FACTORS THAT LEAD TO THE INFLUX OF STREET CHILDREN IN URBAN AREAS. A CASE OF KAKAMEGA TOWN.

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in Home Economics at Kenyatta University.

January, 1997
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Samuel and Joan whose parental care has enabled me to reach this far.

To my siblings, Douglas, Goodrich, Peter, Job, Dorcas, Peninah and Japheth, and my son Brian.

To the glory and honor of God for his sufficient grace throughout my life.

Second, I would like to thank all the street children I researched into, the non-street children, and selected informants who spared time to respond to the interviews. To each of them, their expectation was that the subject of the thesis would inform people who are in similar situation to improve their situation.

Special thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Mntera for providing computer time. Finally I wish to thank my parents and friends whose constant prayers and financial assistance helped me work towards completing the study. Many thanks to my brother and sisters for their love, interest and moral support during the entire period of the study.

To all, I say, "Thank you."
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This was a research with a two-fold purpose. One purpose was to determine why some children from urban families take to the streets while others do not. The other purpose was to fill the gap in knowledge on middle sized towns as concerns the street children phenomenon since studies have been carried out in the major towns of Kenya i.e Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu.

The objectives of the research were to: identify the basic characteristics of the children dwelling on the streets of Kakamega town; establish their socio-economic background; investigate their activities; establish their future goals and aspirations; and to determine why other children from similar family backgrounds do not go to the streets.

Data was collected using interview guides and an observation checklist from a sample of 44 subjects i.e street children (20), non-street children (10), parents of street children (4), and parents of non-street children (10). This data was analyzed using steps adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994).

Results showed that the age of children ranged from 8 years to 18 years. All street children were male. No female child was identified. The non-street children were both male and female and all of them were in school. On
the other hand, 50% of the street children had not gone beyond standard four of primary school education, and none of the street children could read.

The street children were ill-clad, greasy, dirty and aggressive. They had skin diseases, suffered muscle wasting, and appeared too short for their age. While on the streets, street children involved themselves in various activities with the aim of looking for money. Majority (70%) of the children were from polygamous homes where their needs were not being met. As concerns religion, 75% of the street children belonged to the Muslim sect and lived in the slums of Kakamega town.

The reasons for children being on the streets were many and varied. Children took to the streets because of poor relations at home, overcrowded homes, to look for jobs because there is no money for education, influence by parents, homes were materially and morally depriving, while others consider life in town better than that in the rural areas. There are many family breakdowns due to instability in the families, eroded extended family ties, rising costs of living, and social disintegration. These are some causes of children taking to the streets.

From the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that the street children phenomenon is a "time bomb waiting to explode". Preventive initiatives should
be emphasized because they can intervene before the child and the family are negatively affected.

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The streets of Kenyan towns have acquired a hallmark which is the growing number of malnourished, ill-clad and impoverished children who live off remains and wastes, and who frequently threaten the townpeople in various ways.

The problem of street children in Kenya first began in the early 1950s when the colonial system broke up families by imprisoning men and women or taking them away to concentration camps. The children were then left alone and they wandered off to the streets of Nairobi with the hope of finding some means of survival (APRCCAN, 1983). There has been an increase in cases of wandering children both in the rural and urban areas of Kenya as has been highlighted by researchers and the media. In 1994, it was estimated that there were 4,000 street children in Nairobi City (Tumwesigye and Mwenu, 1992). APRCCAN (1985) have estimated the number of street children in Nairobi City as 40,000 and that wandering children have been identified in small towns such as Athi River and Rongai. This growing number of
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The streets of Kenyan towns have acquired a hallmark which is the growing number of malnourished, ill-clad and importuning children who live off remains and wastes, and who frequently threaten the townspeople in various ways.

The problem of street children in Kenya first began in the early 1950s when the colonial system broke up families by imprisoning men and women or taking them away to concentration camps. The children were then left helpless and they wandered off to the streets of Nairobi with the hope of finding some means of survival (ANPPCAN, 1994).

There has been an increase in cases of wandering children both in the rural and urban areas of Kenya as has been highlighted by researchers and the media. In 1992, it was estimated that there were 4,000 street children in Nairobi city (Ombaso and Mutuku, 1992). ANPPCAN (1995) have estimated the number of street children in Nairobi city as 40,000 and that wandering children have been identified in small towns such as Kajiado, Narok and Kapenguria. This growing number of
street children poses a major social policy challenge to all Kenyans.

A search of current literature reveals that most studies are aiming at getting solutions to the problem of street children (ANPPCAN, 1995). Continued interest in street children derives from the fact that their number is increasing rapidly (Ombaso and Mutuku, 1992; ANPPCAN, 1995). The increasing concern over the street children provides further impetus for more research. What happens to these children has important implications to both the government and society. Thus, these children do not go to school and have nobody to guide their upbringing. In their adulthood, they may end up being criminals in order to earn a living. There is therefore a moral duty for each individual in Kenya not only to consider possible personal contributions towards the solution, but also offer constructive ideas for the formation of suitable programs and measures for eradicating the phenomenon of street children. The public agencies concerned with street children have only a limited capacity and cannot therefore accommodate all the children there are on the streets.

There are great disparities between the rich and the poor; consequently the poorest of the poor have highly limited access to essential services and to vital social
amenities. As a result, many parents and their children live in slums which lack social amenities, educational opportunities, health care and leisure. Children living in such conditions have drifted into the streets of towns, where they remain as street children. Views of street children, non-street children and parents from slum areas are a legitimate area of concern if the problem of homelessness is to be curbed.

Statement of Problem

Researchers maintain that street children are a serious social problem. Studies have so far tended to focus on the number of street children there are and the problems the street children are causing (Agnelli, 1993; Munyakho, 1992; Ombaso and Mutuku, 1992; Suda, 1994). Some of the problems they are causing include: crime committed by the children, immoral behavior which is embarrassing to the public, and harassment of the public.

Street children, like any other children in especially difficult circumstances undergo various forms of child abuse and exploitation which interfere with their normal growth and development. Problems of the most acute kind - extremes of deprivation and exploitation, and the inhuman abuse of children in war, work place, on the street and the home - continue to afflict millions of
young people both in the developing and industrialized countries (Aptekar, 1988). For instance, street girls are widely seen as being available for sex i.e "females without protectors" (Onyango, 1991).

Destitution and economic desperation are the principle economic factors that produce children in especially difficult circumstances (Manundu, 1991). In the "Report on a baseline survey on street children in Nairobi", it was found that street children in Nairobi city originated from the Mathare, Kibera and Korogocho slums. Although these children come from slums, there are other children in the slums who have not decided to live in the streets. In Kakamega town the street children originate from the slums and peri-urban region. This study therefore investigated factors that lead to the influx of street children in Kakamega town.

Purpose of the Study

There are various factors that lead to the existence of children in the streets of Kenyan towns. Poverty is singled out as the main cause of street children phenomenon (Suda, 1994). It was therefore important to determine why some children from poor urban families go to the streets while others in similar circumstances do not. The study also aimed at filling the gap in knowledge
Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1) To identify the basic characteristics of the children dwelling on the streets of Kakamega town
2) To establish the socio-economic background of the families of the street children
3) To investigate the activities of the street children
4) To determine why other children in similar family backgrounds are not street children
5) To establish the future goals and aspirations of the street children
6) To establish preventive initiatives against the street children phenomenon

Significance of the study

The findings of this study are to serve as contributions to the area of family studies in home economics education and general home economics, and to general knowledge in the following aspects:
1. This study contributes to understanding the use of the family resource management theory. The researcher adopted the conceptual model from the family resource management system proposed by Deacon and Firebaugh (1988). The theoretical framework shows the relationships among inputs, throughputs and outputs. The researcher also used the theory of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970). The proposed conceptual model can be adopted or improved upon for future use in further studies in the area of resource management.

2. The study also contributes to knowledge of the street children phenomenon in smaller towns in Kenya. Studies have been carried out in only the major towns of Kenya i.e Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. The researcher identified some socio-economic characteristics of families under study that influence the influx of street children in urban areas.

3. Another significant contribution of the study is that it highlights the fact that parents need to be educated on the need to have small manageable families. This is evident from the study's findings that street children came
from large families and that low income earners also had large families. This can be done by home economists, family counsellors, and the Ministry of Health; who can educate families on family planning and use of birth control measures. They can also educate parents on how they can manage their limited resources, and also meet their needs.

4. The findings of the study will be made available to the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage, Ministry of Health, Child Welfare Society of Kenya, family therapists, NGOs dealing with women and children. These findings may be used in rehabilitation and reintegration of street children back into their families. The findings will also be made available to other learning institutions such as colleges and universities. These institutions may include them in their learning materials to enrich and further family studies. It is expected that the study will help people have a better control over the factors that lead to the influx of street children in urban areas. The findings of the future goals and aspirations of the street
children if disseminated to organizations that aim at rehabilitating street children will help them have programs that will help the children achieve their goals and aspirations. These organizations will be in a position to give to the children different treatment because all the children have faced different problems in life.

Limitations of the Study

This study has the following limitations:

1) Because the study was limited to a sample of a population within Kakamega town, implications and generalizations of the study findings to other area in Kenya is not possible since the situations in Kenyan towns are different and the situation in urban areas is also different from that in rural areas.

2) The kind of data in this study is cross-sectional in that it was collected at one point in time.

Definition of terms

Full-time street children: These are children who live in the streets i.e. they eat and sleep in the streets. They have no contact with their families.
Part-time street children: These are children who leave home in the morning for the streets to beg for money and food from the public and then go back home in the evening.

Non-street children: These are children who have not yet taken to the streets.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical background on which this study was based is the family resource management theory proposed by Deacon and Firebaugh (1988), and the theory of self-actualization proposed by Maslow (1970). In the family resource management theory, the family is viewed as a system with two sub-systems namely, the personal and managerial sub-systems (Fig 1.1). The personal sub-system consists of the cognitive, emotional, social and physical capacities as well as human values. The managerial sub-system consists of planning, implementing and evaluating with an aim of meeting set goals (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988).

The resource management theory is composed of four basic concepts which are inputs, throughputs, outputs and feedback (Fig 1.1). Inputs are the goals, demands, events, resources or values put into a system and are
transformed by throughput processes into outputs or outcomes. Goals are value based objectives or anticipated outcomes that give direction and orientation to action. Values are essential meanings related to what is desirable or has worth. Events are unexpected occurrences that require some action. Demands are either goals or events that require some action. Resources are means capable of meeting demands and may either be material or human (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988).

