, and legal institutions. The exosystem contains broader influences such as governmental policies, funding

for shelters, and community resources that indirectly affect the child. The macro system reflects overarching societal values, cultural norms, and legal frameworks that shape how abuse and child protection are perceived and addressed. Lastly, the chronosystem captures how changes over time, including evolving legal systems or societal awareness of sexual abuse, influence child protection practices. This multi-layered perspective ensures a comprehensive understanding of the systemic factors impacting the effectiveness of child protection mechanisms (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Trauma-Informed Care Framework

The Trauma-Informed care framework target on the children who are trauma survivors for their particular need. It supplies a various perspective to evaluate how child care shelters ensure the children condition in aspects of feeling, physical appearance and other. It underscore core principle like advocating trustworthiness and transparency in relationships between their care givers and children, providing peer support by sharing experience, promoting cooperation and empowerment to engage children in decision about their care. This framework highlights the significance of gender and cultural issues, recognizing that sexual abused female children may have a special need shaped by their background status. By prioritizing safety, agency, and inclusivity, trauma-informed practices ensure that shelters do not inadvertently re-traumatize children and instead prepare suitable environments to recover (Fallot & Harris, 2009).

2.15. Literature Summary

The literature on child protection and care emphasizes the critical need for safeguarding children, particularly from violence, abuse, and exploitation, as outlined in the Convention on the

Rights of the Child. UNICEF highlights the urgent issues of child sexual abuse, trafficking, and inadequate access to justice, particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as low-income children fleeing conflict.

The challenges are exacerbated in countries like Ethiopia, where a significant portion of the population requires humanitarian aid, leading to increased risks of exploitation, child marriage, and labor. Research reveals that survivors of child sexual abuse suffer long-lasting psychological effects, necessitating tailored interventions and comprehensive support systems. Child care shelters play a vital role in providing safe environments for children without parental care, offering essential services such as shelter, education, and psychosocial support.

Effective rehabilitation mechanisms are crucial for addressing the needs of abused children, with a focus on holistic care strategies. The legal framework established by international conventions mandates that states protect children's rights and take action against abuse. System Theory serves as a valuable lens for understanding the complex interactions within child care systems, emphasizing the importance of interconnected relationships and comprehensive, personalized interventions to foster well-being among children.

Overall, addressing these multifaceted issues requires concerted efforts from global and local organizations to create nurturing environments that support children's rights and development.

Chapter three: Research Methods

3.1. Research design

The researcher used qualitative research method to study the investigation of child protection mechanisms and service provision for sexually abused female children in IFSO. The qualitative research method used because it looks at how individuals interpret their own tangible, real-world experiences in their own thoughts and words. It has the capacity to elaborate and give knowledge about peoples thinking about social phenomena (Creswell, 2007).). As a result of this, the researcher aims to investigate child protection mechanisms/system program established for sexually abused girls in IFSO so that it will be helpful to acquire the information and meaning through this process

A case study was used in this study as a methodological research tool to provide in-depth information about current events and phenomena in a system that is circular. Learning about real-life situations through in-depth research on both an individual and collective level is beneficial (Coombs, 2022). Since case study is a best method to investigate the program in IFSO regarding program implementation issues like child protection mechanism (prevent from further abuse) and service provision in detail, I chose case study to conduct the research. A case study provides a comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied (Creswell, 2007).

3.2. Study area

IFSO is an indigenous civil society organization established in 1995 and located in Addis Ababa city, Yeka sub-city, called the integrated family service organization (IFSO). IFSO is legally registered at the federal level and work with A.A. City Administration and Regions in serving the local communities respectively. IFSO envisions a society in which equitable

opportunities are available to women, children, and youth from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The organization's goal is to empower women, young girls, and vulnerable children to prevent abuse and to become productive members of society by empowering them (IFSO, 2024). IFSO has been carrying out several initiatives in the South Wollo Zone's Amhara region as well as in Addis Ababa in all sub-cities.

IFSO provides a project-based intervention concerning Educational service and livelihood support for children, Girls' Education and livelihood support, Gender based violence against Boys and Girls, Rehabilitation of boys and girls victims of GBV, Government and CBOs' institutional capacity support, Women and parents' economic empowerment program, Environmental protection and climate change adaptation support and Humanitarian/emergency supports.

IFSO has general assembly with 17 members and board having 5 who direct the organization. IFSO management, who is led by the Executive Directress, appointed by the board, is responsible to manage the operations of the organization. IFSO works co-operatively with different partners and networking organizations. Some of their partners are UN-Women, Embassies (Japan, Austria, and French). IFSOs current funding and partnership organizations are IL SOLE (Italian based International NGO), CIFA Onlus (Italian based International NGO) and the Netherlands Embassy. Currently, there are 21 children who are sexually, physically abused and runaways, who are receiving the services at the shelter. I chose this organization because it has been working in Ethiopia for more than three decades by serving children, girls, women and families through various support and protection.

3.3. Sampling techniques

Participants were recruited for the study using the purposive sample technique, which is a type of non-probability sampling, in order to determine responses. Purposive sampling was employed in this research study in order to examine the IFSO program concerning child protection mechanisms and service delivery. The researcher intentionally selected study participants based on inclusion and exclusion criteria that would contribute to the study.

As mentioned by (Human subject selection module-5, 2024), in a research study, establishing clear inclusion and exclusion criteria is vital for participant selection. Inclusion criteria specify the essential characteristics that prospective subjects must possess to be eligible, ensuring they contribute relevant data to the study. Conversely, exclusion criteria identify characteristics that disqualify individuals from participation, helping to eliminate those who may not fit the target population. Together, these criteria ensure the eligibility of the study findings by creating a suitable participant pool aligned with the research objectives.

