



EXPLORING RISK FACTORS AND LIVING CONDITION OF STREET
CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF ARBA MINCH TOWN, SNNPR

M.A THESIS

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HAWASSA UNIVERSITY, HAWASSA, ETHIOPIA

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HAWASSA ETHIOPIA

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work, has never been presented in this or any other University, and that all the resources and materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

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Advisor's Approval Sheet-1

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “Exploring Risk Factors and Living Condition of Street Children: A Case Study of Arba Minch Town, SNNPR” submitted in partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Arts in Civics and Ethical Education. Mrs. Etete Kelikle Yetemegn with an Id No. CVC12/08 has carried out the research under my supervision. Therefore, we recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirement and hence hereby can submit the thesis to the department for defense examination.

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Examiners' Approval Sheet-2

As members of the Board of Examiners of the final Master's degree open defense, we certify that we have read and evaluated the thesis prepared by Etete Kelikle under the title “Exploring Risk Factors and Living Condition of Street Children: A Case Study of Arba Minch Town, SNNPR.” and recommend that it can be accepted as fulfilling the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with specialization in Civics and Ethical Education.

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Certification of the Final Thesis

I hereby certify that all the corrections and recommendations suggested by the Board of Examiners are incorporated into the final thesis entitled “Exploring Risk Factors and Living Condition of Street Children: A Case Study of Arba Minch Town, SNNPR.” by Etete Kelikle.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

⁰ C	Degree Centigrade
AMCA	Arba Minch City Administration
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIS	Geographic Information System
ILO	International Labor Organization
JJPO	Juvenile Justice Project Office
KM	Kilometer
M.A	Masters of Arts
MoSLA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples Regional State
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nation Education and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

Abstract

The street children have been increasing at alarming rate and escalating problem in the world. The general objective of the study was to explore risk factors and living condition of children is living on the streets in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch Town. To achieve the study objective, a qualitative research design was used to generate data both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews of 20 street children. Collected data were analyzed, summarized, and interpreted using qualitative methods of data analysis. The study revealed that poverty, disagreement with stepmother/father, family divorce, peer pressure, being orphan and lack of alternative were the major push factors while peer pressure, glaring urban life (hope for a change), in search of money, better urban life, hope for better health, and education are the major pull factors. Lack of sufficient health care causes, malaria, and other transmitted diseases are some problems while the disparate feeling of fear, sexual abuse, use drug and alcohol, and fear of rape were the major psychological problems of the street children. It is recommended to offer children with life skill training, mentoring and provide with livelihood options while addressing the misconception towards street children.

Key words: Street children, Push factors, Pull factors, Social and Psychological Impacts.

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, general and specific objectives of the study, basic research question, and significance of the study. It also describes the scope and limitation of the study. Organization of the thesis is part of this chapter.

1.1. Background of the Study

By 2050, the world population is expected to exceed 9 billion people, and nowhere will population growth be more dramatic than in the cities of the developing world (Todaro & Smith, 2012). Indeed, according to United Nations (UN) estimates, the world became more urban than rural in 2008, for the first time in human history (United Nations, 2008; Todaro & Smith, 2012). In this connection, Waghid (2004:68) confirms that the street children phenomenon is an alarming and escalating worldwide problem, representing one of the more pressing issues in child welfare. “No other global child welfare problem is as significant as the loss of human potential experienced by millions of children who are being reared outside of the institutions of family and education in the often perilous street environment”. Thus, dealing with the difficulties of street children among the developing countries had been a critical challenge street children are fast becoming a global phenomenon. There are always difficulties in estimating the exact number of children, who are living on the street (de Benitez, 2011) due to the mobile or on/off nature of street children’s life, and difficulties of counting (day or night), some sleep hidden, and seasonal changes. In this regard, most of the capitals and urban centers of the world become a haven of survival for many children in distress. For instance, LeRoux and Smith pointed out that:

“The street children phenomenon is an alarming and escalating worldwide problem. Street children are maltreated, imprisoned and in some countries kill.... The phenomenon of street children and the offspring of the modern urban environment represent one of humanity’s most complex and serious challenges.” (LeRoux & Smith, 1998:12).

According to UNICEF's widely used definition of street children, street children can be grouped into two main categories. The first group includes those street children who are engaged in some kind of economic activity during the daytime and return to their family home at nighttime. While the second group consists of street children who spend and live their entire time on the street, outside of a normal family environment United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2008). It is evident that for many children and families', movement promises jobs, schools and a better standard of living. The United Nations Human Development Report of 2015 shows that most families, who migrate, both internally and internationally, reap significant gains in their form of better income, access to education, health services and improved prospects for their children.

Many children live and work in the city street throughout the world. Still many choose street life as the alternative to poverty or violence even death. The United Nation Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) noted that the phenomena of street children are not simply the consequence of poverty. Rather the driving factors for the movement of street children can be seen from various perspectives, including, rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, population explosion, unemployment, and insufficient income, family disintegration at home while the maladjustment of formal education systems leading to school failure drops out as the cause for the problem (UNICEF, 2012). Moreover, as Hutchison (2009) identifies, the growing gaps between the rich and poor, poverty, conflict, famine, natural disasters, family breakdowns, and the increase of domestic violence are among the reasons given for the increasing numbers of street children worldwide.

Addressing the needs and problems faced by these children is a serious challenge. In recent years, global action on children's movement has mainly focused on trafficked children. While extremely important, the exclusive focus on the crime of child trafficking has concealed the reality of how many children are moving across the world and why. The exclusive focus on the crime of child trafficking and the limited and ineffective responses has disguised the truth at stake. The characteristic, nature and feature of the problem of street children in Ethiopia have similar trend with the other African countries (Abebe, 2009; Diriba, 2015; Kebede, 2015; Alem & Laha, 2016).

Even though studies have carried out street children in different parts of Ethiopia (Abebe, 2009; Diriba, 2015; Kebede, 2015; Alem & Laha, 2016); however, the number of street

children was not well documented and the exact figure is debatable due to the nature of street children. However, the level of urbanization coupled with the increasing urban population contributed to the increase in the street children.

As a result, the movement of street children tends to be seen as problematic, both in academic and policy debates. However, this position reflects a simplistic view of while children migrate and underestimate the complexity of the street children migration processes. Despite a one-directional understanding of the children migration processes, the reality reveals that children migration processes are the result of continuous interchanges of various socio-economic factors that characterize spatially and temporally.

According to Arba Minch Town Administration (AMTA) (2017), the city administration had 119,666 populations, of which 62, 658 (52.36 %) and 57,008 (47.63%) were male and female population, respectively. It is one of the *Zonal* towns found in the Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPR). The city administration has four sub-cities/*Kifileketemas*¹, namely, Sikeklla, Secha, Abaya and Nechisar. All the sub-cities have three *Kebeles*²except Abaya sub-city, which has only two *Kebeles*. Children in the town lack access to basic needs in any corner of the town, suffer from the socio-economic exclusions and pervasive poverty that affect the lives and livelihoods (Dejene, 2014; Kebede, 2015).