Throughput is the transformation of inputs by a system to output (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988). This comprises of planning, deciding, implementing and controlling. Decision making is a process of choosing between alternatives. Planning involves setting standards and sequencing action so as to meet the demands. Implementing is putting plans into effect. Communication is the process of using messages to produce meanings in the minds of others. Controlling is checking whether actions conform to plans and making adjustments when necessary (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988).

Outputs are the matter, energy, information or processed resources produced by a system in response to input, or transformation. Thus they include demand responses and resource changes. Demand responses are outputs related to values and satisfaction. Resource
changes are outputs related to human or material resources and are either increased or decreased (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988).

Feedback is the positive or negative response to action that re-enters a system as input to affect succeeding output (Deacon and Firebaugh, 1988).

In this study the input component of the family system consists of socio-economic factors which are the parents' education, household size, family type, income, age of parents, age of children, occupation, marital status of the parents, household head, family life cycle, and residence. The throughput processes are decision making and communication. The output is the child's way of life.

The family resource management theory was developed in the United States of America. The researcher therefore applied the theory in the Kenyan situation.

In the theory of self-actualization needs come into play in a hierarchical sequence, and that only when basic needs have been met do the higher needs emerge (Maslow, 1970). There are five levels of needs which are, from the lowest, physiological, safety, belongingness and love, esteem, and the self-actualization (Fig 1.2). Children may be taking to the streets because their needs are not being met.
Fig: 1.2 Theory of self-actualization
Source: Maslow A, 1970

Fig: 1.3 Conceptual Framework

**Inputs**
- Parents' education
- Household size
- Family type
- Income
- Age
- Occupation
- Marital status
- Household head
- Residence
- Family life cycle

**Throughputs**
- Decision making
- Communication

**Outputs**
- Needs met or not
- Child's way of life.

The researcher adopted the conceptual model from the family resource management system proposed by Deacon and
Firebaugh (1988). The theoretical framework shows the relationships among inputs, throughputs and outputs. The researcher also used the theory of self-actualization (Maslow, 1970) which advocates that when needs are not satisfactorily met, there is dissatisfaction.

The study shows preliminary support, of the model in that the socio-economic factors within a family do affect the decision making patterns, parental behavior, and communication within a family. This in turn determines the provision of needs to the family members. If needs are not met children may look for other means to have their needs met. If needs are adequately met, children may stay with their parents. In this study it was evident that when needs were not met, then there was communication breakdown and this resulted in dissatisfaction and children going to the streets.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature on children in especially difficult circumstances is vast and growing daily. The main objective of this chapter is to review current theoretical and practical ideas about children in especially difficult circumstances in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu and to apply these ideas to the diverse conditions found in smaller towns of Kenya.

Street children are a part of children in especially difficult circumstances. The street children are also a part of the family system which is expected to perform certain functions for the good of its parts (members).

The Family System

Nurturing children is a primary function of families throughout the world. Whether nurturing is done by the natural parent, in an extended family, or in some form of group care depends on historical, cultural and political-economic factors within each society.

Since Kenyan towns are now like apartments such that what affects families and what families do affect us,
everyone should help nurture children and improve life for individuals and families. Knowledge of child development, education, nutrition, housing, clothing, family decision making and interpersonal relationships can be utilized to enhance life for our neighbors as well as ourselves. To focus on the issue of caring for children requires looking at the context in which families in today's world are living and rearing their children.

The family is an open system that functions in the following environments: human constructed environment, natural environment, and the human behavioral environment (Bulboz et al, 1979). Thus interaction proceeds from the family to the environment and from the environment to the family.

The future of children depends on the ways the families care for their children and the support the human constructed environment provides for both the families and children. Limitations may be placed on the human constructed environment, with the results that the families do not receive supportive inputs from it. For instance, in developing countries like Kenya, there is lack of resources to construct and operate schools, hospitals, housing and other social amenities. Families cannot therefore receive free public education, health
care services, and leisure among other things. Only those that can afford these services can receive them. For instance, when Structural Adjustment Programs were implemented in 1992, the public has since had to pay for medical services. In 1995, the Mungai commission for higher education proposed payment of fees be introduced at the university level of education. This was introduced in (1995) although most of the students cannot afford it. The Higher Education Loans Board has been set up to disburse loans to needy students. Despite this, a few students did not get the loan for the 1995/96 academic year yet they cannot afford the fees. Such students may be forced to terminate their education.

Housing is a part of the human constructed environment. The illegal process by which new city houses and neighborhoods are constructed has been evident yet very few governments are prepared to acknowledge it (Hardoy, 1989). Most governments mix indifference with repression; some illegal settlements are tolerated e.g 'chuom'- the home of street children in the alleys of Nairobi city - while others are bulldozed e.g Muoroto, a slum in Nairobi city. Bulldozing leaves people homeless and children in such situations may end up in the streets.

Poverty has been singled out as the main cause of
street children and other children in especially difficult circumstances (Onyango, 1991). Many Third World nations can never achieve a level of development which allows for the elimination of poverty (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989).

Poor people in developing countries demonstrate great ingenuity in developing residential areas, and in construction of housing even if governments regard them as illegal. Their ways, their plans and their building materials are often suited to local needs, local incomes, local climatic conditions and local resources than the official standards demanded by the government. This could be because, the official standards are derived from western models which have little relevance to local circumstances and take no account of local climate, local preference and availability of local building materials. A slum is only a slum in the eye of some. To the poor who live there, it is a home. For example, most of the street children in Nairobi city are from the slums of Korogocho, Kibera and Mathare (Munyakho, 1992; Suda, 1994; ANPPCAN, 1995).

The family is therefore a habitat for the child. This family could be single-parent headed or could be headed by a married couple. If a family is to remain together, it is necessary that the family satisfies the
basic needs of its members which include shelter, food and clothing. If this is not done, then parts of the family, the children, are going to acquire behavior that they think will help them get what is lacking. Other functions of the family are: socialization i.e. encouraging, guiding, supporting and rewarding; and for provision of a support system for parents and their offspring (Sluckin and Herbert, 1987).

**Children**

As indicated above, children are a part of the family system. Children are wanted by every married couple since it is believed to be the bond in a marriage. Children are also considered a social asset.

In the African tradition, having many children was geared to offset the high infant mortality rate in the family. Children belonging to other relatives were frequently adopted to demonstrate concern and regard for the relatives of the family. In polygamous households, children from a man's previous marriage are raised by his successive wives. These children may suffer neglect which often arises from apathy, poverty and resentment by step-mothers and co-wives. This is a quite difficult situation for them (Ombaso and Mutuku, 1992) i.e the children are often wretchedly unhappy because of the strain put upon
them at home and may end up looking for alternative places where they think they can be happy. These are children who need more individual attention and concern. Parents' attitudes towards the children therefore have an important influence on how the parents and children relate, and in turn influences the way the children develop.

**Needs of Children**

According to Maslow (1970), developmental needs come into play in a hierarchical sequence, and that only when basic needs have been satisfactorily met do the higher needs emerge.

![Diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs]

**Fig 2.1: Theory of self-actualization**

The lowest level of needs in this theory are the physiological needs which are food, air, water, shelter and clothing. They are the most preponent of all needs. Any of the physiological needs and the consummatory behavior involved with them serve as channels for all sorts of other needs as well i.e the person who thinks is hungry may actually be seeking more for comfort, or dependence, than for vitamins or proteins. Conversely, it is possible to satisfy the hunger in part by other activities such as drinking water or smoking cigarettes.

If the physiological needs are relatively well met, there then emerges a new set of needs which may be categorized as safety needs (security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from anxiety and chaos, law and order e.t.c). The human being in such a state may be described as a safety-seeking mechanism. A child needs an organized and structured world rather than an unorganized or unstructured one. The central role of parents and the family set up are undisputable: quarreling, physical assault, separation, divorce, or death within the family may be particularly terrifying (Schaffer and Collis, 1984). An average child in our society generally prefers a safe world which he can count on and in which he has powerful parents or protectors who shield him from harm (Maslow, 1970). For
children who are reared in unthreatening, loving families, danger reactions are apt to come mostly to objects or situations that adults too would consider dangerous (Bigner, 1979).

If both physiological and safety needs are fairly well met, there will emerge the love and affection needs. A person will feel keenly, as never before, the absence of friends. He will hunger for affectionate relations with people and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goals. The thwarting of these needs is the most commonly found core in cases of mal-adjustment and more severe pathology like in the case of street children (Maslow, 1970).

All people in any society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others. Thwarting of these needs produce feeling of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends (Maslow, 1970).

Even if all the above mentioned needs are satisfied, we may still often expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he is fitted for. This need refers to a man's
desire for self-fulfillment: the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. The clear emergence of this need usually rests upon some prior satisfaction of the physiological, safety, love and esteem needs.

When the human organism is dominated by a certain need, the whole philosophy of the future tends to change e.g. for a chronically and extremely hungry street child, utopia can be defined simply as a place where there is plenty of food i.e. if only he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. But when the belly is chronically filled, at once other higher needs emerge. Thus an organism is dominated by a need and its behavior organized only by unsatisfied needs (Maslow, 1970).

On the other hand Pringle (1989) suggests that all human needs are inter-related and interdependent in a subtle, complex and continuous way e.g. an unhappy child may reject food and, even if he takes it, he may fail to thrive. That the cognitive and affective aspects of development are closely interwoven from so early an age that they are almost indivisible. The essential driving force of the will to learn has its roots in the quality of relationships available right from the beginning of life. Poor family relationships may cause break-ups in
the family and children in such families may end up in
the streets (ANPPCAN, 1995).

The needs of children are many and varied. Not the
least are food, clothing, shelter and good health care.
There are other basic needs and some of these are usually
swept under the rug by busy parents. The findings in the
situation analysis of women and children indicate that
parents of street children had jobs to attend to. Most of
them were self-employed or unemployed and about 12% of
the 634 mothers were barmaids (GOK/UNICEF, 1992). This
could make them too busy to provide certain needs for
their children.

Children in the streets, just like those in homes
have their needs which have to be met.