Consequently, the inclusion criteria contains working experience in IFSO (Above 1 year), Education level (first degree). Their ability to purposely contribute to the study's objectives through their expertise and experience is essential, as it enhances the relevance and quality of the research findings. The participants in this research were the staff members and government bodies because it focuses on program assessment. The IFSO's female children who had experienced sexual abuse were also chosen as participants; however the organization forbade me from getting in touch with the children because of the way the organization operates.

To explain the child protection systems and service provision at the safe home, the study included thirteen participants: eight in-depth participants from IFSO and five key informants

from government offices. The key informants were experts from the Yeka Sub-City police station, Wereda 7 Unit of Women and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, selected for their expertise in child protection. Their insights helped provide a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative efforts in safeguarding vulnerable children in the shelter.

3.4. Methods of data collection

In order to obtain qualitative information from IFSO regarding child protection mechanisms and the provision of services for sexually abused female children, In- depth interview, key informant interviews and field observation were employed as primary data collection methods. Additionally, there was a field observation. It is the most significant method to triangulate the data taken from the participants (Adosi, 2020). Moreover, secondary data from reports and archive records, document evaluation were taken.

3.4.1. In-depth interview

According to Creswell and poth (2018), In-depth interview are semi-structured conversation that enable the researcher to discover participants experience and attitude in detail. The open-ended question is led by the interviewer. To be flexible is important to make the participants go deeper and share their ideas. This method is appropriate for qualitative data, analyzed thematically and the researcher expected to build rapport and manage Ethical considerations like informed consent and confidentiality (Creswell & Poth, 2018). An In-depth interview was taken as a primary data collection method. The researcher contact with IFSO staff workers as an In-depth interview and the interview took 30-40 minutes. During the interview session, the researcher took note and records the conversation by their permission. The major goal of this interview is to collect important information and insight from staff members which

have direct relationship with the children. Through the interviews, I gained a deeper understanding of how IFSO implements child protection measures and provides care for female children who have suffered sexual abuse. Moreover, the interviewees expressed profound emotional concern for the girls, sharing their empathy and sadness about the challenging situations the children face.

3.4.2. Key informant interview

The researcher uses a key informant interview as one source of data collection method. Yeka sub-city police station and women and social affair office wereda 07, ministry of women and social affairs (head office) are taken as a key informant interview in this study. The interview took 20-30 minutes and it was held in their offices and available guest welcoming classes. During the interview, I used record and took note. The questions were probing questions. The main goal of the key informant interview is to get information from the child protection officers and professionals workers related to child protection. Key informant interviews gave me insight into how the child care shelters and institutions implements child protection procedures and policy related issues to sexually abused children.

3.4.3. Observation

In this study the researcher observes a variety of activities, including the interactions and treatment that take place between the staff and the girls, the physical layout of the shelter, the services delivery, and the ways in which the staff members employ child protection mechanisms. This assisted me in triangulating the information from the document review and key informant interview. Observation is one of the data collection tools used to acquire live data that shows natural settings of an event (Satapathy, 2023). The observation checklist contains the physical settlement, employment of child protection mechanisms, service provision and the treatment.

3.4.4. Document review

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical Knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The process of methodically going over and assessing written and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) materials is known as document review. Document review is a qualitative research process that necessitates the analysis and interpretation of data in order to extract meaning, gain comprehension, and produce empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). The researcher looks at a variety of written resources, including reports, brochures, and booklets pertaining to IFSOs activities. And also web-site and archives.

3.5. Methods of data analysis

The data interpreted using qualitative data analysis techniques of coding and thematic analysis through identifying patterns in the data; thinking in terms of systems and concepts; developing a broad understanding and knowledge of the data; and capturing relevant information about the issues. The data will be presented in narrative form (Croker, 2009). To make use of the data, transcription and coding of the participant information obtained from audio recordings and interview notes were done. Thematic analysis used to analyze the data that were collected by qualitative technique like; in-depth interview, key informant interview, observation and document review were coded into distinct themes and categorized. It was directly transcribed into English.

After the content of the data is summarized, it is categorized into sub-themes and others themes that emerge during classification. Then after, it was grouped under the sub-themes and themes that can answer the research questions that are child protection mechanisms and service provision in IFSO. The data is presented in a narrative form.

Thematic analysis provides a better solution. Relevant themes coding, separating patterns, classifying common codes and themes, develop a thought of internal meaning and creation of basic theory and reporting on it are revealed (Swami, 2021).

3.6. Quality assurance

The researcher tries to assure the quality of data by justifying the trustworthiness of data collection tools by using peer debriefing that implies, sharing the research paper with other small groups that have a basic knowledge regarding social work field and research work and discuss on it. Peer debriefing is a means to prove credibility for the research project. It is a series of steps for credibility that enhance the participants and supports the qualitative methodology. It also improves the culture of group learning process (Spall, 1998).

In addition, the quality of data was assured by conducting an in-depth interview, key informant interview, observation and document review in detail. To assure the trustworthiness of the collected data, the researcher tried to triangulate the data collected from in-depth interview, key informant interview and observation. So that, we can say the quality of the study was assured (Croker, 2009).

3.7. Ethical consideration

The researcher first obtains a permission letter from Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work in order to ensure the research's ethics. The researcher takes an informed consent to IFSO, yeka police station of wereda 7, unit of women and social affairs of wereda 7 and Ministry of women and social affairs (Head office) which try to explain the purpose and related ideas about the study. The researcher explains every detail for the respondents that they are free to leave the interview session, if they don't want to be interviewed. After that, the goals and intentions of the study were explained to the participants by the researcher.

The in-depth interviewee and key informant participants signed a consent form indicating their agreement. After reaching a common understanding with the study participants and verifying their willingness, the assurance of voluntary participation and the justification for informed consent was achieved. The participants know that their names and identities will remain private and that their confidentiality will be upheld in this way.