Apart from this, the town is a tourist destination, which invites and increase children into street life. On this account, the study focused on such has a large number of children who are on the street and have been facing number problems due to a multitude of reasons. In most rural primary schools of the zone, particularly in the town dropout has been increasing at an alarming rate despite the efforts of access to primary education by the government. Therefore, this research aimed to identify the push factors, pull factors, and the social and psychological impacts on the street children in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch Town Administration.

¹ *Kifileketema* refers to the second administrative unit next to the town administration, which has its authority to handle issues that come under it. It is also used interchangeably with sub-city for official purposes.

² *Kebele* is the lowest administrative unit, which is accountable for *Kifileketema*.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Following 1979 of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report on the number of street children in the "international years of world child", the street life of children as a global phenomenon has been a focus of attention for aid agencies and governments (Lalor, 1999). There are always difficulties in estimating the exact number of children who are living on the street (de Benitez, 2011; Panter-Brick, 2002) due to the mobile or on/off nature of street children's life, and difficulties of counting (day or night), some sleep hidden, and seasonal changes. As to Aptekar and Stoecklin (2014:1), the numerical figures can be the other contentious issue because of mixing different categories of children who are living and working on the streets such as:

"children of the street", "children on the street", "homeless children", "abandoned children", "children in conflict with the law", "children in especially difficult circumstances", "exploitive child labor" and other categories that might be included or excluded from the counting of children in street situations."

The number of children in the world has now reached a peak of about 1.9 billion. They represent 26 % of the world population. The absolute number will be about the same in 2050, but then children will make up 21 % of the world population (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

Similar to many developing countries, the figure of street children in Ethiopian cities is progressively increasing owing to the complex socio-economic and natural factors (Kebede, 2015). However, the estimate in Ethiopian is difficult due to the lack of comprehensive statistical information on street children; and this makes understanding the magnitude of the problem of street children challenging. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs report that some 150,000 children live on the streets in Ethiopia of which about 60,000 live in the capital (Kebede, 2015). However, UNICEF and others estimate the number to be much higher. UNICEF (2006) reveals that the issue might be far more serious, with nearly 600,000 street children nationwide and above 100,000 in Addis Ababa. Kebede (2015) agrees that the number of street children is growing in many major urban centers in Ethiopia.

As stated in several studies, like Lalor (1999), Abebe (2009), Diriba (2015), Kebede (2015), and Alem and Laha (2016) in Ethiopia the contributing factors that lead children to join the

life of the street are neglect of children, abuse, poverty, unprecedented population growth, and recurrent displacement as a result of drought and famine.

Regardless of this, over 100,000 children living on the street of Ethiopia cities (UNICEF, 2012). The International Office of Migration estimates that at least 1.2 million children are victims of trafficking in Ethiopia every year (UNICEF, 2012). This is mainly because the persistent vulnerabilities of street children to various socio-economic challenges, urban centers of Ethiopia provide a typical case in point and Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world with human development index ranks 174 out of 188 countries as reported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2017). Ethiopia faces complex challenges of food insecurity, overpopulation, political instability, ethnic conflict, and large-scale out-migration flows, land scarcity, and lack of agricultural resources, ecological degradation, drought, and poverty are historically among the major causes of children to migrate to urban centers in Ethiopia (Berhanu & White, 2000; Zeleke, Asfaw, Tolosa, Alemu, & Trutmann, 2008).

Arba Minch is one of the growing cities in Ethiopia host aging large number the problem of street children like other big cities in the country. Many are not more than 13 year's age and they are always in a group or if not in a group, they are found sleeping in the street (Dejene, 2014; Kebede, 2015). It is assumed that most of these children are involved in begging, pick-pocketing, drug trafficking and child prostitution. The children mostly belong to rural and countryside and they have run away due to various domestic problems in the village. The family problems, lack of education, food, security and they ran away due to poverty to take shelter in the street of the town.

Some empirical studies were conducted in Arab Minch town for example, Dejene (2014), Kebede (2015), and other contexts. Lalor (1999), Abebe (2009), Diriba (2015), Kebede (2015), Alem and Laha (2016), Chimdessa and Cheire (2016) about street children. The studies were comprehensive in terms of the methodology applied, data used and level of analysis. However, the available studies focus more on regional and sub-regional scales with emphasis on risk factors of street children and the impacts in quantitative ways.

Nevertheless, studying the situation of street children demands to understand the socio-economic, cultural as well as contextual push and pull factors for children migration to urban centers like Arba Minch town. Even the recent studies of Arba Minch City Administration

have focused on identifying hot spot areas, the directions, and transits as well as destinations for children on move (Dejene, 2014; Kebede, 2015). In 2017 alone, estimated 450-500 street children were reported to live the streets of the study sub-city-Sikella³. Moreover, there are no recent and accurate statistical data to understand or describe the exact number of street children in Aba Minch, but the number of street children is increasing in number.

Although their number is increasing from time to time as far as the knowledge of the researcher concerned there is no study conducted to show the problem in the study. Thus, this study looked into the gaps in the existing studies and may contribute to fill the gaps in the study area context. Therefore, this study helped to show the gaps in previous studies and contribute through alternative ways to address their problems in the study area. Therefore, there is a need to show the existing reality of children's living in the street of Arba Minch has necessitated this study. Given this, the research aimed to explore the push factors, pull factors, and the social and psychological problems face the street children in the study area.

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to explore risk factors and living conditions of children is living on the streets in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch Town.

1.3.4. Specific Objectives

To attain the general objective of this thesis, it outlined the following specific objectives.

1. To assess the push factors of street children to the street;
2. To assess the factors that pull street children to be on the street in the study area;
3. To investigate the social problems of street children;
4. To explore the psychological problems that street children face owing to their living conditions on the street.

³ The Socio-economic Profile of Arba Minch Town Administration (2017). Arab Minch, SNNPR.

1.4. Basic Research Questions

To address objectives of the study, the following key research questions were designed.