**Parent - Child Interaction**

The way parents raise children may be divided into
three varieties: authoritarian (restrictive), firm
(strict), and permissive (easy) (DeMause, 1977). And,
whether parents know it or not, they give strong signals
as to how they want them to behave, believe, and what
kinds of people they want them to be (West, 1967). These
parents have an influence on their children's behavior.
Fig 2.2: The range of parental behavior types within the two major dimensions: autonomy - control / warmth - hostility

AUTONOMY

(Permissiveness)

Detached | Freedom
Indifferent | Democratic
Neglecting | Accepting
HOSTILITY | LOVE
 Rejecting | (Warmth)
Demanding | Over-indulgent
antagonistic | Protective-indulgent
Authoritarian
dictatorial | Overprotective

(Restrictiveness)

CONTROL

Source: Sluckin and Herbert, 1986
Fig 2.3: Details of children's behavior within the two parenting styles.

### Restrictiveness

- Submissive, dependent, polite, neat, obedient.
- Minimal aggression.
- Maximum rule enforcement (boys)
- Facilitates adult role taking.
- Dependent, not friendly, not creative.
- Maximal compliance.

### Permissiveness

- Active, socially outgoing, creative.
- Successfully aggressive.
- Minimal rule enforcement.
- Minimal self-aggression.
- Independent, friendly, creative.
- Low projective hostility.

Source: Sluckin and Herbert, 1986.
There is a happy medium in child rearing techniques, and extremes of permissiveness and restrictiveness entail risks as is indicated in Fig 2.2 (Baumrind, 1971).

Parents, as agents of society, exerting social influence and control on an impressionable, malleable child, bear an awesome responsibility. The very processes which help the child adapt to social life can, under certain circumstances contribute to the development of deviant, dysfunctional modes of behavior as is indicated in Fig 2.2 and Fig 2.3. Parents are the crucial and therefore (potentially) the weak link in the chain of socialization (Herbert, 1978). Taking care of young children is likely to be more stressful for some parents than others, especially in unfavorable circumstances - poverty or poor housing for instance (Sluckin and Herbert, 1987). Children initiate approximately fifty percent of interactions with parents. A child's behavior can have as much effect on his parents' actions as his parents' behavior has on his (Fig 2.2, Fig 2.3, Bell and Herper, 1977). Thus parental rejection has certain effects on the children. For instance, aggressive boys who suffered a lot of parental rejection show much less dependent behavior than non-aggressive boys who have been accepted by their parents (Herbert, 1974). There is an
exception — if withhold or are sparing with their attention and care, but do not actually punish behavior, they are likely to intensify the child's need for attention and care. The more a child is pushed away, the more he clings (Herbert, 1985).

Violence towards children in the home also does influence behavior in the children. The most consistent features of the history of abusive families is the repetition from one generation to the next of a pattern of abuse, neglect and parent loss or deprivation (Herbert, 1978; Kempe and Kempe, 1978; Sluckin and Herbert, 1978). Delinquents have more commonly been the victims of adult assault — often of a vicious, persistent nature — than the non-delinquents (Herbert, 1978; Danziger, 1971).

Children in the streets may have taken to the streets from their homes due to their family background. While in the streets, these children are quite aggressive. This could be due to their previous parent-child interaction and also due to the way the members of the public treat them. They are harassed by the public and the police too.
Children in especially difficult circumstances

Children have constituted an endangered species in society today — a yielding target for the frustration, conflicts, projections, unresolved hatred and smoldering anger of the adults who often tyrannically bestride their lives (UNICEF, 1994).

Although child abuse and neglect have only recently commanded respect — in Kenya by ANPPCAN Kenyan chapter in 1995 — the bleak outlook for so many contemporary children is no new phenomenon. As chronicled by child historian DeMause (1977), the history is a panorama of incredible cruelty and exploitation.

In their study, Ombaso and Mutuku (1992) describe children in especially difficult circumstances as those whose basic needs such as food, shelter, education, medical and security are not met due to prevailing conditions in the society. They undergo various forms of child abuse and exploitation which interfere with their normal growth and development. Street children are a part of the children in especially difficult circumstances. These children can be found in both rural and urban centers of Kenya.

Bwibo and Onyango (1985) in their study define street wandering children as the young boys and girls often seen roaming in town streets, car ports, gambling
places, by cinema theaters, e.t.c. Some of these children are immoral, others vagrant with intention to commit crime. On the streets, the children are involved in

The problem of street children in Kenya first began in the early 1950s when the colonial system broke up families by imprisoning men and women or taking them away to concentration camps (ANPPCAN, 1995). The children were then left helpless and they wandered off to the streets of Nairobi with the hope of finding some means of survival.

Research done by Suda (1994) indicates that there is a growing number of street children in the country and that these children have become a serious social problem. In 1990, there were 4,000 street children in Nairobi province and 943 in Western province (GOK / UNICEF, 1992). In 1995, there were 40,000 street children in Nairobi and 500 in Kakamega district. Reasons given by researchers for children being on the streets are: rapid urbanization, high unemployment, rising costs of living, political transformation, social disintegration, progressive erosion of extended family ties, increased family breakdowns, global economic recession and deterioration of the overall economic situation (Suda, 1994).

The children on the streets are in two categories:
i). full-time street children and

ii). part time street children (Onyango, 1994).

While on the streets, the children are involved in various activities such as collecting and selling waste papers, bottles, or plastics, begging and selling edibles among others (GOK/UNICEF, 1992). These children face problems such as harassment, abuse, hunger and thirst, lack of sleeping places, poor weather conditions, boredom and poor health (GOK/UNICEF, 1992).

Street children cause certain dangers which include shame and embarrassment that affects the society, the aggressive children feel frustrated and no doubt are facing physical and mental retardation in general besides the daily risks (Bwibo and Onyango, 1985).

It has been predicted that half of the world's population will live in the cities by the end of the century with the majority being young people under 20 years of age (Boyden and Holden, 1991). The urban young face special problems caused by rapid and uncontrolled urbanization. Governments tend to focus on the wealthier residential areas of the city at the expense of countless people who live in rented or squatter housing (Boyden, 1991).

In Kenya, the government regards human development as both the goal of social and economic activities. The
major binding constraints on human development were identified in the Sessional paper No 10 of 1965 as poverty, disease, ignorance, environmental protection and equity (GOK, 1992). Human development must therefore be the development of the rural and slum areas of Kenya where most people live. This will help alleviate poverty which has already been singled out as the main cause of street children. It will prevent the influx of children into the streets of towns.

All in all, there is much that has been done on street children but there is more that needs to be done.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative mode of inquiry was the main mode employed in the research. The assumption which underlies the approach is the belief that human behavior is integrally related to the context in which it occurs and that behavior cannot be understood without knowing its meaning from the participants (Tarasuk and Maclean, 1990).

Families present a challenge as to the unit of analysis. Most survey research takes the individual as the unit and focuses on that individual's characteristics, attitudes and behavior. By contrast, qualitative research can accommodate multiple perspectives and can better deal with families, marriages, or sibling relationships as units and enable richer accounts and closer approximations of lived family experiences (Handel, 1989).

Although the main mode of inquiry was qualitative, the quantitative mode was also employed.
Target Population

Street children in Kakamega town have their homes of origin in Kambi-somali and Majengo slums, and the peri-urban region. The population that was used in the study were street children, their parents, and non-street children who live in the slums, and their parents. Slums in the urban center were selected for a follow up of street children whose homes of origin are the slums. They were also selected so as to compare information given by the street children and the non-street children.

Sample

The sample from the population consisted of children in the streets, some parents of street children, children who lived in the slums and were not in the streets, together with their parents. The purposive sampling technique was used to come up with the sample. The technique required the researcher to decide to have a particular informer and then look for that informer. The purpose of sampling was to discover and describe categories of phenomenon hence informants were selected in order to obtain the fullest possible characteristics (Achterberg, 1988).

Qualitative sampling involves decisions not only about which people to observe or interview but also about
settings, events and social processes (Sandelowski et al, 1994).
In the study, the sample size consisted of twenty (20) street children, four parents or guardians of street children, and, ten (10) non-street children and parents or guardians of each child.

The children who were interviewed were those of ages between five (5) years and eighteen (18) years. For the street children, only those who had been in the streets for a period of six months or more were interviewed. Street children whose homes of origin were the slums directed the researcher to their parents or guardians. These were only four children. Therefore, four parents or guardians were interviewed and ten parents/guardians of non-street children were interviewed.

Residential buildings in the slum areas were not planned for by the Kakamega County Council. They are not well defined. The Kakamega County Council has no map for these houses. It was therefore not possible to randomly select the households by use of house numbers. With the help of the District Officer Kakamega municipality, the researcher made a list of families meeting the required criteria and then randomly selected ten households from the list. In each of the selected household, one child (preferably the eldest but not one who was over eighteen
years of age) was selected for the interview. The available parent at the time was also interviewed.

Data Collection Techniques

The research instruments that were used in the study were three sets of semi-structured, in-depth interview guides and an observation checklist. Thus there was one interview guide for the street children, one for non-street children, and one for parents of both categories of children.

Interviews

The interview guide was developed in both English and Kiswahili.

Probes from predetermined topics were used to direct the interview. Silence was used as much as possible to allow the subjects full expression before probes were employed. This served to minimize the interviewer's interference with the natural flow of subjects' conversation.

Besides the semi-structured interviews and field observation, taking of field notes were employed. Consent was sought to audiotape the interviews but none of the subjects consented. Detailed notes were therefore made during and after the interview.
Pre-testing

A relative small sample was chosen from the population: 5 subjects from each category of the population. The subjects selected for pre-testing were not included in the sample. Each of the selected subjects was interviewed by the researcher. Important suggestions, omissions and corrections from the pre-testing exercise were incorporated in the final questionnaire to improve it.

Validity is concerned with the extent to which a technique measures what it is intended to measure. In this study validity was ensured by contacting experts on the area of study and by pre-testing. The researcher also examined the areas to be covered and ensured that the items in the questionnaire were adequate and represented the various aspects of the topic which was to be assessed.

Data Collection procedures

The researcher personally interviewed all the subjects using the interview guides. By so doing, The researcher assured the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses.

At the start of the study, the researcher had problems with the street children until when the
researcher went to the streets in the company of a member of the Good Samaritan World Missionary Association (GSWMA). That was when the street children became very co-operative. The nature and purpose of the study was explained to all the subjects and then consent to participate in the study was sought. Data was collected by the researcher using the language best understood by the respondent. The languages used therefore were Kiswahili, Luhya and English. During this research period, the researcher found only female parents at home during the day. The researcher therefore had to go back to homes in the evening so as to interview the male parents too.