Analysis,

CHAPTER FOUR; FINDING

4.1. Presentation of Data

In this research, the participants are 8 in-depth interview participants and 5 key informants. From 13 participants, 8 of them are staff member of integrated family service organization, and 5 of them are governmental offices. The organization works with children who experience sexual and physical abuse, by providing safe stay home other service provision until their legal case came to an end. The finding analyzed through thematic analysis by the data collected through in-depth interview, key- informant interview, observation and document review come up with 4 major themes. It consists child protection mechanisms, service provision, challenges and referral linkage. Consequently, the report will begin by presenting the background of the participants and thorough description and analysis of the identified themes.

Background information of the participants

Key informant interviews	Sex	Working position	Organization
In-depth P 1	M	Project manager	IFSO
In-depth P 2	F	Counsellor	IFSO
In-depth P 3	F	Nurse	IFSO
In-depth P 4	F	Senior community worker	IFSO
In-depth P 5	M	Social worker	IFSO
In-depth P 6	F	Junior community worker	IFSO

In-depth P 7	F	Mother (care giver)	IFSO
In-depth P 8	F	Mother (care giver)	IFSO
Key informant 1	F	Unit of Child and women police officer	Yeka sub-city police station
Key informant 2	M	Child protection officer	Ministry of women and social affairs(Head office)
Key informant 3	M	Child protection officer	Ministry of women and social affairs(Head office)
Key informant 4	M	Child protection officer	Ministry of women and social affairs(Head office)
Key informant 5	F	Unit of women and child affair office	Woreda 7, unit of women and children affairs.

In order to understand the characteristics of the participants in this study, it is important to provide a brief background on their demographic profiles. As shown in Table above, the participants are females and males staff workers in IFSO and government bodies. There are eight in-depth participants and five key-informant participants. The study participants are peoples who are direct and indirect in-charge person related to sexually abused female children in order to implement child protection mechanisms and service provision.

4.2. Child protection mechanisms in IFSO

IFSO mainly works on the area of prevention and overcoming the already happened issue but the detailed protection is carried out by legal system which refers to police. Since 2021 IFSO gives its attention on giving various prevention mechanisms to protect the children before the abuse happened, such as community mobilization through training by enlighten the community that there is a sexual, physical and other abuse by close family, neighbor and other segment of the society harm children. They also gave training regarding case management and child psychology awareness. IFSO gives consciousness rising for the community and institutions, for example training for polices of different sub-cities about prevention, how they communicate with sexually and physically abused children before and after the crime. Regarding prevention IFSO also gives a capacity building service for various institutions by giving, office materials such as desktop, printer and stationary materials for police stations in different sub-cities. They also support with furniture for offices.

4.2.1. Form and signature

As one of the IDI said, about 70% of the IFSO clients are children and the others are the mothers and families of the children. So that staff members, volunteers, students assigned for a project study and other peoples who came to IFSO for a various purpose will sign a form that talks about the children rights, that physical contact, verbal and non-verbal action, and other attempt of harm will bring consequence on them. And their signature proves that they are informed about the case and agree on the mentioned punishment. IFSO uses these mechanisms to ensure the children safety from further abuse in the shelter and other working office.

4.2.2. Child protection safe guarding policy

In IFSO there is no a child protection officer but there is a professional staff worker and she is the focal person for the child protection safe guarding policy issues. She is responsible to enforce the safe guarding policy in the shelter and also the working place.

IDI 1 stated that

If any child in the shelter and other work place face any kind of harmful activity then child protection safe guarding policy in charge person will investigate the case and respond accordingly. The case might be serious that needs legal response and termination form their job or minor cases that will be passed with oral and written warning.

4.2.3. Safety and security

Girl's shelter has a security on the gate; the security guard is responsible to keep an eye on the children, pass every single person with a letter comes from the head office specially a new client. The staff members are allowed to get in and out because they are permanent workers and they are known, from them the nurse, care givers (mothers), community workers, counselor, social worker and teachers. Beside this the girls care giver (mothers) follow their every movement in the compound. And if anything happen to them the first person to contact the children is their mother and if there is serious situation the mothers contact the counselor or other responsible body otherwise they will handle it by themselves.

4.2.4. Continuous follow-up

Staff members like the counselor, social worker, and child protection safe guarding focal person visit the children in the shelter every day consciously to monitor and assess what is going on in

the shelter in addition to the moms who provide care for the children. Due to this reason the children in the shelter are secured from different abuses. As IDI 1, enlightened

IFSOs first action is providing safe place for the sexually abused female children to stay in a secured and suitable place until their legal process came to an end. He also said that the children in the shelter are in a busy schedule by various activities provided in their shelter; it might be formal education class, playing time, meal time and counseling time. So that, children will not have an alone time or to hide themselves. This also protects the children from further abuse in the shelter. However there are no records regarding this kind of cases in IFSOs working journey.

4.3. Accessible service provision in IFSO

4.3.1. Settlement of IFSO

Within an integrated family service organization, there are differences between the office where staff members perform their everyday tasks and the children center. The boys' and girls' child care centers are located in two distinct locations. However, due to confidentiality, I am unable to disclose the locations. The Girl's Children Center consists of one ground floor and one upstairs house. It also has a playground, learning centers, offices, and a kitchen on the first floor, and additional rooms, beds and restrooms on the second floor. Their main office is located near Shola in the Yeka sub-city. There are offices for the manager, project manager, and social worker, counselor, nurse and community workers. Within the compound are guest rooms, a kitchen, restrooms, and a common area. IFSO owns a vehicle for distinct uses.