1. What are the push factors that motivate children to live on the street of Arba Minch town, particularly in Sikella sub-city?
2. What are the pull factors that cause children to live on the street in Sikella sub-city?
3. What are the major social problems that street children face owing to their living condition on the street in the study area?
4. What are the major psychological problems that street children face owing to their living condition on the street?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Since the problem of street children in Ethiopia has been rapidly increasing and remain a rampant problem. This study can help both governmental (Arba Minch Town Administration and Children, Youth and Women Affairs Office) and NGOs working on the issue by revealing the factors that push and pull children to live on the street, which would help design intervention strategies to save the lives of children living on the street of Arba Minch. The study results may serve as a stepping-stone for some other similar studies in the study area and other contexts.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study was conducted to explore risk factors and living conditions of children living on the streets in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch Town. It was chosen since most of the street children live and work in *Sekella* sub-city due to its proximity to the market center and better access to social services than the other sub-city. The study was limited to exploring only the push factors, pull factors, and the social and psychological impacts of children living on the streets in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch Town. Methodologically, the study merely applied a qualitative approach to answer the research questions. Moreover, due to time and budget limitations, the study focused on the topic, in general, and the study area, in particular.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The study had two major limitations. The first one was the lack of updated figures on the street children, which was difficult to document the exact number of street children both

nationally and locally. Nevertheless, the researcher tried to explore the existing studies and referred government and non-governmental organizations reports to get the overall figures of the street children in Ethiopia, in general and the study area, in particular. The other limitation was the identification of “on-street children” from “of street children” due to their similarity in many attributes and contacting those street children.

Regardless of this, the researcher was able to identify who is the “on-street children” children from the “of street children” through proving methods to address the study objectives. Undertaking the FGDs and taking some of the pictures with the street children were challenging as they relate it with the wrong perceptions that their photos have been sources of money for some people, hence, they refused not to take photos. However, with the search from multiple data sources and allocating adequate time for fieldwork, and with the informed consent of the children for the interviews and photos, the above-mentioned problems were minimized to address the study objectives.

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five independent yet interrelated parts. The first part is given to present the introduction where, it highlights on the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, basic research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, and organization of the study. Part two focus on the review of related literature and theoretical framework. The chapter consisted of the concepts of the street children, theories on street children, experiment of street children living conditions, street children policy, empirical literature review, and conceptual framework of the study.

Part three emphasizes mainly on the broader methodological approaches. This chapter details with the description of the study area, research design, case study approach, sample design and techniques, source and types of data, methods of data collection, data transcription and analysis, and ethical consideration in the field. Section four presents the study result and discussion, including, profile of the street children, pushing factors of street children in the study area, pulling factors of street children in the study area, major social problems of street children, and major psychological problems of street children. The last section presents the summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Introduction

This section emphasis on the literature that defines explains and describes the concept of “street children” defined differently depending on the contexts, theories on street children, street children living conditions discussed from global, African and Ethiopian perspectives. It also discusses on the street children policies, including the Ethiopian experiences. Finally, it summarizes the causes of street children, social and psychological problem that face street children and the conceptual framework of the study.

2.2. Conceptual Literature Review

2.2.1. Concept of Street Children

So long, there is no universal definition of “street children”, broad and unclear definitions are subject to several interpretations (Benitez, 2011:107; De Moura, 2002:355). This is because the terms are used to denote children living on the streets that differ depending on the geographical area the study being undertaken (De Moura, 2002:354). For instance, some studies in North America and Western Europe use the term “homeless” interchangeably with “street children”, while countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America use the term “street children” (De Moura, 2002:354; Le Roux & Smith, 1998:2).

Moreover, various scholars and international organizations working with children who live on the streets take different opinions on what the concept of street children delineates. For example, relevant questions asked reading whether the term states to those who work and/or spend days and nights outside their homes, or to those who return to their homes after spending the whole day on the streets (Iqbal, 2008:201). From the review, it is evident that different scholars define stet children to defend differently to fit their purposes. Hence, the following definitions emanated from the literature.

Schurink (1993:5) defines street children as:

“ A street child is a boy or girl who is under the age of eighteen and who left his/her home environment part-time or permanently because of problems at home and or in school, or to try to alleviate those problems,

and who spend most of his/her time unsupervised on the street as part of a subculture of children who live an important communal life and who depend on themselves and each other and not on an adult, for the provision of physical and emotional needs such as food, clothing, nurturance, direction and socialization.”

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1994:9):

A “street child” is any girl or boy for whom the street has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults. They are either children on the street or children of the street.”

Barnette (2004:5) defines street children as “Children who spend a considerable amount of their time in the streets of urban centers to fend for themselves and their families and are inadequately protected, supervised and cared for by a responsible adult person”.

Cosgrove (1990:192) has used two dimensions to define street children: the degree of family involvement and the amount of deviant behavior. According to Cosgrove, a street child is "any individual under the age of majority whose behavior is predominantly at variance with community norms, and whose primary support for his/ her development needs is not a family or family substitute." “Street children are those who have abandoned or have been abandoned by their families, schools and immediate communities before they are eighteen years of age, and drifted into a nomadic street life” (Chetty, 1997:22).

UNICEF has widely used definition of street children sees from two board categories. The first group includes those street children who are engaged in some the kind of economic activity during the daytime and return to their family home at nighttime. While the second group consists of street children who spend and live their entire time on the street, outside of a normal family environment (UNICEF, 2008). In other words, the term “children of the street” refer to those who live on the streets without adult supervision, while “children on the street” refers to those who beg and do menial work on the streets and return home to contribute towards their families’ livelihood (UNICEF, 2008).

Furthermore, Panter-Brick (2002:150) asserts that researchers and organizations providing services to these children find it difficult to uphold the typology of children “of the street” (those who have access to their families but make the streets their home) and “on the street” (those who return at night to their families) established by UNICEF to differentiate street-based or home-based street children. In this study, the term “street children” is used to refer to children who work and/or sleep on the streets. Such children may or may not necessarily be adequately supervised or directed by responsible adults and include the two co-existing categories referred to by UNICEF as those “on the street” and those “of the street”. Therefore, the definition given by the Schurink (1993:5) was used as a working definition of street children.

2.3. Theoretical Literature Review

2.3.1. Theories on Street Children

Many theories are available to explain the situation of street children, which in turn depends on the nature and objectives of the study. For this study, social studies of children and childhood, which is also called an emergent paradigm that identify children as active social agents’ worthy of study in their own right (Prout & James, 1997) was used.

The emergent paradigm pursues to give a voice to children (Qvortrup, 2015). Consequently, as Hardman (2001) suggests children must be studied in their own right and not just as receptacles of adult teaching. The social studies of children and childhood draw inspiration from a wide range of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, geography, and anthropology, and gives a methodological direction as to how children should be studied (Woodhead, 2009). This emergent paradigm recognized the capacity of the child to exercise agency, which includes the lived experiences of children in their everyday lives (Qvortrup, 1994).

Some of the tenets of the emergent paradigm, as discussed by Prout and James (1997) include understanding childhood, which constructed based on the ideas of the society and the ideas vary with time and space in different societies. The emergent paradigm views children as active agents or being capable of exercising agency on matters that concern their development (Prout & James, 2015; Qvortrup, 2015). Based on the perspectives of the paradigm, four approaches have been proposed as to studying children and understanding childhood (Jenks, 2009).