None of the respondents accepted to have the interview recorded on tape. The researcher therefore chose to interview a maximum of three subjects in any one day. After interviewing one subject, the researcher would find a place to sit and go through the field notes so as to fill in what was left out during the interview. This was also done to find out if there were any items on the interview guides that had not been answered adequately. These were noted down so that the researcher would use them as a guide to interview the same subject a second time. Going through the field notes was a way to update the field notes and this is best done when the interview
is still fresh in the researcher's mind. It was also a way of establishing the truth, especially with the street children, of the accounts they had given. In some cases, it took the researcher more than five sessions to get street children give honest, true answers.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, raw data (the scribbled field notes) were converted into write-ups at the end of each day before they were made available for analysis.

Steps adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) and Morse (1994) were used throughout the study period to analyze the data. These were:

a). contact summary sheet
b). codes and coding
c). pattern coding
d). memoing/synthesizing
e). display format
f). drawing and verifying conclusions.

Besides qualitative data analysis, quantitative data analysis was also employed. This included means, frequencies and range.
a). Contact summary sheet

A contact summary sheet is a single sheet with some focusing or summarizing questions about a particular field contact. The researcher therefore formulated questions for a contact summary sheet. The researcher then reviewed the written up field notes and answered each question briefly to develop an overall summary of points in the contact.

The contact summary sheet was filled out as soon as the written-up field notes had been reviewed and corrected.

b). Codes and Coding

To review a set of field notes transcribed or synthesized, and dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact, is the stuff of analysis. This part of analysis involved differentiating and combining the data that had been retrieved and the reflections that had been made about the information.

Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes were used to retrieve and organize chunks of information.

A provisional 'start list' of codes was prepared prior to field work. This list came from the theoretical
framework, list of objectives, and key variables that were taken to the field.

c). Pattern coding

Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, those that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation. They pull together a lot of material into more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis. They are a sort of meta-code.

d). Memoing/synthesizing

Memos tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept.

Memoing helped the researcher move easily from empirical data to a conceptual, refining and expanding codes further developing key categories and showing their relationship.

e). Display format

A display is a visual format that presents information systematically so that the user can draw valid conclusions and take needed action. The display format used in this study consisted of three columns. The first column was for codes and reflections made by the
researcher. The second column contained the write-ups while the third column contained the observations made.

f). Drawing and verifying conclusions

This involved drawing meaning from a particular configuration of data in the display by noting patterns, themes, seeing plausibility and clustering, counting and making contrasts/comparisons. Thus data in the display format from the three columns was lapsed together.

A descriptive analysis was done to determine the frequencies of variables followed by a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions. The results are presented under the following topics:

1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents
2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the children
3. History of the street children
4. Socio-economic background of the respondents
5. Reasons for being on the streets
6. Prevention of the street children phenomenon
7. Future goals and aspirations of both the street and non-street children.

The 'class' of street children

Street children include those who live and work full-time on the streets having little or no contact with
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that lead to the influx of street children in Kakamega town. The study also aimed at filling the gap in knowledge on middle sized towns as concerns street children since studies have been carried out in only the major towns of Kenya i.e Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

A descriptive analysis was done to determine the frequencies of variables followed by a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions. The results are presented under the following topics:

1). Demographic characteristics of the respondents
2). Basic characteristics of the children
3). Activities of the street children
4). Socio-economic background of the respondents
5). Reasons for being on the streets
6). Prevention of the street children phenomenon
7). Future goals and aspirations of both the street and non-street children.

The 'home' of street children

Street children include those who live and work full-time on the streets having little or no contact with
their parents as well as those who live and work on the streets by day but return to their homes and families at night (Onyango, 1992). In the late 1960s, these children were referred to as 'parking boys'. This name came as a result of the activities they used to be involved in. These children used to direct cars where to park (Onyango, 1985).

At the moment, wandering children are referred to as "chokora" by the public. This name originated from some of their activities which include collecting waste paper, bottles, and plastics from garbage heaps and picking leftover food from dust bins.

Street children in Kakamega live in 'chuoms'. A "chuom" is a place where street children live i.e eat, sleep. This is a name that was coined by the street children but is also used by the public. It is actually a damping site for hotels with business located nearby or it lies hidden between buildings.

At the start of the field study, the street children thought that the researcher was a 'karao' i.e policewoman. Every time the researcher approached the street children they ran away. To win their trust, the researcher had to go to the streets in the company of a member of the Good Samaritan World Missionary Association. This Association has organized a feeding and
bible teaching program for the street children. The researcher later learnt that the street children are friendly and kind if and when they know you and win your friendship unlike the public image people have of them being rough and nasty. It took quite a long time before the children were able to talk about themselves, their family backgrounds, and the problems that made them run away from home.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Street Children And Non-street Children

In the first part of the interview schedule for the children, the researcher intended to find out their demographic characteristics.

Of the twenty street children interviewed, all were male. No female was identified. This could be attributed to the fact that girls who are treated unfairly in their families are usually given out as housemaids while others choose marriage as an alternative. For the ten (10) non-street children, five were male and five were female. The sample size for the non-street children was set at ten. The researcher therefore chose to interview five male and five female so that each sex would have an equal chance.
Age of the children

The children interviewed were aged between 8 and 18 years as Table 4.1 below shows. The average age of the street children was 13.9 years. There was no street child who was below 10 years of age. On the other hand, the average age of the non-street children was 11.50 years.

Table 4.1: Age of the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Street Children</th>
<th>Non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 20 100 10 100

\[ X = 13.90 \] \[ X = 11.50 \]
As is depicted from table 4.1, the greatest percentage of both the street and non-street children were of age ten years. This majority representation of the street children in this category is because of the kind of the activities they are involved in as will be seen later in this chapter.

Education of the children

On formal education, none of the street children had gone beyond standard four of primary school education (Table 4.2). Fifty percent of the children had dropped out of school but could not read, while the other fifty had not been to school at all. For the non-street children, all were attending school at different levels (Table 4.2). These children may not take to the streets because they are attending school and have their parents to provide all their needs and control their character.
Table 4.2: Education level of the children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Street children</th>
<th>Non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No schooling</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 1 - 4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary 5 - 8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the reasons given by the street children for not being in school were beyond the children's control. These were:

a) being made to work at home by their step-parent while their step-siblings went to school,
b) punishment by teachers for lack of books, pens or uniform and for not paying school fees,
c) punishment for putting on old or torn school uniform,
d) teachers being too harsh. They would give very heavy punishment for even small mistakes or for mistakes that were not of their own making,
e) severe punishment for absenteeism.
There was one boy who gave quite a different reason from all the other boys. He said:

"I used to live with my grandmother on my mother's side. I knew her as my mother because she was so good to me. One day I had her talking to someone. That is when I knew who my mother was. She was telling the other woman that my mother was a prostitute. This made me very angry. When I went to school, I injured another boy so badly after a fight at games. I knew I would be expelled or punished very heavily. So I decided not to go back to that school again and I was never taken to another one."

Family size of the families of the children

The average number of siblings in each of the families of the children was 6.5 ± 7 (Table 4.3). Therefore, including the parents the average family size was eight members. Seventy five percent of the children had five or more siblings. When families are so large, it becomes difficult for parents to provide adequately for their children. Children in such situations may seek alternative ways to meet their needs, for instance choosing to beg from the public.
### Table 4.3: Number of siblings of the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of siblings</th>
<th>Street children</th>
<th>Non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents of Street and Non-street children

\[ \bar{X} = 6.5 \quad \bar{X} = 6.2 \]

The parents of street children may not have been in a position to provide for their children and the children therefore ended up taking to the streets. Although the
families of non-street children are equally large, results show that the parents of these particular children are better able to provide for their children because they had some source of income. Some parents reported to be civil servants while others were self-employed.

Homes of origin

The street children were asked to state where they were staying before they got to the streets. Majority of the children (70%) had their homes of origin in the peri-urban region of Kakamega town. These results are not in agreement with what has been documented by other researchers that street children in towns originate from the slums. Most of them originate from areas away from town. Twenty percent came from the slums while 10% came from other estates within the town. This is an indication that children can leave all sorts of homes in different residential areas and take to the streets.

Parents of Street and Non-street children

During the research period, only four street children were willing to direct the researcher to their homes of origin. These homes were within the town. Four parents/guardians of street children were therefore
interviewed.

The results indicate that all the parents or guardians of the street children were female. Those of non-street children were both male and female (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Sex of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the households from which the street children came were female headed.

Age of the parents

As concerns age of the parents, most of the parents were in their mid-life as is indicated in table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Age of parents/guardians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = 44.3  
X = 33.2

One parent was a grandparent to a street child and could not tell her age.

**Education of parents of the children**

On formal education, one parent of a street child had up to college level education. The grandparent of a street child had no formal education at all with the rest having secondary education (Table 4.6). As concerns
parents of non-street children, two parents had no formal education while the rest had attained certain levels of education (Table 4.6). The two parents with no formal education were female.

Table 4.6: Education level of parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No schooling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, only one parent in a street child was a health worker and this was the parent with tertiary level education. Although this parent was able to provide adequately for her child who was a last born child, her child still runs on the streets. She said:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No employment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All parents of non-street children had some source of income (Table 4.7). This implies that these parents were able to meet the needs of their children which include food, shelter, education and clothing. This could partially explain why children have not taken to the streets.

On the other hand, only one parent to a street child was a civil servant and this was the parent with tertiary level education. Although this parent was able to provide adequately for her child who was a last born child, her child still took to the streets. She said:
"My son joined bad boys and he always used to demand for money. On the occasions I gave him some money, he came back home drugged with bhang. When I stopped giving him money he refused to go to school and later went to the street".

From what this parent said, her son had began using drugs and therefore sought alternative ways to meet his desires by going to look for his own money. This boy gets this money by washing cars, and doing casual work such as masonry.

One of the respondents, a grandparent who had no formal education, no source of income and was ill could not provide for her orphaned grandson. The grandson therefore had to go to the streets every morning and bring his collection back home in the evening. He was a part-time street child. She said:

"I am so old. Even the tube that clears my bladder is old and dirty and I cannot replace it. My sons and daughters no longer care about me. The only one who cared was the father to this boy who died in a house fire. My grandson is so young, neighbours cannot share with us what they have. It is not like the olden days when neighbors got concerned about each other. I asked my grandson to and beg from people in town so that we could survive. Sometimes he comes back with nothing and we have to sleep like that".

The other two parents of street children who were not
employed had secondary education. These parents claimed that they have never been successful in getting employment. When asked why they could not engage themselves in self-employment, they said that they had no money to start their own income generating activity. These single, female parents were therefore not able to provide adequately the needs of their children. Even their small children who were aged between three years and seven years were not attending school, had tattered clothes. For their children who had taken to the streets, the parents said that their children claimed that life in the streets was far much better than that in their homes. Thus their children took off to the streets as an alternative way to have their needs met.