4.3.2 Food, clothes and shelter

IDI1 elucidated that female children who had experienced abuse were referred to IFSO for a variety of reasons, including physical and/or sexual assault and they are referred by the policy child protection office, resident pointing, and health center. Additionally, policies also pertain to the runaway children. They experience rape on the street. When the children came to IFSO for the first time, it is the nurse or counselor who welcomes the children at the gate and they will take the girls to their shelter and gave them to their mothers (care givers). There are two mothers in the girl's shelter, they will took them and help them to take a shower and change their clothes, then after the girls will be served food. They will burn the previous cloth they wore after changing. Then after the children assessment take place regarding the situation happened in the children, which is called pre-assessment form, so that general things about the sexually abused girls will be known, this will be done by the counselor. Children are expected to change into new clothes and take showers on a scheduled basis while they are at IFSO.

IDI6 explained that the children will be offered meals as soon as they change into new clothes and take a shower; throughout their stay, they will follow a daily meal routine. The children will remain in the shelter until both their mental health and legal cases are resolved. They feel comfortable, have food, and friends in the shelter, which is similar to their home. While residing at the IFSO shelter, the girls will be given the necessities, including a clean bed and bed linens, blankets, pajamas, trousers, shirts, outfits, shoes, combs, bars of soap, hair oil, and nail cutters. All activities done in the shelter is supervised by their mothers (care givers).

Every day the girls have a schedule for when they eat. They eat four times a day, without distinction between Muslims and Christians. If one of the meals contains meat, the Muslims will

purchase it from a Muslim meat house, while the Christians will purchase it from a Christian meat house.

4.3.3. Medication

The first thing the children get done when they come to IFSO is a check-up. The children were attended to by the IFSO's nurse after they had been cleaned, dressed, and fed. If their condition is more critical, they will be admitted to hospitals and given medical attention.

IDI 3 illustrate that the children will be taken to the nurse office and treated by her, however if the case is more serious the children will be taken to the hospital. IFSO has an agreement with yekatit 12 and without agreement with yeka health station. Not only will the children present condition be treated with medication, but any pre-accident or illnesses will also be addressed. Supervisors oversee and examine everything daily in the shelter at IFSO, where there is a serious and ongoing follow-up regarding personal hygiene and a clean environment. Mothers counsel and guide their daughters on maintaining personal cleanliness, and they receive numerous trainings on sanitation and diseases that are spread through contact.

4.3.4. Counseling service

At IFSO, there is a counselor that directly communicates with sexually or physically abused female children. The counselor is responsible to give counseling service for the girls. The counseling service is given according to their age group. There are three types of therapy such as individual, group and play therapy. Individual counseling is mostly given for children below 10; this way of counseling section is very helpful and creates intimacy between the girls and counselor so that the children will feel free to tell anything. The individual counseling approach helps the children bring emotional and behavioral change. The second approach is the group

counseling, it is trauma focused, the children mostly talk and this kind of counseling therapy is given for children above 10. The group counseling will be categorized by children abuse cases and age group like sexually abused with sexually abused children and physically abused with physically abused children. The last way of counseling therapy is the play therapy (Art therapy) that contains reading stories, painting, and cutting pictures. This way of counseling approach is very helpful for the children to forget their situation and also relief their bad memories.

According to counselor, sexually abused female children in IFSO are mostly in 4-11 age groups and they are very young to understand what thinking, perception and emotion and also they are easily traumatized and psychologically hurt so that, to address these girls the counselor will try to prepare treatment plan with the social workers and other direct and indirect communicator of the children, then after that pre-counseling format will be filled. The pre-counseling format consists the information about the girls and questions regarding the accident. The every girl in IFSO has counseling service schedule so that they are served by that schedule. However if there is serious situation that girl will get counseling service every day until she became more stable. Out of the counseling schedule, if a girl came to the counselor and said she have something to say or feel something, the counselor will immediately put everything beside and try to hear what the girl what to say.

As the counselor said, counseling session took 8 weeks but the children cases at IFSO is related with legal issue so that the counseling service will be given until they accomplish their legal cases and leave the organization. If the children recover before they accomplish their legal case and stay in IFSO, then trauma healing process will stop and follow-up process will start. In the counseling sessions girls will relapse, during that period the counselor will advise and thought develop coping mechanisms.

The children in IFSO will get their counseling service according to their schedule and when their legal process came to an end and when they leave IFSO, the expected result must be achieved. This result is predicted when the children came to IFSO and after the pre-assessment form. The ultimate goal is not making the children forget the accident but when they remember the moment they have to face it and feel anything bad but feel like it already happened to them and know that life goes on. In other words, make them not to be traumatized by practicing them to face what makes them remember that moment. For the question, does the children heal from their emotional and psychological difficulties the counselor said that;

My proud moment is the ending moment, to see those abused female children heal, stop night dreaming, panic, and crying when they remember the moment of the accident. It's when they say I have a good night and slept well.

The abused children have a big difference before and after they came to IFSO. According to the counselor;

When the children came to IFSO after the sexual and physical abuse, they are much stressed, panic, feel loneliness, stand in the corner and not talking as expected, crying and also see nightmare, however they have a very visible change when they leave IFSO because of the counseling and other services they take. Even the children's physical status also changes into beautiful appearance.

4.3.4. Trainings

In IFSO, there are various trainings given for staff members, parents/guardians and also the female children. There are on job and other trainings given for the staff member in IFSO in accordance with their profession. Not only does IFSO provide training for its employees, but its

staff members also participate in training offered by other NGOs and institutions. The children also took different trainings with various topics regarding their sanitation, health and skills. IFSO gives training for the children parents/guardians regarding small businesses in the community.