- The first approach is studying children as socially constructed. The approach views that what childhood comprise are socially constructed knowledge and ideas about societies and varies from place to place.
- The second approach is studying children using tribal child approach. In this view, children should not be seen as having the misguided or an irrational understanding of the rules of their society. In this approach, children must be seen as an autonomous being in the societies where they live, have their own rules, rituals, and folklore.
- The third approach is the understanding of children as a minority group. It indicates that studying children as a group who are subject to discrimination and are marginalized just like women and ethnic minorities. It is universalistic, differentiated and global because it suggests that in all societies, children are marginalized and exploited at various levels to a various degree.
- The fourth is the social structural child approach that is a perspective that children live within the social structure. It believes childhoods are manifested differently, through the various political, social, and economic structures at the places where they live.

Given the topic of the study deals with the situation of street children, the push and pull factors and the social and psychological problems, they face owing to their living condition on the street, it is imperative to use the basic tenets of this new emerging paradigm, which is crucial essential from a different point of views. Hence, beginning from the methodology, the paradigm was employed in order to explore the situation of street children directly from their own point of views, knowledge, and experiences. It also helped to present children's views on issues that affect their own lives as social actors and participants in their social world as well as in the formation of their own childhoods.

2.3.2. Experiment of Street Children Living Conditions

2.3.2.1. Worldwide Context

Never before has the world had so many children. Children need protection, must have access to quality education to reach their potential, but children can also play critical roles as agents of change in their families and communities. For example, the number of children in the world has now reached a peak of about 1.9 billion. They represent 26 % of the world population (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). The absolute number

will be about the same in 2050, but then children will make up 21 % of the world population (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Moreover, it is argued that a large share of the world's children lives in poverty and will be severely affected by sustainability problems (Von Braun, 2017). It is evident that children's potential of making use of their right to participation can be constrained by several factors such as exclusion and inequality. Wealth-based inequality is a global phenomenon. Children need cognitive stimulus to fully unfold their capacities, and this stimulus is often not given in poor households (The World Bank 2015).

It is also noted that inequalities can also be found between children living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas. In many low-income countries, child labor is a rural phenomenon (Admassie, 2003).

2.3.2.2. African Experiences

Turn through a market or past a hotel or at the roadside of any major street in the center of most African capitals, towns or urban areas and you cannot fail to see them (Kopoka, 2000). The problem of street children is a growing problem worldwide, more so in African countries. The presence of large numbers of children sometimes as young as three on the streets in urban areas was virtually unheard of prior to the transition to a market economy (Kopoka, 2000). It is now a growing problem in most African cities and towns. For example, the phenomenon of children living on the streets is experienced in South Africa as a psychosocial–educational challenge (Moolla, 2012:1). As mentioned by Rydberg (2006:1-4), many children living on the streets suffer as they are constantly exposed to drug abuse, sickness, violence, and hunger. Moreover, Schimmel (2006:227) noted that these experiences of stigma can cause children living on the streets to internalize the negative perceptions that members of the public have of them.

In Egypt, street children are often perceived and treated like dangerous criminals, public enemies or even “rubbish people” by their surrounding societies (Scheper-Hughes, 2006: 154). These stigmatizing, criminalizing and sometimes dehumanizing sentiments contribute to a hostile political and legislative climate in regards to the street children, as well as having a more direct impact on an individual level (Scheper-Hughes, 2006, Wernham, 2004: 22-24).

In Tanzania, it is typical to see children between the ages of 10 and 18 meandering around on the streets taking part in distinctive activities for survival. It is assessed that there are around 800 street included children in Moshi (Mkombozi Statistics Report, 2011) despite the fact that the figures could be higher or lower because of the absence of national information.

In general, street children face untold hardship and danger on the streets. The lack of food, clean water, and adequate health care. Living and 'working' on the streets exacts a terrible toll on street children. They are often prey to every physical and moral danger and as they grow older, they often become a danger to others. After such precarious childhoods, most of them are condemned to spend their lives excluded from mainstream society (Kopoka, 2000; Scheper-Hughes, 2006; Moolla, 2012).

2.3.2.4. Ethiopian Experiences

According to De Oliveira (2000), sexual abuse, violence in the neighborhood, abandoned by parents, thrown out or asked to leave, death or diseases of one or both parents, peer pressure, violence at home, became attracted to or comfortable with the street life, physical abuse and lack of a sense of belonging were found to be causes of why street children go to the street. After starting living and working on the streets, street children are disproportionately affected due to extreme poverty and living conditions and particularly vulnerable to different forms of sexual abuses. They remain disadvantaged for their lives because they lack experience of life in normal society (Beyene, 1995). Similarly, Wernham (2004) avowed, street children are more frequently at risk of sexual abuse than other children. They are easy targets to be abused because they are young, often small, poor, and ignorant of their rights and frequently do not have responsible adults to look out for them. According to UNICEF, street children are the casualties of widespread poverty, rapid population growth, loss of traditional values, domestic violence, physical and mental abuse, and recurrent displacement because of civil war, drought, and famine. Moreover, the numbers of street children increase as they have lost their parents to illness often associated with HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2007:1).

In Ethiopia, the growing number of street children is one of the most serious urban social problems. Street children in Ethiopia have become a countrywide epidemic, with over 100,000 children living/working on the streets of Ethiopia's cities (Kebede, 2015). It was estimated that the number of street children was approximately 200,000 who are working and living on the streets in urban areas, of which 150,000 reside in Addis Ababa (UNICEF, 2007

p.1). It was also said that about 70% of Ethiopian's street children live with their families in slum areas of the major cities, while the rest live alone on the streets, with no care and support Juvenile Justice Project Office (JJPO) (2005: 33).

2.3.3. Street Children Policy

2.3.3.1. World Wide

There have been many initiatives to protect the right of children on a global scale, which were drafted and ratified at different times. For example, the movements to save the child from exploitation and abuse at workplaces due to the industrial revolution started in France and Europe at the beginning of the 20th century (Child Rights History n.d.). Development of child protection legislation, schooling, and construction of separate institutions including the juvenile courts for delinquent children was undertaken during this time (Bhakry, 2006).

Regarding the United Nations, in 1946 the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations recommended that the Geneva Declaration be reaffirmed as a sign of commitment to the cause of children. UNICEF was set up to care for the children of the world affected by not only war but even the economic and political upheavals. The UN General Assembly adopted the 'The Rights of the Child' on December 10, 1959, through its resolution 1386 (XIV) (Declaration of the Rights of the Child n.d.) that states that the child by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth. The Rights of the Child have also been recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, a legally binding International Treaty was set up to ensure that all the children – persons up to 18 years of age, were given their due rights. The Member States must incorporate changes in their respective policies, legislations, and programs to provide welfare, care, and protection to children. Committee on the Rights of the Child (Committee on the Rights of the Child 1991) monitors the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols.