Religion of parents of street children

Table 4.8: Religion of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is indicated in table 4.8, majority of the parents were muslims. All the muslim parent lived in the slums while one parent of a street child who was a christian lived in Otiende estate. On inquiry as to why the muslim parents lived in the slums, one of them answered:

"We do not have money so as to be able to live in the other estates like Nabongo scheme, Milimani and Amalemba. They are too expensive. Again, our religion demands that we live together as a community and share what we have. In those estates people do not mix. Houses have fences, gates, walls and even dogs. For us, we are supposed to avoid luxury and things we can do without, and live simple lives. In this place life is simple and we can mix with fellow muslim easily".

The other parents were in agreement with the above account. The slums were crowded and with litter all over the place. The pit latrines used within these slums were not kept clean neither were they maintained properly. Such living conditions are unhealthy for human beings. Children who told their parents that living in the streets was far much better than living at home as indicated previously, may have taken to the streets due to poor living environment. The residential rooms in the slums areas were small although they were occupied by about eight people. When the researcher sought to find
out why a family could not rent more than one room, one subject responded:

"In our religion, men are allowed to be polygamous. Since we are supposed to live together and share as I had told you, the men do not see the need to separate their wives and children. That is why most rooms have very many people".

Appearance and Behaviour Of The Children

a) Street Children

The basic characteristics of the street children were that these children were generally dirty, greasy and ill-clad although they were quite clean on certain days (Thursdays). The dirty, grease look was to win sympathy from the public. On Thursdays, the Good Samaritan World Missionary Association (GSWMA) meets the street children, gives them soap to go take a bath and then provide them a meal which they take as they listen to a preacher. Thus on Thursdays the children had to be as clean as was expected of them by the Association.

The children, appeared to be too small for their age. One would observe muscle wasting and some had skin diseases. This may be as a result of inadequate feeding and low hygienic standards.

The children were also very aggressive. When they
beg from a member of the public and he/she does not give a coin, the children would kick the person and abuse him/her.

b) Non-street Children

The non-street children were also ill-clad i.e. had tattered clothes or the clothes were undersize. This could be because the parents prioritized their children's needs and therefore did not take clothing as a priority. The children also suffered muscle wasting. The food provided by their parents might not be balanced.
Activities of The Children

Table 4.9: Activities carried out by street children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begging and loitering.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeping outside shops.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferrying luggage.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car washing.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glue, and petrol sniffing, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm work, slashing, wood chopping.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snatching/stealing.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage collection.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawking.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promiscuity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 reveals that the major activity engaged in by the street children is begging and loitering in the streets. Indeed, eighty percent of the children engaged in this activity. This suggests that most of the street children are out to get their own money and spend it like
they wish. The boys who did not engage in this activity felt that they were too old to beg on the streets. Begging and loitering was for small boys. The other activities which street children engaged in most were sweeping outside shops and other buildings and ferrying luggage. Reasons for engaging in these activities were that these were jobs readily available, and that the pay was well. Money obtained from these activities was used to buy clothes, food and glue.

Boys who sniffed glue or petrol, smoked bhang, cigarettes, and also took locally brewed alcohol - chang'aa were over fourteen years of age. Use of these substances made them feel "high", forget about their problems and not feel hungry, they claimed. They also claimed that use of these substances made the nights short and "chased" away the cold. Garbage collection was unpopular among the children because it brought no money. There are no industries in Kakamega town that would require waste paper, bottles or plastics. Only 10% of the children got involved in the hawking business although they did not like it. This was because the items to be sold would sometimes not sell out. If they happened to sell out, they brought little money and their "bosses" (those who employed them), paid them badly. The rest of the activities were done by boys of age 16 - 18 years.
This is because they considered the other activities for younger boys.

All the street children engaged themselves in more than one activity in a day. The time spent working was determined by the amount of money collected. If by half the day they had "enough" money, work would stop until the next day. The street children did not begin their activities very early in the morning. They began at about 10.00am. Before then, they claimed it would not be easy to get any jobs. Street children have engaged in these activities because of the kind of life they lead. The children made decisions by themselves. Nobody assigns them these activities and nobody supervises them.

Table 4.10: Activities carried out by non-street children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wash dishes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed others and bath them</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean the house</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fetch firewood</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean compound</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the non-street children interviewed go to school (Table 4.10). When they get back from school, there are certain duties they have to carry out while at home. Unlike the street children who decide on what to do on their own, the parents of the non-street children assign them the above mentioned duties and also supervise them. Washing of the dishes after meals was done by girls while cleaning of the compound was done by the boys. Cleaning of the house was done mainly by girls. Only one boy responded to cleaning of the house. Washing of the clothes was done by the big girls who were of age 14 - 16 years. Distribution of these duties such that certain duties were dominated by a certain gender is as a result of culture of the Luhya community. Certain jobs like cooking, washing clothes, washing dishes and cleaning the house are considered female jobs while cleaning the compound, chopping wood are considered male jobs. The non-street children were busy i.e spent a bigger portion of the day in school and in the evening, busy at home. This may be what is keeping them off the streets.
### Socio-economic Background of The Respondents

### Socio-economic background of the children

#### Table 4.11: Marital status of parents of the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two street children had no idea about their families since they left home at an early age about 6 years ago. From table 4.11, all the non-street children had their parents alive and their parents lived together. For the street children, 30% were half orphans. The live parent remarried and the child was therefore brought up by his parent and a step-parent. The step-parent had no liking for his step-children. They treated them unfairly: gave
them no food nor education, and overworked them. For instance, Geoffrey was born in 1980 two years before his mother got married. His step-father never accepted him as his own son. Immediately after the first blood child of his step-father was born, he was treated differently and unfairly. His step-father punished him for mistakes he never made. He says:

"When I was about six years old and my mother was preparing me to go to school the following year, my step-father came home for Christmas. He was working and is still working in Nairobi. He brought very many gifts for my brother and sister, my mother, his parents, and even my cousins. He brought me nothing! I felt very bad and even attempted to run away to my grandparents but did not know the way. That Christmas was the worst - even worse than those that have passed while I have been on the streets. My step-father even made me work on Christmas Day - looking after cows, when everybody else went to church and later to the celebrations. I could not bear this. As soon as he left for Nairobi, I also ran away from home".

Table 4.12: Family type of the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family type</th>
<th>Street Children</th>
<th>Non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both the street and non-street children belonged to the two categories of family types (Table 4.12). For the street children, 20% were from monogamous families while 70% were from polygamous families. In these polygamous families, the father had more than one wife at one time and then separated with one of them. The father may have separated with his first wife and married another. Of all the street children interviewed, 50% lived with a step-parent before they left home for the streets. During the separation, the mothers left their children behind and these children later ran away from home. These children took to the streets because they were ill-treated by their step-mothers, suffered apathy and neglect. Family relations in these families were poor.

For the non-street children, 60% were members of polygamous households with 20% living with a step-parent. These children have remained in their homes because the family relations are not poor. The parents of non-street children had a source of income and thus were able to meet the basic needs of their children.
### Socio-economic background of Parents

#### Table 4.13: Family type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family type</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.13, the monogamous families for both categories were few. Forty percent of the parents of non-street children were polygamous while there were no polygamous parents of the street children. This is because all the parents of street children were female and seventy five percent of these female parents were single. Only twenty percent of the parents of non-street children were single.
Table 4.14: Monthly income of the parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; Ksh 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksh 1000-2499</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ksh 2500-5000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; Ksh 5000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one parent of a street child had a source of income which could make her provide for her child adequately. The rest of the parents/guardians of street children had no source of income (Table 4.14. They were therefore not able to meet the needs of their children adequately. On the other hand, all the parents of non-street children had some source of income and thus could provide their children with their needs. The income for all parents did not exceed Ksh 5000 per month which is quite low with the present economic situation. All the parents use money as
it becomes available. This implies that they do not budget at all. Low income earners have a negative evaluation towards themselves (Mugenda et al, 1986). That is why they do not budget nor do they have necessary adjustment in their money expenditure. Since their income is low, the parents have chosen to live in slums which are affordable. The houses are small, made of mud and roofed with either corrugated sheets, old tins or grass.

Table 4.15: Parents property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Parents of street children</th>
<th>Parents of non-street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No land</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land less than 1 acre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land more than 1 acre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parents of street children who had no land at all
were all female. They had no other property. In the Luhya community, women do not inherit land and that is why these female parents own no land. The rest of the parents own some land back in their rural homes. These pieces of land are used for growing subsistence crops.

Both the parent of street children and the parents of non-street children have large families i.e more than four children in each family. This is partly owed to the Luhya culture where many wives and many children was a sign of wealth. Despite the present hard times as concerns the care of families, some men have taken to doing what was required of them by the tradition. There are cases of single parent families with the single parents being female. The children in each of the single female parent families were not of the same fathers. The mothers were at one time cohabiting with men, had a child or two and broke off the relationship. The mothers then got involved in other relationships that did not lead to marriage but brought forth children. These mothers have remained single although they still see some men.

Reasons for Being On The Streets

Views of the street children

All the twenty street children interviewed had been
on the streets for a time that ranged from one year to eight years. When asked to give reasons why they were living in the streets, the children mentioned a wide and varied range of factors.

Parents as agents of socialization exerting social influence and control on an impressionable, malleable child, bear an awesome responsibility. As was shown by Sluckin and Herbert (1986), the very processes which help the child adapt to life can, under certain circumstances contribute to the development of deviant, dysfunctional modes of behavior.

Freedom for the children

One of the boys complained that his parents were treating him unfairly. When asked to explain what he meant he said that his parents were not giving him money the way they used to give his elder brothers and sisters just because he was a last born child. He felt that it was not his wanting that he was born a last born therefore his parents ought to have treated him like the rest of their children. Since his parents were unfair, he left for the streets so as to make his own money and use it without being controlled by his parents. The mother to this particular child claimed that her son took to the streets after she stopped giving him money. From this
reason stated, it can be seen that a child's behavior can have as much effect on his parents' actions as his parents' behavior can have on his. The parent must have been permissive and warm to her son such that she allowed so much freedom to her son. When she decided to limit the freedom, her son took to the streets and considers life in the streets to be better than that at home.