4.3.5. Legal service

The legal assistance started as soon as the crime case was reported and continued until the abuser was punished at the conclusion of the case. In the beginning the police are the first to communicate the children and specifically they are women and child affair protection unit under each sub city police station.

A police officer stated that the police would respond to the reported crime scene right away and conduct life-saving measures. As part of this process, the police attempt to get in touch with secure households so that the child can remain there and be kept safe. When the police have the female children who have been sexually abused, they will attempt to investigate how it happened. However, it is difficult to look into every detail and apprehend the perpetrators, so the children must have a safe place to stay while the investigation is ongoing. The police station will then get in touch with IFSO to arrange for the children to receive a shelter. Finally the sexually abused female children will arrive in the compound of IFSO. There are situations where the police and IFSO staff went to bring the abused children from where it is reported.

According to key informant 1, a car will be assigned to bring the sexually abused female children from the police station, the counselor and the nurse will go to bring the girl. When they bring the girl, they will bring a letter from the police station that gives detail information about the female children who is sexually abused. And also the one who bring the girl will sign a form that assures that they took the girl to IFSO.

A police officer stated that the police would respond to the reported crime scene right away and conduct life-saving measures. As part of this process, the police attempt to get in touch with secure households so that the child can remain there and be kept safe.

4.3.6. Teaching formal Education

For female children in the shelter who have experienced sexual abuse, there is formal education. The girls who were abused may have been students in a past life, thus IFSO provided them with formal education in their shelter, with a female teacher, to help them remember the spirit of education. As I observe, the girls in the shelter are female children. They were learning by counting letters, they have suitable classroom and the walls were decorated with various paper that reflects knowledge.

4.3.7. Re-integration and follow-up

After the court proceedings involving the sexual abuse of female children are resolved and justice is served, the reunification and follow-up process will begin. If the girls' families live nearby, IFSO is in responsibility of returning the girls to them after the girl's legal proceedings are over. In cases where the relatives or parents of the children are located far from the shelter, IFSO collaborates with Hope for Justice to locate the parents' address and arrange for the children to be returned home.

As IDI6 said

Children don't want to leave the shelter because of their intimacy with their mothers and the children in the shelter. Some of them don't want to leave the shelter because of insecurity, which means what will happen in their original

place after they leave the shelter. But some of them are due to bondage with IFSO communities.

Pre- unification training

This pre-unification training is given for sexually abused female children families or guardians. The training contains how to treat the abused children by understanding their thinking, attitude, behavior and their action. It also consists psycho-social support and various child related cases regarding sexually abused children.

Support for sexually abused children families or guardians

Beyond giving trainings, families or guardians get support from IFSO. As key informant 5 said, there are various means to support the children in the community, this means there are sexually abused female children who already rehabilitate and reunified with their families or guardian, and those children are called children in the community. In IFSO there are programs designed to support the victim's family or guardians through Economic empowerment program which contains capacity building, helping them to open small businesses, material support and vocational skill training. The capacity building program consists allocating money for mothers to begin small businesses or if they already start the business then money will be given to strengthen the business. This support has its own criteria that needs home visit and need assessment, after that the mother will be provided 10,000 birr for their small businesses. The other support is that the vocational skill training provided for the guardians, adult in the family and for the victim children who rehabilitate. In this program an adult will be taken from the victim's family and trained different kinds of vocational skill such as driving and other, this helps the family indirectly. Currently there are 80 children in the community and from these 80 children family 10 mothers and 10 adults will get money and training support per a year.

4.4. Challenges of IFSO in order to implement child protection safeguard policy and service provision.

4.4.1. Lack of Finance

Lack of budget is a very serious issue and cause of different challenge in IFSO. IFSOs working place (office) and also the shelter are in rent. From the challenges:-

Not employing people with their subject related field

In IFSO there are various fields and also employees such as project manager, social worker, community workers, nurse, teacher, counselor, care givers (mothers) and also other employee's. However there is lack of skilled manpower in some of the areas that IFSO work. When a person became in charge out of their basic field they know the work will lack effectiveness and efficiency. IDI 5 said, that

There is no specifically child protection officer in IFSO but the child protection safe guarding policy is handled by a staff worker which her background is different from the child protection policy and related field. This might affect the implementation of child protection mechanism.

Similarly, IDI 1 also mentioned about the child protection policy officer that there is a focal person to handle this case but it needs specifically a child protection policy officer.

. Not hiring sufficient employee's

As it is well known, in order for anything to be done, funding is required. In IFSO, there are plenty of tasks to be done but there is no sufficient employee's. To give an example, there is additional work on the social worker which is case management data, so that the social worker is responsible to do his job as a social worker plus data case management. The reason why the staff

members work multiple tasks is because there is no sufficient staff workers and the reason why sufficient staff workers no employed is because lack of finance.

Elongated legal case process

The legal process is the responsibility of the police. Sexually abused female children will stay in the shelter until their legal cases came to an end. However the legal process will take long period to bring the criminal to justice. This makes one female children to stay in IFSO shelter for a long period of time. And this is a serious challenge for IFSO because there so many sexually abused female children came to the shelter referred from police and also other institution, at that time there will be a shortage if resource to allocate. IFSO is not a type of safe home where sexually, physically abused children and run away children live as a resident but it's a safe home where children came and kept safe until their legal process came to an end. As a key informant from the staff member 2 said,

The children legal process is very prolonged and even the children came and ask whether the abuser caught or not and they even doubt their future life because they think the abuser will never be caught and attack them again.

The children face hopelessness regarding the legal process, as a key informant mentioned what she heard from the children, *I don't think he will be punished but let God punish him.* This much the legal case process will last long without any respond.