The legislations enacted by the world community are required to be incorporated and integrated by the member states while making laws, rules, policies and schemes for child welfare. Main legislations include: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles deprived of their Liberty, 1990; UN Standard

Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules), 1985 United Nations Guidelines for the Protection of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines), 1990; Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Inter-Country Adoption, 1993.

2.3.3.2 Street Children Policy in Ethiopia

In 1991, Ethiopia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Following the ratification, the government of Ethiopia has undertaken many activities geared towards ensuring the protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of children (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoSLA, 2005). It was domesticated through national legislation (Proclamation No 10/1992) and then translated into 11 nationality languages for dissemination. Further, other conventions such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ratification proclamation No283/ 2002) and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor were ratified by the government. The children affairs department within MoSLA is the leading organ to coordinate and spearhead the translation of the international commitment into concrete actions and results. Apart from this, under the supervision of the Federal and Regional labor and social affairs organs, child rights committees were set up at all levels to oversee the implementation of the Convention on the country (MoSLA, 2005).

According to MoSLA (2005), vis-à-vis violence against children, there is no one comprehensive law dealing with all types and aspects of violence. Dealing the violence involves multisectoral thinking. Several laws address the different forms of violence against children. Being the supreme law of the land, the Federal Constitution provides the basis for the protection of children from violence. Firstly, it domesticates all international human right instruments, which Ethiopia has ratified by stating ‘all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land’. (Article 9(4) of the FDRE Constitution). Secondly, it has incorporated a specific provision on the rights of children (MoSLA, 2005).

From the same source, family law is taken as the major law-favoring children. In the earlier regimes, there was one family law found incorporated in the Ethiopian Civil Code of 1960 (MoSLA, 2005). Nevertheless, regions and city governments in the country have issued their respective family laws as mandated by the FDRE Constitution. In this regard, children are

protected from economic exploitation by the labor law (Proclamation No. 377/2003). A proclamation that sets the minimum age for work as 14 categorizes workers of ages 14-18 as young workers. With this assertion, young workers are entitled to special protective measures. They can work for maximum of seven working hours per day compared to the eight working hours for adults. Moreover, the law prohibits the employment of young workers for night work, overtime work, and work on weekly rest days or public holidays. There are also list of work activities not allowed for young workers.

Finally, there are also varied customary and religious norms operating in the country. The legal status of these norms is made clear by article 34(5) of the Federal Constitution that allows adjudication of disputes relating to personal and family laws in accordance with religious or customary laws on condition that both parties have consented thereto (MoSLA, 2005). Although these are, some of the policies and laws that protects and stands wrong doings and acts against children, the problem that child, in general and street children, in particular are rampant.

2.4. Empirical Literature Review

2.4.1. Empirical Literature on the Causes of Street Children

It is not difficult to isolate the factors responsible for the prevalence and practice of the phenomenon of street children. Family poverty, family disorganization, maltreatment and abuse of children at home, labor demand suitable to the children in the urban informal and unorganized sectors and the lack of interest in education in these children are the common and specific factors that compel the children to be on the streets. Needless to add, the phenomenon is a product of the larger problem of child maltreatment that includes *inter alia*, child abuse, neglect and a variety of unhealthy patterns of parent-child relations at home. However, the general assumption is that poverty causes their families to disintegrate and these results in street children phenomenon (Ayub, Kumar, & Shora, 2014; Chimdessa and Cheire, 2016; Hansen, Jima, Abbas, & Abia 2016). The adverse family situation such as the death of parents, the presence of stepmothers and domestic violence were the leading factors for children leaving home, while poor household, economic condition and the desire for modern consumerism were the other important reasons. Street children are escaping to the street life are due to their family violence, alcoholism and other forms of abusive behavior within their families (Naterer & Godina, 2011:26).

Studies also point out the two important factors are associated with the movement of street children-push and pull factors. As explained by Besnet (2010), the common push and pull factors that bring children to the street. The push factors are those problem especially family situation which make home life unattractive which may include poverty, big family size, family violence, abuse, school abandonment and inadequate parental guidance (Graham, 2011; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016), while pull factors are those factors which make street life very attractive and encourage children to leave home and includes desire for independence, financial security, enthusiasm and glamour of living in cities, and some hope of raising one's standard of living (Besnet, 2010). From the reviews, the main reason, which prompts street children to run away from home are generally described as; broken families and irresponsible parents; torture by family members and step-parents; excessive control by parents; large family size; poverty; less wages or low income; father's drunkenness; disinterest in studies; parents' illicit relationship, actions and practices; anxiety to earn and spend lavishly, according to their whims and fancies; desire to live in towns and cities; and desire to do things independently without restriction (Besnet, 2010; Graham, 2011; Belay, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Fikre, 2016; Kebede, 2018).

2.4.2. Social and Psychological Problem that face Street Children

2.4.2.1. Social Problem⁴

Poverty and illiteracy: They lack basic resources to sustain a healthy living. They usually have no financial means to buy food, which is crucial for their development. Street children cannot afford to go to school unless supported by non-formal services provided by NGOs, etc. Even where schools are free, many children cannot afford to buy uniforms, shoes, and books. Since they live in places where they are not adequately protected from the environment, they rarely have access to facilities that they need for hygiene and sanitation, such as toilets and clean and safe water supply. They are, therefore, more vulnerable to health

⁴ The term "*social problem*" is usually taken to refer to *social* conditions that disrupt or damage society-crime, racism, and the like. ... It focuses on how and why people come to understand that some condition ought to be viewed as a *social problem*, that is, how they socially construct *social problems*.

problems resulting from poor sanitation (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen *et al.*, 2016).

Discrimination and lack of accessible resources: When civic authorities plan towns, cities, etc. street children's plight tends to be excluded from the planning process resulting in their not having facilities to get medical, educational, recreational and vocational resources. They face problems such as lack of vaccinations; poor health, illiteracy, and they cannot acquire skills needed for finding jobs (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Hansen, 2016).

Violent Environment: The Street is an unprotected environment and street children are exploited frequently. In some places, street children may even face the possibility of physical injuries or death from violence. Common sources of violence are the police, gangs, drug peddlers, pimps, other street children, families and sexual partners (Diriba, 2015; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen *et al.*, 2016).