**Seeking for money**

There were four boys from the peri-urban region who were in the streets to make their own money just like the case above. These boys felt that town life was better than life in the rural areas. Another boy was out to look for money and food so that he would go and share it with his ill grandmother. There is general poverty such that some homes are materially depriving. This implies that shelter is poor, there is little or no food at all, poor bedding and clothing, and parents are not able to send their children to school. Families are thus under economic pressure. This is as a result of low or no education. Parents are thus unemployed or if employed, are low income earners. Those who are self-employed do not have a regular income. Coupled with this are the rising costs of living. With these conditions, the children are influenced to take to the streets. Children
on the streets were thus able to make money. This money was used for buying food, clothes, cigarettes, glue and bhang.

Polygamous families

In polygamous households as was the tradition, children from a man's previous marriage were raised by his succeeding wives. Children belonging to other relatives were frequently adopted to demonstrate concern for the relatives of the family. Presently there are numerous family breakdowns. When a couple separates, the man remarries and the woman too. There were children from broken and polygamous families who were being treated poorly by their step-parents. When asked why he was in the streets, 10 year old Kombo said:

"My mother was chased away by my father and she left me and my small brother. He then brought another mother who did not like us. She used to beat me and tell me that I was as stupid as my mother. She used to ask me to wash dishes, fetch firewood and even prepare food. When food got ready, she would send me somewhere or to do some work and when I finished the work, I would find when everyone had finished eating and I'm told to clean the dishes. Sometimes I ate left-over on the plates before washing them. She even removed me from school. I was her servant. When father came home she would cheat for me and my father would beat me with a big stick. Sometimes I would cry so loudly until neighbors came to tell him to stop. When my father was around..."
she would make sure that I am chased out of the house at night. I would sleep in the neighbors cowshed, old car, or in a grain store that was unused. When it become too much for me I just began walking away from home without knowing where I was going, sleeping by the roadside at night until I reached this town. I met some boys who kept talking to me and I became their friend”.

There were other boys who gave similar accounts of step-parents being too cruel towards them. For instance:

“My father separated with my mother when I was still very small. My step-mother stayed for a long time but did not have any child. They used to quarrel everyday and fight. She then became a drunkard. After she had taken chang’aa, she would beat me so much telling me that I was the cause of all her problems. When I could not bear it any more, I ran away from home”.

Besides having cruel step-parents, they also had cruel step-siblings. The step-siblings always told lies about them to their parents and these lies would earn them beatings. They had to go without food, no schooling while their step-siblings went to school. The clothing and bedding of these children who ran away from home never used to be replaced when it wore out. Thus, these street children found living conditions in their homes too harsh and therefore sort an alternative place to stay.
Family breakdowns

Family breakdowns are a result of poor family/parental relationships which make families unstable. Children born in families that break down usually remain with one of the parents. When the parent with the child remarries, parent-child interaction becomes very important. There are parents of these children who become indifferent, others neglect their children while others reject them. Some step-parents and step-siblings reject the children and detach themselves from the children. Some parents become authoritarian and dictatorial. Children in these kind of situations suffer apathy and neglect and run away from home. This is a clear evidence of erosion of extended family ties.

There was one boy who was sent away from home by his father after his parents separated. His father told him to go and learn to survive on his own. He left home and when he met other children in town, he began staying with them. This is a boy who has been influenced by his father to live in the streets. Another boy whose parents had long separated had been left in the custody of his father had nobody to take care of him after his father's death. He left home wandering and then ended up in the streets of Kakamega. He remained in the streets when he found that there were other children living in the streets.
Three boys who lived with their single mothers left home because the rooms in which they stayed with their siblings were too small. At the same time their mothers brewed and sold chang'aa or were involved in prostitution as a means to earn a living. On many occasions, some male patrons spent nights in these single rooms. On such occasions, the children had to find alternative places to sleep. When these mothers got drunk, they would deny the children food and send them out of the house. These boys left for the streets because they felt that street life was better than life at home. Some families are large such that there is overcrowding in the homes. With such large families, providing for the members becomes a difficult task for the parents/guardians. Thus such homes become materially depriving. It can be noted that these homes are also morally depriving. Thus the parents are over-indulgent. Some children therefore leave home because of poor morals while others leave because they are usually allowed to do what they want. This has led to rapid social disintegration.

Reasons For Children Being on the Streets

Views of non-street Children

The non-street children knew who street children
were and they referred to them as "chokora". The non-street children are aware that street children beg from the public, steal from people, and that they are usually dirty. The non-street children claimed that some street children refused to go to school and therefore ran away from home. Other children ran away because their parents beat them so much when they made mistakes. One boy gave the account below:

"You see that house over there, there was a boy called Nandwa. That Nandwa used to really disturb his parents and they used to really beat him. When his father was beating him, he would lock the house and beat him with a tyre of a bicycle. Nandwa used to cry very loudly saying he will not repeat it again but his father would just continue beating. Neighbors would shout from outside so that his father would stop but his father would just continue beating. When his father got tired he would open the door then Nandwa would dash out very quickly running very fast. Sometimes he would come out bleeding, or with swollen eyes, his legs became very black with lines of the tyre. After some days he disappeared. Then another day his father came back with him from those sides of town beating, beating, beating. Nandwa was crying loudly. As usual his father entered the house and started beating him again. When his father opened the door, he ran away again. We have never seen him again. But his father, aaaaah!"
beating him like a human being which was very bad. He claimed that even if Nandwa made a small mistake, the beating was the same instead of just having his ear pinched a bit. Nandwa got used to being beaten and he never stopped making mistakes and later ran away from home.

All the non-street children were not in favor of children living in the streets. One of them said:

"Those children in the streets have no food to eat. They eat rubbish from composite heaps. Sometimes they stand outside Franka, Merry Eating or Pizza begging from people who are eating in there. You know this is bad manners begging food. It is like begging food from visitors when they are eating in your house. Your mother can really beat you badly. They also don't have clothes to put on. Their clothes are black, dirty, and torn. They don't even sew them and they don't bath. They don't even sleep in houses. They snatch people things, kick those who don't give them money when they beg, sniffing glue, very bad manners. They should go back home so that they can become good children. Their mothers and fathers will teach them good manners if they go back home."

The non-street children felt that street children were lacking so many things. They felt that the parents of street children should provide for them so that they stop suffering in the streets.
Reasons For Being on the Streets

Views of Parents of Street Children

Parents/guardians of street children were asked to explain why their children were living in the streets. One guardian who was an old grandmother said that she had asked her grandson to go and beg for money or food from people and bring it home for them to eat. The grandmother has thus influenced her grandson to take to the streets.

One other parent does not understand why her youngest son refused to go to school, would demand for so much money, and later took to the streets.

"I am able to meet all my son's needs because my older children do send me some money and I am still earning money from the civil service. I used to give him some money but he would use it to buy bhang. This made me stop giving him money. He then stopped going to school, and later took to the streets. I have tried to bring him back home but the boy has refused to stay at home. The last time I tried to get him back home, he told me that life in the streets is better than life in my house. I do not know what to do".

The remaining two parents could not tell why their children went to the streets. One of them said:

"I had always done my best to make my children comfortable. One of the eldest boys just left
home telling me that he was going to stay in a better place. That was a bit of a relief because it reduced the number of children I had to take care of. I cannot trouble myself going for him. He is a big boy. He will take care of himself".

**Reasons For Children Being on The Streets**

The parents of non-street children gave a wide range of factors that made children live in the streets. The parents felt that majority of the street children had parents who were in fact responsible for getting them onto the streets to secure additional financial support for the family. A case was reported where a mother stripped naked to protest the rescuing of her child who was contributing to family survival by working in the streets. They also reported cases of some mothers fetching their children from the children's home using false excuses - only for the children to be found begging on the streets.

**Views of Parents of Non-street Children**

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**Lack of basic needs**

Some children go to the streets due to lack of parental love, food, schooling and shelter. Some homes are overcrowded and therefore provisions are not enough.
One parent commented:

"When a parent is unable to provide the basic needs for his or her children, he/she definitely loses their (children) respect and hence cannot control them. The parent will lose confidence and self-esteem. He/she begins to take cheap drugs and alcohol. This separates the parent further from his children and misunderstandings become the order of the day. Eventually, the children run away from home".

Some parents do not train children properly as concerns discipline such that they become indisciplined. Some children have bad company and end up being rude. Such children live for the streets on their own especially when their parents do not handle them the way they (children) would want to be handled. This is an action taken especially by children who want to have money of their own.

Abandonment

Orphans and other children who do not know their parents are likely to end up in the streets. For instance, orphans who have nobody to provide their needs will seek alternative ways to meet their needs. Taking to the street may be one of the alternatives. Cases were reported of infants who have been picked up by policemen...
by the roadside, or in dustbins. These children are usually taken to the children's home or given to someone who will be willing to take care of them. When such children become big, they run away from their foster homes.

Some mothers who realize that their children born out of wedlock may interfere with their marital life in future, come with them to town and abandon them in the streets.

Parental behaviour

Behaviour of parents also contributes to children taking to the streets. According to the interviewees, many slum women with children are single. Most of them brew chang'aa so as to make money to support their children. They live in small rooms. Their patrons do stay in these rooms. The parents are thus immoral and drunkards as well. Children find such homes to have poor living conditions and therefore choose to take to the streets as an alternative place to stay.

There are cruel step-mothers, step-fathers and step-siblings who, through the treatment they give to these children make the children take to the streets.

"In the neighbourhood, there is a family in
which the son ran away when he was about six or seven years old. You know, before he ran away, his mother died. His father married another woman who used to mistreat this boy. He stopped going to school all of a sudden, used to work so much. He was later taken to the rural home. When he came back to town visiting, he would complain of herding cattle, milking cows very early in the morning and going to sell the milk, and even weeding in the shamba during the weeding season. When his step-mother came visiting with her children, they treated him like he was the servant in the home. This used to make him so sad especially when he would report to his father who would never intervene. He never understood why he had to stop going to school when his brothers and sisters went to school. This was poor treatment for this boy and I think it made him run away from home".