4.5. Referral and linkage

IFSO networks with several institutions and organization regarding fund, services and other direct and indirect cases. Those institutions are present partner and funding organization of IFSO;

- IL SOLE (Italian based International NGO)

- CIFA Onlus (Italian based International NGO)
- The Netherlands Embassy

Network and umbrella organizations that IFSO is a member and working with:

- Union of Ethiopian Women and Children Associations (UEWCA),
- Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA),
- Ethiopian Women Shelter Providing Organizations (ESPWO).
- Gender Responsive Budgeting Coalition

IFSO have a referral and linkage with hope for justice, Addis Ababa police commission, ministry of women and social affairs, Addis Ababa city administration and regions and health extension (Yekaitit 12). And also child justice offices are also a signatory with IFSO.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This study explores the child protection mechanisms and service provisions implemented by Integrated Family Service Organization (IFSO). The finding underscore the importance of proactive child protection strategies, comprehensive service delivery, and the challenges faced in implementation, aligning with existing literature in the field.

Child sexual abuse is a familiar concept happening every time that affects children life in aspects of their behavior, attitude, emotion and perception. It could be by their parents, neighbor, and relatives and on the street. And children emotion, psychology and even physical are affected. The child care practice in Ethiopia, there are various child care practices as the type of abuse, there are coping mechanisms in different child care institution (Haileselassie, wassie, Kahasay & Fieseha, 2014). IFSO has its own coping mechanisms to protect and prevent sexually abused children. In the child shelter, there are children who lived in their secured and served different kinds of services that are basic need (Ashenafi& Sara, 2021). Similarly IFSO is a safe home (Shelter) to protect sexually abused children by providing various services that are necessary for the children.

According to Child Welfare Information Gateway2016 and National Network for Youth, 2020) implies that child care shelter must provide basic needs such as food and shelter, not only basic needs but also medical, educational, counseling and other vocational trainings. Similarly IFSO gives counseling service, trainings, and Educational services, re-integration and re-unification for those sexually abused female children. In aspect of protection mechanisms in child care shelters, a study conducted in Kechene and OPRIFS reveals that there is trauma focused-cognitive behavioral group treatment are given. Similarly IFSO gives psycho-social

support, trauma focused approach in counseling session within a group and also individually. They also give formal Education and training service so that they develop their cognitive Knowledge.

Concerning the child protection mechanisms in child care shelter. According(Hoffer,2018) child protection can be standardize by the insight of policy and organizational structure, working method in the system of governmental framework. In aspects of this, child protection is defined as a comprehensive set of policies, procedures, and institutional actions aimed at preventing and addressing various forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. The literature reviews that the significance of good legal framework and institutional responses to safeguard children and the protection mechanisms vary across different context and countries. Similarly, IFSO shelter is dedicated to safeguarding children through a comprehensive array of child protection mechanisms.

One key approach involves requiring all clients, staff workers and stakeholders to sign a formal agreement outlining the dos and don'ts of behavior within shelter. This form not only establishing clear expectation but also stipulates that violation of the rules can lead to seariou consequences, potentially involving legal action. In addition to these agreements, IFSO emphasize safety and security within the shelter, implementing a robust security system to ensure the physical protection of the children.

The literature identifies financial constraints as a major barrier to effective child protection services (Roberts, 2019), a concern echoed in the findings from IFSO. The organization's reliance on rental spaces for both offices and shelters highlights the impact of budget limitations on operational efficiency.

According to article 19(1), children have a right not to be harmed physically, mentally and sexually by their caregivers. Their caregivers can be their parents, legal guardian and other responsible bodies. And also they have a right to be protected from injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation and negligent treatment. According to article 19(2), these preventive approaches should incorporate successful methods for creating social programs that offer vital assistance to the child and their caregivers. They should also address preventive programs and protocols for recognizing, documentation, reporting, referring, looking into, treating and monitoring the previously mentioned incidents of child abuse, as well as, when appropriate, court involvement. Article 27(3) talks that the children have a right to have food, cloth and shelter. And also access to Education, article 28. Similarly, IFSO cope up those legal protection mechanisms and have child protection safe guarding policy and also follow a various legal right regarding sexual and physically abused children. Moreover, IFSO assigned child protection in charge person to run the legal case of the children in IFSO shelter.

The general framework implemented in IFSO is similar to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological System Theory, which emphasize the significance of immediate and wider Environmental factor in shaping a child's development and recovery.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION OF SOCIAL WORK

6.1. Conclusion

The result of this research study indicates that the child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children in IFSO, to protect the children from further abuse is a very serious issue in IFSO. To prevent this organization uses various methods, to mention those signing a form that ensures the safety of the children and it consists the not to be done in organization related to the children and also working system of IFSO, in addition they will sign knowing that they are responsible and there is consequence.

The other method is that child protection safe guarding policy, there is a focal person in this field and they seriously follow the children to keep their right. Safety and security, in IFSO there is a serious security in the female children shelter and they keep their safety in very way the children are in need. The last method to protect the children from further abuse that IFSO use is that continuous follow-up, this refers to the staff workers who frequently came and visit the shelter to supervise and evaluate the status of children and also the workers in the shelter. There are various challenges assessed in the study, they are lack of finance, skilled manpower, elongated legal process, and load of tasks.

The service provision delivered in IFSO contains shelter, food, clothes, counseling, formal Education, training, medication, legal, and re-integration and follow-up. The legal stream mostly taken by police but IFSO assures the right of the children in the safe home and also support on their legal process.

Overall, this thesis reaffirms the urgency of strengthening child protection systems to safeguard the rights and well-being of sexually abused children. By addressing existing challenges, fostering collaboration, and prioritizing the holistic recovery of survivors,

organizations like IFSO can continue to provide essential support and pave the way for a more comprehensive and effective child protection framework in Ethiopia.