Stigmatization: Society usually perceives street children as difficult children who are out there to cause trouble. In general, the public thinks that street children are uncontrollable and violent, have substance use problems, have no morals, have lost all the ability to feel emotions such as love and that they turn into terrorists and revolutionaries. They tend to be unsympathetic to the street children's plight. This negative attitude may be a result of the society's inability to care for its people (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Hansen, 2016; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

2.4.2.2. Psychological Problem⁵

A Stressful Past: Many situations and events that pushed these children onto the street in the first place (like natural disasters, manmade disasters, exploitation, and conflicts) may have a lasting impact on their well-being. For example, the family conflict that pushed the child onto the streets continues to deprive the child of emotional and material support for years afterward (Bibars, 1998; Kopoka, 2000; Lemessa, 2005; Diriba, 2015).

A Transitory Lifestyle: Street children in some large cities move frequently from district to district or between cities. Sometimes they do this by choice, but at other times they are forced

⁵ The term "psychological disorder or problem" is sometimes used to refer to what is more frequently known as mental disorders or psychiatric disorders. Mental disorders are patterns of behavioral or psychological symptoms that impact multiple areas of life. These disorders create distress for the person experiencing these symptoms.

to move to hide from the police, welfare authorities, gangs, and drug peddlers. This type of lifestyle leads to problems of social isolation and loneliness and difficulties in developing emotional attachments to special individuals (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Hansen *et al.*, 2016).

Mental Health: The emotional health, the loss or shortage of an adequate kinship with an adult caregiver presents the greatest dilemma for most of the street children. The stress that street children experience makes them vulnerable to emotional problems, psychiatric disorders, and learning difficulties. They do not receive adequate care for these conditions. Once again, some of these psychological difficulties may be evident before the onset of substance abuse, although psychological functioning often worsens over time in individuals with substance use disorders (McWhirter, 2004; Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

Substance Use: Many street children are involved in harmful use of psychoactive substances. This can lead to overdose, increase the chance of accidents, violence, unwanted pregnancy, and unprotected sex. Substance use and abuse are at the forefront of societal problems. It is a pervasive problem, affecting directly or indirectly the overwhelming majority of persons. Over time, the continued use of substances can lead to complications such as brain and liver damage (Naterer & Godina, 2011; Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

Belay (2014) intended at exploring working experiences of street working children in Addis Ababa. He applied a qualitative approach to address the study objectives. The study revealed that street children engage in street occupations that they assumed affluent. They construct themselves as workers who are different from street children. Streets are constructed as workplaces. Children's dignity and self-worth are situated in their occupation. They consider their ability to pay their daily experiences. Their culture is not different from the mainstream society.

Dejene (2014) studied the challenges of life for children on the move from the highlands of Gamo with particular focus on practical push factors, the route and destination of trafficking and the challenges they face while on the move. He used mixed methods to generate both qualitative and quantitative data and present the results qualitatively and quantitatively.

Kebede (2015) investigated the overall situation of street children living in Hawassa City and assessed the role of NGOs in addressing their socio economic problems. He found out that

the majority of street children in the study area were males and different causal factors have contributed for their streetism but poverty was found to be one of major factors to push children to move to the street.

Diriba (2015) studied to justify family problem as the contributing factor for streetism in Nekemte town. He employed a cross-sectional survey design where data was collected from 100 street children and other 10 concerned living in Nekemte Town. The study reported that the highest proportions of street children were from instable families (53.2%) and the majorities (51.6 %) of their parents were engaged in low-income activities with monthly income of less than 530 Ethiopian birr.

Fikre (2016) aimed at exploring the street children's social world in Addis Ababa City Administration. He applied a qualitative approach to address the study objectives. The study out those children in the street situation are not passive victims because of living on the streets or 'living outside of their proper space' with the absent adults to guide and control. Rather street children's peer friendship and group life together with their street subculture enables children in accessing support to survive, and provides space to exercise their freedom in forming their own street subculture without adults' control.

Chimdessa and Cheire (2018) assessed to point out the experience of sexual and physical exploitation and its determinant factors among street children in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, using a phenomenological qualitative method. Deaths of parents/unhealthy relationship of extended families forced them be on a street. Thus, flee to street to search for work was the main reason for joining to a street. Street children are vulnerable to sexual and physical exploitations on a daily basis. For street children, street is the world characterized by misery deprivation, physical, verbal and sexual abuse and become daily victims of violence.

Finally, Kebede (2018) examined the impact of urban poverty on child's school participation in the study area. The finding show that poverty (proxied by family per capita income) has a slightly weaker negative impact on the likelihood of a child works full time relative to schooling-only category, as do the engagement of household head on stable income generating economic sectors.

The empirical studies are multiple in terms of methods employed (qualitative, quantitative and mixed), study contexts (urban and rural settings), emphasis (push and pull factors,

impacts of the street life among others. However, most of the studies have emphasized on bigger cities such as Addis Ababa and Hawassa. Only Dejene (2014) and Kebebe (2018) assessed about children in the study area context, focusing on impact of urban poverty, on one hand and challenges of life for children on the move from the highlands areas, on the other hand. Some other focused on the quantitative analysis of the life of street children. None of the above studies can explain the situation of street children, push and pull factors as well as the social and psychological impacts of children in Arba Minch town. Hence, this study aimed to contribute to fill the knowledge gaps between this research and the previous studies.

2.5. Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this study, the push factors⁶ such as war, poverty, drought, famine, divorce, and drop out of school (Bibars, 1998; Kopoka, 2000; Lemessa, 2005; Diriba, 2015). On the other hand, the urban pull factors⁷ for street children include, urbanization, growth of urban centers, peer pressure, employment opportunities, better social and cultural situations (Ayub, *et al.*, 2014); Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen, *et al.*, 2016) (Figure 2.1).

In terms of the social and psychological effects on the lives of street children in the urban centers, it is anticipated that child labor, alcohol and drug addiction, prostitution, abduction, exploitation and work under harsh environments (Ayub *et al.*, 2014); Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen *et al.*, 2016). Since they are engaged in livelihood activities, such as lottery, shoe shining, loading, and unloading of vehicles begging, and car wash among others being under the age of 18 years. Due to this, they are highly exposed to abuse of their labor and face various challenges such as sickness and homelessness.

Therefore, the consequence of street children on the social life may create crime, commit, robbing, theft, bad ethically wrong actions, conceived as bad models for children at school, and live with families (Naterer & Godina, 2011; Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016). In view of this, this study explored the situation of street children in Arba Minch town and thereby assessed the push and pull factors affecting the lives of street children in the study area context.

⁶ The push factors are factors that compel a person/a child, due to different reasons, to leave that place and go to some other place.