Problems faced By Street Children

(As perceived by the street children)

Street children, due to the circumstances in their homes, found living in the streets a better alternative. While in the streets, they are involved in certain activities which help them make some money. These children like the jobs that give them money because they can spend their money without being controlled by anybody. Despite this, the street children face numerous problems which they listed as is indicated in table 4.16:
Table 4.16: Problems faced while on the streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harassment by police, public</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of shelter (during the rains)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor health (sickness/disease)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment by colleagues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clothing and bedding</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing jobs to get money</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beg and get nothing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about the future</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lack of shelter

The street children came up with many common problems. Lack of shelter, especially nights during the rainy season, some children have to keep changing their sleeping places. Some slept on verandas of buildings under vehicles, on top of trees. A group of four children used to sleep in a big tree that had a wide hole in its trunk. The tree has since then been cut down, and the children had problems locating another place to sleep each night. Children used sacks and sack cloth used to carry "mitumba" (second hand clothes) as their bedding.
These sack clothes were normally stolen from second hand cloth vendors. Polythene bags were also used as bedding during the rainy season. They were spread on veranda and the sack cloth placed on top of the polythene paper (this happened in places that were wet. Places that the rain would not reach at night).

Harassment by police

During the day, street children were insulted by some members of the public. At night, the policemen came for "msako" (to round up the street children). They would arrest some children and take them to the cells. After they had stayed in the cells for a while, they were taken to the children's home. Sometimes they were beaten up by the police officers. 12 year old Juma gave an account of his experience:

"One night, I slept with my friends under some lorries at Midland Emporium. While we were asleep, there were sharp lights near the lorries with people talking. When I looked, I saw four of my friends being held by their shirts. When I tried to run away, a policewoman saw me and I was caught by the policemen. We were taken to police cells. We stayed there for two days and then I was taken to juvenile. I stayed and stayed. I used to be taken to the court under police escort. Then one night, eh! I sneaked out of juvenile and came back to the streets. Juvenile was bad. We were sleeping four people on a bed and the mothers were too harsh".
The street children reported that they had a friend in the police force who always informed them when there would be a "msako". The children would pass this information to other children such that all children would be on the look out at night.

Food and sickness

On some days, some children would find no jobs and would therefore have no money to buy good food, glue, petrol, alcohol or bhang. Hunger was a major problem. Solutions were found by eating from garbage bins, begging for leftovers or remains from plates in hotels, or asking their friends to share with them what they had cooked.

The street children, like other human beings, suffered from diseases such as malaria, chest pains and venereal diseases. Those who suffered from venereal diseases were mainly the boys between 16 years and 18 years. When the children got sick, they visited the Provincial General Hospital where medicine, usually in form of tablets and injections were administered. The street children mentioned the Good Samaritan World Missionary Association as a big help to them when they fell sick. When one of the children became really sick or ill, his group attended to him, and brought him food. To also help the children keep themselves clean, G.S.W.M.A.
taught the boys to use the money they collect to buy bathing soap and second hand clothes.

The children listed their prioritized needs as food, shelter, and bedding, job, clothes, parents and health-care. Unlike the non-street children whose needs are met by their parents, the street children meet their needs by themselves.

**Physical environment**

The physical environment where these children live leaves a lot to be desired. Open sewage systems, stench from mountains of garbage, litter scattered everywhere, human faeces, narrow and dusty or muddy roads and paths are common features in the residential areas of the street children. These are poor environmental conditions. However, when asked if they would accept to live in an alternative place, the street children said that they would accept on condition that in the new home, they would be allowed to live the kind of lifestyle they wanted. When asked if they would go back to their parents, the responses were varied and interesting. One said that it would depend on how his parents treated him. If they should show acceptance and tolerance, he would try staying with them. Two of the boys were of the opinion that they would not go back
under whatever circumstances.

One said, "I would rather kill myself". The other said, "If my parents showed up and I had a gun, I would kill them. A parent cannot do what they did to me. They showed me so much hate and left me to suffer in the cold when they were comfortable, eating good food and dressing well. They thought I didn't deserve to live".

Another said, "I would go if my parents stopped being drunkards and leaving me hungry".

Others said their parents were dead.

Table 4.16 reveals that harassment by other street children, lack of money, getting nothing after begging, and thinking about the future were least common problems among the street children. The two boys who were harassed by other children were small, timid and scared of the big boys. The five who lacked money depended solely on begging as a means to meet their needs. The four boys who were worried about their future were of age 18 years and felt that they were too big to continue staying in the streets.

Future Goals And Aspirations Of The Street Children

Many street children had no idea of what they would like to be or do in future. They said that they left everything to God. This would be attributed to the fact that they were still young (10 to 15 years of age). There
were only four children aged between 16 years and 18 years who thought about their future. These boys had set goals but did not know how they would achieve these goals. Each one of them gave a different response:

"I want to become a respectable person, have a small family and take care of it. You can just see how big families are difficult to take care of. Like my father. He had three wives and so we were so many at home. Each mother had to take care of her own children. My mother and another step-mother just ran away and went to look for other men. The step mother who was left did not want to take care of us. We slept hungry, she mistreated us because we were too many for her. Father did not care at all. As long he had drunk his chang'aa, he would come and just sleep".

Another boy said, "For me all I need is a small push and I will become self-reliant. I have learned very good skills (masonry) while on the streets. If people get to know me and give me work, I can earn a living and give my family all, all that they need. Not like my mother who refused to give me money when I wanted some".

A third boy said: "I will go for adult education classes, get a job, and get married, then make sure that my children do not suffer".

The fourth boy said "I would like to be a businessman and make so much money and feel alright. What won't I have?"

From the responses given above, it can be concluded that none of the four boys would like his family to undergo the kind of suffering they underwent. They would like to see their children happy.
Prevention of The Street Children Phenomenon

Views of Parents of Street Children

Provision of basic needs.

Parents of the street children were of the view that street children should be counselled and then institutionalized in good institutions. The researcher felt that this should be supported since it has worked in several places e.g Undugu society in Nairobi, Shangilia mtoto wa Africa in Nairobi. There is a danger in doing this in that the number of street children may increase.

Parents also felt that the government should provide basic needs (education, food, shelter and clothing) to the helpless families. That this will make children comfortable and they will not take to the streets. This implies that children take to the streets because their needs are not met. If their needs were met, they would stay at home and keep off the streets.

Keeping of the extended family ties.

The parents also felt that the society should not allow culture to get eroded. If African culture is sustained, extended families ties will be built up and step-parents will accept their step-children. Children who become orphans will have their relatives to turn to. Neighbors in any one community will mind the welfare of
one another. Children in the society will thus feel accepted by the whole community and will therefore not consider street life as a better alternative to the hardships they face at home. Parents will also not send their children to the streets to beg for money and bring food home.

Prevention of The Street Children Phenomenon

Views of Parents of Non-street Children

Parents of non-street children gave many varied ways in which the street children phenomenon can be prevented.

Training and employment.

There were parents who suggested that the government should intervene by training and providing jobs to the children who are already on the streets. That this will prevent them from becoming criminals now that they are not going to the school and have nobody to control their upbringing. They also suggested that the members of the public should also give these children jobs so that they can get to know better, honest ways of getting money. One parent suggested:

"It is the responsibility of parents to meet the needs of their children. Parents ought therefore to provide their children the basic
needs. If they do this, the children will not find a reason to take to the streets. And, parents who have children on the streets should be prosecuted and so that other parents will see to it that their children do not also take to the streets. This will definitely prevent children from getting into the streets"

Population control.

There were some parents who claimed that many families in the slum areas are very large especially those headed by single women. They therefore suggested that family planning should be intensified especially among the low income earners and the poor. This will help people have small manageable families. They also claimed that people in the slums had no access to family planning information and that is why their families are large.

The parents also suggested that their should be education on premarital sex to avoid pregnancies by young girls who normally throw away the infants. They also felt that extra-marital sex should be avoided so that there are no children born out of wedlock who are usually rejected in families. It is such children who take to the streets. Besides this, the parents also felt that AIDS awareness should be intensified so that people do not involve themselves in premarital and extramarital sex.

With this, incidence of AIDS orphans who normally take to
the streets will be reduced.

Another parent gave this suggestion:

"You know, there are some people who marry a woman then after some time chase her away or the woman leaves that man. The man will then marry another woman. For men it is not had to find a wife. An old man can even marry a small young girl. A man can even have many wives and is still keeping women outside the marriage. Now, in this marriages, children are born. When the woman leaves her husband, sometimes she goes away with the children. When she gets married to somebody else, she goes with the children because she would not like her children to be ill-treated by another woman. So, when these women get married to somebody else who is not the father of her children, she should take these children back to their father without carrying any one to her new marriage. I say this because step-fathers are worse at mistreating children than step-mothers especially if the children are boys. Usually the worry is that the step-sons will require a place to put up a house one day and that will mean, giving them land. So you see that. Another thing, when a man and a woman break up and the man remarries, this man should treat all his children equally. Whether it is children he had with his previous wife or his present wife, treatment should be the same. If he does this, his present wife will not have a chance to mistreat her step-children. These children will not feel unwanted and will therefore not take to the streets. Let us now look at women. Women who marry men who already have children should treat the children like their own. Relatives of children from broken families should not just sit back and watch. The should stop whoever is treating children badly. So you see it is the responsibility of each person in the whole society".
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that lead to the influx of street children in urban areas. The study also aimed at filling the gap in knowledge on middle-sized towns as concerns street children since studies have been carried out in only the major towns of Kenya i.e Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu.

Research objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1) To identify the basic characteristics of the street children in Kakamega town
2) To establish the socio-economic characteristics of the families of the street children
3) To investigate the activities of the street children
4) To determine why other children in similar family backgrounds do not go to the streets
5) To establish the future goals and aspirations of the street children
6) To establish preventive measures that can be initiated to prevent the street children phenomenon

Methodology

The qualitative mode of inquiry was the main mode employed in this study though the quantitative mode was also used. The sample consisted of 44 subjects i.e twenty (20) street children, ten (10) non-street children, ten (10) parents of non-street children, and four (4) parents of street children. Interview guides and an observation checklist were used to collect data. In so doing, information pertaining to the research objectives was collected. The data were analyzed by use of means, frequencies and percentages for the quantitative data, and steps adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) were used for the qualitative data.

Major findings of the study

The results showed that the age of both the street and non-street children ranged from 8 years to 18 years and none of the street children was below the age of 10 years. The non-street children were both male and female while all the street children were male. No female street
child was identified. Another finding was that all the non-street children were in school, and that none of the street children had gone beyond standard four of primary school education. Fifty percent of the street children had not been to school at all and none of the street children could read.

The age of the parents/guardians of the children ranged from 26 years to 49 years. Of the parents interviewed, parents of non-street children were both male and female while parents of street children were all female. On formal education, one parent of a street child had no education while the other three parents had some formal education. Two parents of non-street children had no formal education at all while the rest had education up to the secondary level. For both categories of parents, the parents with no formal education were female.