6.2. Implication to social work

This section of the research includes implication to social work, practice, policy, Education and Research:-

The research study focuses on investigating child protection mechanisms to protect the abused children from further abuse and service provision for sexually abused female children in IFSO.

Implication for practice

Social work intervention works in individual, families, group and communities who needs help to reach their normal life goal. Social workers deal with individuals who endure oppression, discrimination and poverty on a daily basis. There is a lack of knowledge about sexual abuse of female children in the community and the community must take action to prevent accidents not only after they occur but also before they do. This is an area that needs social work intervention, as a result of this, social workers have a duty to create advocacy and awareness-raising programs to educate the public about child sexual abuse and the importance of being proactive in reporting such cases to the police in order to facilitate a speedy resolution. Social workers are also responsible to increasing referral and linkage by having many networks to simplify tasks, obtains funding, find partners, and expedite legal and other processes. So that, the elongated legal process could be supported.

Implication for Policy

According to this research finding, IFSO have been dealing with several issues regarding vulnerable female children focusing on sexually abused children. As it is known promoting

human right is one of the principles of social work. As result of this social workers have a great responsibility in promoting the children right by collaborate with the other stakeholders and following the united nation child right convention, the Africa charter and other policies. In order to protect the children in the shelter from further abuse social workers are highly responsible to facilitate, giving awareness, and advocacy for the community and government so that there will be a policy specifically that concern further abuse in childcare institutions.

Implication for Education

This study paper can be used as a teaching tool about children who have experienced sexual abuse and how they are protected in child care institutions from another abuse. And also the provision of services in child care institution since child protection mechanisms and service provision are concepts that are relevant to the social work field. Social work Education programs need to provide specialized knowledge about child abuse since they are vulnerable groups, especially child sexual abuse, for the reason that they will be harmed emotionally, psychologically and also physically.

Implication for Research

This study was based on cases at IFSO. The experiences of other shelters or safe homes were not addressed by this study. Therefore, there is a need to conduct studies to understand the experiences of other shelters. Moreover, using this study as a foundation other quantitative studies need to be conducted. This paper can be used to teach social work courses in the area of children and abuse in childcare institutions.

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Appendices

Annex 1: Informed Consent form

Dear respondent,

My name is Herani Kidane. I am a student in the postgraduate program at Addis Ababa University School of Social Work, College of Social Sciences. Currently, I am conducting research on the topic titled as “Investigating child protection mechanism for sexually abused female children; in integrated family service organization” to fulfill the partial requirement of the Masters of Social Work (MSW). The purpose of the study is to know the child protection mechanisms and service provision given in IFSO. It will take me 30 to 40 minutes to ask you the questions I would like to ask you. Notes will be taken and an audio recording will be used during the interview.

Hence, I would be grateful if you kindly take a few minutes of your time putting your responses regarding the issues under investigation.

I thus respectfully ask that you respond honestly to each question, as it will greatly impact the outcome of our study. The researcher wishes to reassure you that any information you choose to share will be kept completely private and used exclusively for scholarly purposes. Furthermore, the report will not include any reference of your name. It is voluntary for you to take part in this study. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you would like to participate in the study. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any moment and without giving any reason, even after you have signed a consent form. Your relationship with the researcher won't be impacted in any way if you decide to withdraw from this study.

I appreciate your candid responses and the valuable time you have sacrificed in advance.

I have read and comprehend the material offered, as well as ask questions. I am aware that this is entirely voluntary and that I can stop participating whenever I want, for free. I am aware that this consent form will be copied and sent to me. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

Name of the participant.....

Signature.....Date.....

Name of the Researcher.....Signature.....

Date.....

ስምምነት ቅጽ

ክቡር መልስ ሰጪ፤

ስሜ ሄራኒ ኪዳኔ ነው። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የማህበራዊ ስራ ኮሌጅ የድህረ ምረቃ ፕሮግራም ተማሪ ነኝ። በአሁኑ ወቅት "በጾታ የተነፈጉ ሴት ልጆችን የህፃናት ጥበቃ መርምሮ መመርመር፤ ba የተዋሃደ የቤተሰብ አገልግሎት ድርጅት" የሶሻል ዎርክ ማስተርስ (MSW) በክፍል የሚጠይቀውን ብቃት ለማሟላት። የጥናቱ ዓላማ በIFSO ውስጥ የሚሰጠውን የሕፃናት ጥበቃ አሠራርና የአገልግሎት ዝግጅት ማወቅ ነው ። ልጠይቃችሁ የምፈልጋቸውን ጥያቄዎች ለመጠየቅ ከ30 እስከ 40 ደቂቃ ይወስድብኛል ። ማስታወሻዎች ይወሰዳሉ እና ቃለ መጠይቅ ወቅት የድምጽ ቅጂ ጥቅም ላይ ይውላል.

በመሆኑም ምርመራ እየተካሄደባቸው ያሉትን ጉዳዮች በተመለከተ የሰጠኸውን መልስ ለጥቂት ደቂቃዎች በደግነት ብትወስድ በጣም አመሰግናለሁ ።

በመሆኑም በጥናታችን ውጤት ላይ ከፍተኛ ተጽዕኖ ስለሚያሳድር ለእያንዳንዱ ጥያቄ በሐቀኝነት መልስ እንድትሰጡ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ ። ተመራማሪው ይህን ማረጋገጫ ሊያረጋግጥልህ ነው, ተመራማሪው ለማካፈል የመረጥኸው ማንኛውም መረጃ ሙሉ በሙሉ ለብቻው እንደሚቀመጥና ለምሁራዊ ዓላማ ብቻ እንደሚውል ሊያረጋግጥልህ ፈለገ። ከዚህም በላይ ሪፖርቱ ስለ ስምህ ምንም ዓይነት መግለጫ አይሰጥም ። በዚህ ጥናት መካፈል ያለብህ በፈቃደኝነት ነው ። በጥናቱ መካፈል የምትፈልግ ከሆነ ስምምነት ላይ እንድትፈርም ይጠየቅሃል። ስምምነት ቅጽ ከፈረምክ በኋላም እንኳ በማንኛውም ጊዜና ምንም ምክንያት ሳትሰጥ ከቃለ መጠይቁ የመውጣት መብት አለህ ። ከዚህ ጥናት ለመውጣት ከወሰንክ ከተመራማሪው ጋር ያለህ ግንኙነት በምንም መልኩ አይነካውም።