⁷ The pull factors are factors which attract the migrants to an area.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

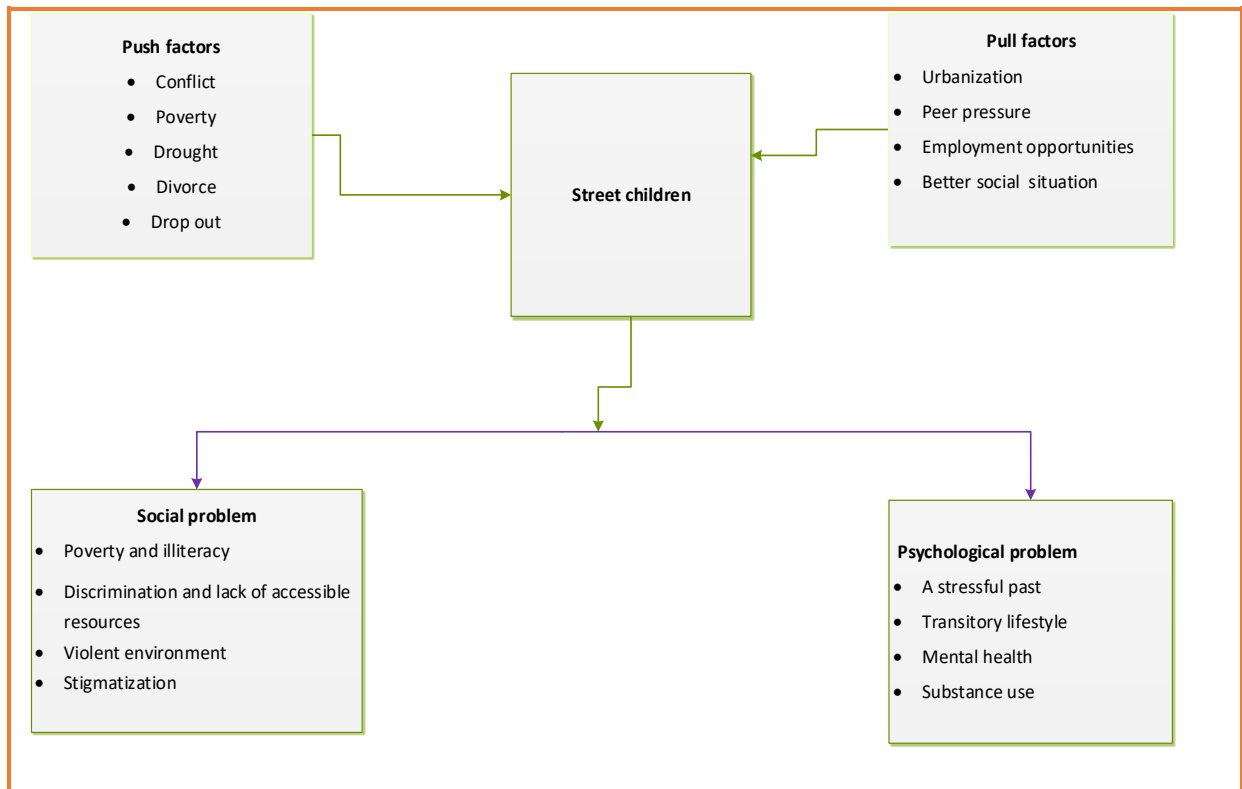


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the study

Source: Own construction, 2019

Chapter Three

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the overall methodology of the study. The first section presents a description of the study area. The second section highlights the research design and the case study approach. The sample design and approaches, types and sources of the data, methods of data collection are described in section three. The final section presents the data transcription, discussion, and ethical considerations in the field.

3.2. Description of the Research Area

The study was conducted in Arba Minch town, which is one of the *Zonal* towns found in Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPR). The town was established in 1963 with the original ethnolinguistic name called “*Garo*”. The name “*Garo*” is derived from the Gamogna language. Meaning “a spiritual power place where the communities gather and scarify animals believing that it will save the life of the communities from various risks” (AMTA, 2017). Later it has got its current name, Arba Minch, literally mean “the 40 springs” being derived from its natural endowments of the forty springs found in the dense forest and South of what is locally called “yeegizabeher dildi” or “God’s Bridge”, which connected the two neighboring Lakes (Abaya and Chamo). It is the center of Arba Minch *Zuriya Woreda* and the current Gamo *Zone*. It is located at about 505 Km South of Addis Ababa while 275 KM South of Hawassa, the regional capital. Astronomically, Arba Minch town is located at 602’ N Latitudes and 370 33’ E Longitudes. Relatively, the town is bounded on the North, North East, and East by Lake Abaya, Lake Chamo in the South and in the West and North West by ‘*Genta*’ Mountain.

The highest point of the town is towards *Shecha Kifileketema*, “*Genta*” mountain and while the lowest point is found in the Eastern part of the town around Lake Abaya. The altitude of *Shecha* and *Siquela Kifileketema* is about 1500 and 1300 meter above sea level respectively. As a result, the town with this altitude is classified into lowland region in the country. The town's total area covers 5,556.62 hectares (AMTA, 2017). The town gets its lowest temperature 21⁰C during the summer season (that is July) and the highest temperature (26 ⁰C) is recorded in March (AMTA, 2017). The city administration has four sub-cities, namely,

Sikeklla, Secha, Abaya and Nechisar. All the sub-cities have three *Kebeles* except Abaya sub-city, which has only two *Kebeles*. Sikella is chosen for this study due to its proximity to the market center and consists of a large number of street children migrated from different parts of the zone.

According to Arba Minch City Administration (AMCA) (2017), the city administration had 119,666 populations, of which 62, 658 (52.36 %) and 57,008 (47.63%) were male and female population, respectively.

3.3. Research Methodology

Methodologically, this study was based on the philosophy of qualitative research design. The rationale of using this method lies in its paramount usefulness in understanding the social world of street children more or less as the way they experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who live them out (Crang & Cook, 2007). Unlike quantitative research, design that assumes reality is fixed and measurable, qualitative research design assumes that perspectives and experiences of individuals are socially constructed (Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2012). The qualitative research approach also has the ability to provide complex contextual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. It also provides information about the human side of an issue, that is, the often-contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals.

3.3.1. Research Design

For Creswell (2009), research design refers to a comprehensive description of the plan that indicates how systematically a scientific study is going to be conducted. It describes the real problem to be addressed by the intended scientific study; aims and purposes the research is intended for; research methodology, which includes approaches and research styles such as survey; descriptive, case study, ethnographic, longitudinal, cross-sectional, correlational and so forth; and kinds of data required (quantitative, qualitative or both) (Creswell, 2009). In view of this, a case study was used to explore the situation of street children in the study area.