Another difference between the parents of street children and those of non-street children was availability of income. Results showed that all parents of street children except one had no source of income (they had no employment), while all the parents of non-street children had a source of income. Thus three of them who were male were civil servants while the rest were self-employed.
On religion, results showed that seventy percent of parents of non-street children and seventy five percent of parents of street children were muslims. All these muslim parents lived in the Majengo and Kambi-somali slums of Kakamega town. These findings showed that slums are dominated by muslims. The slums are quite congested with small rooms occupied by many people. Some houses in the slums are made of mud and roofed with flattened old tins, while others are made of tins all through.

On marital status, one parent of a street child was married, one was widowed, while the rest were single. On the other hand, eighty percent of parents of non-street children were married while twenty percent were single. These single parents were female.

Results also showed that street children were ill-clad, dirty, greasy looking and aggressive. These children also had skin diseases, suffered muscle wasting, and appeared too short for their age. The non-street children were also ill-clad.

Findings indicate that while on the streets, the street children are involved in various activities with the aim of making money. The major activities engaged in by the street children are begging, ferrying luggage, garbage collection and sweeping outside buildings. The non-street children are assigned duties at home by their
parents. These duties include washing dishes, fetching firewood, going to school, cooking food and cleaning the house among others.

Majority of the street children (70%) were from polygamous homes. These were homes in which a man had previously separated with his wife and married other women. It was also found that all the non-street children had both their parents living together and that sixty percent were from polygamous families.

On the socio-economic background of the parents, results showed that all the parents of street children were female. One of them was a civil servant while the rest of the parents/guardians were jobless with no property and had large families which they could not provide for adequately.

As concerns the reasons for children taking to the streets, the results showed that the major reason was poverty. Parents were of low education level and have not been able to secure employment. Due to the rising cost of living, the homes were materially depriving such that children took to the streets to seek alternative ways to satisfy their needs. Some homes, especially the female headed households were morally depriving. The mothers were quite immoral such that their children were forced to leave home. It was also found that some families were
large such that there was overcrowding in the homes. With large families, providing for the members becomes a difficult task for the parents/guardians.

Results also showed that the extended family ties have been eroded. This has led to poor family relationships and instability within the families. There are thus numerous family breakdowns with the children being the victims of circumstance.

**Recommendations**

The street children phenomenon is a 'time bomb waiting to explode' Preventive initiatives should be emphasized because they intervene before the child and family are negatively affected. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:-

1. The family planning program and its impact should be reviewed and the campaign intensified. A major finding of this study was that family planning information does not reach most of the poor people. These poor people bring forth too many children they are not able to provide for. This forces them to engage in illegal activities such as chang'aa brewing and
commercial sex to earn a living. These activities are detrimental to the children.

2. Findings in this study also indicate that most street children were forced out of school because of lack of school fees. Therefore there should be a government policy on cheap or free and compulsory basic education for all children. Early childhood education and vocation skills training should be made affordable. Affordable basic education will immensely contribute to the preventive measures. In addition, basic education will provide skills which will help in creating employment.

3. Results show that a lot of money given to street children is used to purchase glue, cigarettes in addition to food. The money given is not used for the purpose the giver intended. Giving them coins will encourage more children to get to the streets.

4. There should be networking and collaboration of organizations working with street children because all these children have different problems which should be handled differently. These organizations should try different methods of rehabilitation. Some
strategies suggested in the study are institutionalization and reintegration. There is a danger in that children will get encouraged to leave their materially deprived homes for the streets so that they too can be institutionalized. The organizations should counsel both the child and his parents i.e. rescue, rehabilitate, and then reintegrate the children with their families.

5. The staff working with street children should be retrained (in-serviced) to acquire skills such as counselling, psychology, financial management, and communication. Staff in institutions for children are people who have volunteered to assist and thus lack knowledge and skill in the mentioned areas. A program to train staff to work with children in especially difficult circumstances should be started.

6. Family therapists/family counsellors should reach out to families and not wait for family members to present their problems to them. Very few people are aware of services offered by family counsellors.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings, the following conclusions were derived on the factors that lead to the
Suggestion for further research

1. A follow-up research need to be carried out using larger samples in other small towns and in rural areas Kenya.

2. A quantitative study on this same topic should be carried out using bigger random samples to test the family resource management theory and the proposed conceptual framework.


REFERENCES


Howard university press, Massachusetts, U.S.A.


APPENDIX 1

FOR STREET CHILDREN ONLY

A. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
   i). Name (optional) ________________
   ii). Ethnic group ________________
   iii). Residential area (estate) ________________
   iv). Age _____ years
   v). Sex: 1____ male 2____ female
   vi). Number of living siblings: 1____ male 2____ female
   vii). Birth order in the family __
   viii). Do you attend formal school? 1____yes 0____no
   ix). If yes, where do attend school?
   x). If not at what level did you leave school?
      1____ primary 1-4 2____ primary 5-8 3____ secondary 1-4
   xi). Why did you leave? (Interactions with teachers, pupils)
   xii). Can you read or write? (Show something to read).

B. FAMILY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND
   i). Do you know both your parents? 1____yes 0____no
   ii). Where is the original home of your parents? ________
   iii). Are both your parents alive? 1____yes 0____no 3____ i don't know
   vi). If both your parents are alive are they:
      1____ living together 2____ living separately
      3____ other(specify).
   v). If your parents are alive, where do they live?
   vi). If your parents do not stay together, which one of them do
you stay with?
1. mother 2. i stay with friends 3. i stay alone
4. father 5. i stay with relatives 6. other (specify)

vii). Who brought you up?
1. both parents 2. father alone 3. friends
4. mother alone 5. grandparents 6. relatives

viii). Who takes care of you now?
1. nobody/self 2. father alone 3. friends
4. mother alone 5. both parents 6. relatives

ix). What is the occupation of your parents? father___
mother___

x). Does your father have more than one wife?

xi). Describe your interactions with your:
--parents
--sibs
--relatives

C. VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS

i). When did you join the streets? (How long have you been on the streets?).

ii). Why did you join the streets?

iii). What do you do while on the streets on a daily basis?

iv). Have you been asked by someone to do it?

v). How long do you work on the streets on any one given day?

vi). Do you make some money? If so, how much and how do you use it?

vii). Do you like your work?
viii). What problems do face as you do your work?

ix). Do you like staying on the streets? Give reasons for your answer.

x). How do the public treat you when they meet you on the streets?

xi). If you had an alternative place to stay, where would you rather be? Why?

xii). In order of priority, what do you need most in your life?

xiii). Who do you think can best need these needs?

xiv). What do think should be done to meet your needs?

--food: what they eat; where they find it; how often they eat in a day; whether they share the food,

--shelter: where they sleep; safety,

--health: any health problems; where they seek treatment; care.

xv). Do you have a welfare group? How do you help each other?

xvi). What do you plan to do in future (goals, aspiration)?
APPENDIX ii

FOR NON-STREET CHILDREN ONLY

For the non-street children, the sections A and B used in the interview guide for street children, will be employed.

C. VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS

The assumption while carrying out this part of the interview is that a researcher can obtain more realistic accounts of the views and perceptions of the children if he/she leaves the discussion of what street children and other children are like until the end.

i). Have you ever heard about street children?

ii). How did you get to know about them?

iii). What name do you call them.

vi). Why do you think these children stay in the streets?

v). Are you aware of what they do while on the streets? What do they do?

vi). Do you like what they do while they are on the streets? Give reasons for your answer.

vii). Do you like the idea of these children staying on the streets. Give reasons for your answer.

viii). Why are you not on the streets? If you were asked to go and stay on the streets, would you go? Give reasons for your answer.

ix). In order of priority, what do you need in life?
x). How are your needs met?

xi). Who can best meet your needs?

xii). What should be done to meet your needs?

•,CHAH,fJ

For Parents/ Guardians Only

1). Age of mother in years

2). Age of father in years

3). Residence

4). Level of education

1. none 2. primary 3-6 3. college

4. primary 7-12 5. secondary 6. university

5). Marital status

1. single 2. married 3. separated 4. widowed

6). Religion

7). Occupation

--- How much time do you spend at your place of work?

--- How do you fit domestic chores in your time schedule?

--- Do you spend some time with your family members?

8). Net salary per month

1. under 1,000 2. 1,000-1,999 3. 2,000-2,999 4. over 5,000

--- Do you budget? If so how often?

--- Does it work?

--- Do you review your budget?

--- Do you control the budget?

--- Do you save anything? How much?

--- Do price changes affect your expenditure? Explain.

--- Do you get satisfaction out of the budget?

9). Number of children alive: 1. male 2. female

10). Place of birth

11). Do you have debt? 1. yes 0. no
APPENDIX iii

FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS ONLY

i). Age of mother __years. iii). Ethnicity ______

ii). Age of father __years. vi). Residence

v). Level of education

1__none 2__primary 5-8 3__college
4__primary 1-4 5__secondary 6__university

vi). Marital status

1__single 2__married 3__separated 4__widowed

vii). Religion ______

viii). Occupation ____________________

--How much time do you spent at your place of work?
--How do you fit domestic chores in your time schedule?
--Do you spent some time with your family members?

ix). Net salary per month:

1__<Ksh 1000 2__1000-2499 3__2500-5000 4__>Ksh 5000

--Do you budget? If so how often?
--Does it work?
--Do you review your budget?
--Do you control the budget?
--Do you save anything? How much?
--Do price changes affect your expenditure? Explain.
--Do get satisfaction out of the budget?

x). Number of children alive: 1__male 2__female

xi). Home of origin _____________

xii). Do you have land? 1__yes 0__no
If yes, what is the size of your land?
1__<1 acre  2__1-3 acres  3__3-5 acres  4__>5 acres

xiii). Do you have any other property?  1__yes  0__no
If yes, what other property do you have? __________
Where is this property? __________

xiv). Current place of residence __________

xv). Who is the head of the household?

xvi). How many meals do you eat in a day?
Who plans the meals?
What kind of meals are they?

xvii). Do you have any of your children on the streets? If so, how many of them are on the streets?

xviii). Why are they on the streets?

xix). If you have no children on the streets, what do you think makes other children go to the streets?

xx). How can they be kept off the streets?
APPENDIX V

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

What was observed
(children)

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<table>
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i) ill-clad
ii) muscle wasting
iii) glue sniffing
iv) garbage collection
v) begging
vi) ferrying luggage
vii) car washing
viii) stay in "chuom"
ix) feeding on wastes
x) aggressive
xi) other (specify)

Note: 1 = Yes       2 = No