የሰጠኸውን መልስና አስቀድመህ መስዋዕት ያደረግኸውን ውድ ጊዜ አደንቃለሁ ።

የቀረበልኝን ትምህርት አንብቤያለሁ እንዲሁም ተረዳሁ ፤ እንዲሁም ጥያቄዎችን እጠይቃለሁ ። ይህ ሙሉ በሙሉ በፈቃደኝነት እንደሆነ እና በፈለግሁት ጊዜ ሁሉ፣ በነፃ ተሳትፎዬን ማቆም እንደምችል አውቃለሁ። ይህ የስምምነት ቅጽ እንደሚገለበጥና ወደ እኔ እንደሚላክ አውቃለሁ። በዚህ ጥናት ለመካፈል ፈቃደኛ ነኝ ። በዚህ ጥናት ለመካፈል ፈቃደኛ ነኝ ።

የተሳታፊው ስም ፊርማ..... ቀን.....

የተመራማሪው ስም ፊርማ.....

φ?.....

Annex; 2

Interview questions

Interview Guiding Questions for the program Manager in IFSO.

Sex

Job description

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1. How do you get the children?
2. What are the criteria's to select and accept the children to the institution?
3. What are the service provisions in the institution?
4. Do you give short or long term trainings regarding different kind of service provision for IFSO staff members?
5. What are the challenges in providing services for the children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

- 1, what kind of child protection mechanisms do you use to protect the sexually abused female children from inside abuse?
- 2, what are the challenges to implement protection mechanisms inside in IFSO institution?
- 3, is there any legal service regarding the sexually abused female children implemented in IFSO?

4, do you give short or long term trainings regarding different kind of child protection mechanisms from further abuse for the IFSO staff members?

5, is there any rule and regulation in IFSO regarding the sexually abused female children? How communicate and interact with them?

6, What do you recommend to improve the challenges identified in service delivery and child protection mechanisms activities for sexually abused female children?

Interview guiding question for care givers

Sex

Job description

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, what is your role concerning the sexually abused female children?

2, how do you treat the children?

3, what kind of service do you deliver for the children?

4, how do you create a suitable environment for the children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, what kinds of protection mechanisms are there to protect the children from further abuse?

2, what are the challenges in taking care of those sexually abused female children?

3, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned?

Interview guiding question for counsellors

Sex

Job description

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, how do you give treatment for the children?

2, what kinds of counselling service did you give?

3, how long will it take to counsel one child?

4, how often children get counselling service?

5, is there any change in the children life after the counselling?

6, what are the challenges in counselling service provision?

7, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, what kind of child protection mechanisms do IFSO use to protect children from further abuse?

Interview guiding question for social workers

Sex

Job description

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

- 1, what is your role in IFSO regarding sexually abused female children?
- 2, what kind of social work activities do you deliver?
- 3, what are the challenges in providing services for sexually abused female children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

- 1, what are the child protections mechanisms done for the sexually abused female children from further abuse?
- 2, what are the challenges in child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children?
- 3, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned above?

Interview guiding question for community workers

Sex

Job description

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

- 1, what is your role in IFSO regarding sexually abused female children?
- 2, what kind of community work activities do you deliver?
- 3, what kind of relationship do IFSO has with the surrounding community?
- 4, what are the challenges in providing services for sexually abused female children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, what are the child protections mechanisms done for the sexually abused female children from further abuse?

2, what are the challenges in child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children?

3, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned above?

Interview guiding questions for Nurse

Sex

Job

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, what kind of service do you deliver?

2, how do you communicate with the sexually abused female children?

3, what are the challenges in giving medical service for sexually abused female children?

4, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, how do you protect the children from further abuse?

Interview guiding questions for police officer

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, what kind of legal service do you provide regarding sexually abused female children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, is there any protection mechanisms that the police station try to create awareness regarding the sexually abused female children from further abuse to IFSO and other childcare institutions?

2, what are the challenges in implementing legal services?

3, what do you recommend to improve the challenges that you have mentioned above?

Interview guiding questions for unit of women and children affairs

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, what kind of services do you provide regarding sexually abused female children for childcare institutions?

2, is there any way that women and children affairs know reports and other status of sexually abused female children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, what kind child protection mechanisms are there for sexually abused female children to prevent the children from further abuse?

2, how is the follow-up process take place regarding the sexually abused female children with the childcare institutions?

3, what kind of relationship is there between childcare institutions and women and children affairs?

Interview guiding questions for Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (Head Office)

Regarding service provision for sexually abused female children

1, what kind of services do you provide regarding sexually abused female children for childcare institutions?

2, is there any way that women and social affairs know reports and other status of sexually abused female children?

Regarding child protection mechanisms for sexually abused female children

1, what kind child protection mechanisms are there for sexually abused female children to prevent the children from further abuse?

2, how is the follow-up process take place regarding the sexually abused female children with the childcare institutions?

3, what kind of relationship is there between childcare institutions and women and social affairs?

Annex 3: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

1. The female children living situation in their safe home.
2. The physical set-up
3. The provided service delivery
4. The child protection safe guarding policy
5. The interaction between the care givers and the female children