3.3.2. Case Study Approach

Merseth (1994) defines a case as a descriptive research document, often presented in narrative form, based on a real-life situation or event. It attempts to convey a balanced,

multidimensional representation of the context, participants, and reality of the situation. The definition reaffirms three essential elements of the cases: a) they are real; b) they rely on careful research and study, and c) they foster the development of multiple perspectives by the users (Merseth, 1994). In line with this idea, the researcher study was based on the real case, which is the lived realities and experiences of street children using appropriate research methodology, which the researcher believed as fitting to investigate the problem under study. In addition, Clardy (1997) suggests that a case study can be a richly detailed story about a specific situation or event in the workplace, describing who, what, where, when, and how. As well, Yin (1994) recommends that case studies are prepared strategies when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary life within some real-life context. The other quality of the case study method is that it provides an opportunity for the investigation to apply a range of data gathering techniques and use evidence from multiple sources.

3.3.3. Sample Procedure and Techniques

For this study, a non-probability sampling, particularly a purposive sampling procedure was used. It is argued that when obtaining purposive samples (occasionally referred to as “*judgmental samples*”), researchers use their subjective judgment and attempt to select sample units that a particular sampling units included in the sample primarily depends on the researcher's subjective judgment (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008:168). It is also argued that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information rich cases for study in depth. Rich information and cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance for the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002).

Since street children are available but hardly accessible in the study area context. Thus, to get the required data for the study, a snowball sampling technique was employed. Snowball sampling, as the name implies, is a technique for finding research subject. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject who in turn, provides the name of the third, and so on (Vogt, 1999). It is based on an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled on wet snow and picks up additional snow. Hence, the researcher continued this way until the level of saturation, that is the data needed for the study has reached. A total of 20 street children were interviewed in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch City

Administration. Before selecting the sample, the researcher visited different parts of the city to map out the sites of street children that were frequent or on a regular basis.

3.3.4. Types and Sources of Data

Relevant qualitative information was generated both from primary and secondary sources. The former was collected directly from the respondents (street children) while the latter was generated from different works and organizational reports relating to the topic. These include yearly abstract from Central Statistics Authority, demographic and socio-economic data regarding the study area, reports on street children and other relevant information fitting the study purpose. Due attention and crosschecking of different materials were made to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the secondary sources.

3.3.5. Methods of Data Collection

In this study, the researcher used different data collection methods, including semi-structured interview, focus group discussions, participant observation together with informal dialogue and field notes, which enabled the researcher to triangulate and offset the weakness of one method by the strength of the other (Abebe, 2009).

3.3.5.1. Semi-Structured Interview

During the fieldwork, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with 20 street children including six girls and 14 boys. The interviews were held basically to explore the street children living conditions on the street, factors that motivate them to leave their home (push factors), the urban pull factors, social problems they face owing to their living conditions, and the psychological problem they face on the street. Initially, the researcher used the interview guiding questions that were prepared before the fieldwork. In addition, a local language called Gamogan (Annex 1) conducted the interviews.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) argue that this method goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views in conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach to obtain thoroughly tested knowledge. They further discussed in the method the knowledge will be constructed in the interaction, interview, interchange of views about a subject of mutual interest, between the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, using this method, the researcher generated details of information on the street children socio-economic and

demographic data, their living conditions, push and pull factors, social and psychological problems they faced on the street.

3.3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion

During the fieldwork, the researcher also used focus group discussion as a method to have information with street children. According to Crang and Cook (2007), this method enables information about group perspectives and the variety of opinions or views within the group regarding their street life. They further argue that FGD enables to collect a large amount of information over a relatively short period (Annex 2).

In this study, two focus group discussions were conducted with the study participants. The intention of the group discussions was to uncover a street child's peer relations, group life, and social life and the influence it has on its street ways of life, and to explore whether or not they have group norms and another related issue then help them to overcome social and psychological problems they face in-group or individually. In doing so, Lloyd-Evans (2006) argued that participants might feel uncomfortable during the discussion due to differences in terms of age, gender, street experiences or physicality, and other factors. Therefore, as per the suggestion of Lewis (1992), the most effective single criteria employed in recruiting participants were looking for friendship groupings. The first group discussion was held on with eight group members, including the leader of the group and all participants were boys. The second group discussion was conducted with six street children who are a girl to see the views of the girls and boys. For uniformity and simplicity, all the focus group discussions were conducted in local language "Gamogan" and questions were stated in clear, simple language to help ensure mutual understanding between the researcher and the street children (Annex 2).

3.3.5.3. Non-Participants Observation

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995:79), the term observation "entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts in a social setting". There are two types of observations, thus, during the researcher fieldwork, non-participant observations were used to learn what life looks like for an insider in the street children's daily life while remaining, inevitably, an outsider. In this type of observation, the researcher does not engage with the groups under study, rather he/she makes clear the objective(s) of the study for the

people being observed. Frequent field observations are increasingly important to understand street children further than a one-off the interview and to gain a greater understanding of their views and experiences (Abebe, 2009). This method also helps participants to have a direct voice in the productions of knowledge about their life than other methods like experimental or survey style of study (Vakaoti, 2009). In this study, this method together with informal dialogue was employed as a means to crosscheck the information taken from other methods (Vakaoti, 2009). This helped the researcher to see their way of life, observable social and psychological problems they face on the street, livelihood activities they are engaged in an overall life on the street. In the fieldwork, the researcher took as many possible as photos which helped me to exemplify the cases and support the qualitative data in the analysis section (Annex 3).

3.3.5.4. Field Notes

During the fieldwork, the researcher carried out field notes, which was part of his reflections on his day to day fieldwork activities with his participants, and research assistants. Taking notes mainly concerned in writing during his observation in the field and during individual and group discussions. Emotions, facial expressions or body languages and challenges from officials in his attempt to consent letter, reactions from the local people to the street children's presence, and other many more events were included in his field notes. Lloyd-Evans (2006) indicated that writing notes still they are fresh in mind makes much easier to remember. Thus, this helped to substantiate any missed information via interviews, group discussion, and observation during data collection.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher transcribed the dialogue and the stories of study participants, street children, while listening to the recorded voices. The categorizations of data were carried out in line with the structured research guideline and then according to the research questions. After doing categorization, the needed data were reorganized into themes, in order to help me later process of writing. The researcher used the narrative analysis method. This was because much of the information collected from the study participants were stories of their daily experiences on the street.

3.7. Ethical Consideration in the Field

Having the UNCRC's principles in mind along with the several ethical principles that researchers should consider when doing research with children, such as protecting children emotionally, physically and mentally from any kind of harm; protecting children from violence, abuse, and exploitations, not placing children at risk, respecting their privacy and ensuring confidentiality, and seeking their consent. Cognizant of this, in the fieldwork, the researcher considered the ethical principles such as getting consent, respect privacy and confidentiality, power imbalance, and reciprocity. Thus, the researcher requested permission letter from the Department of Civics and Ethical Education, School of Governance and Development Studies, Hawassa University. After the permission was received, then the researcher applied informed consent and showed the letter to the concerned bodies before undertaking the data collection and the data gathered from them were kept confidential.

Chapter Four

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Introduction

The primary focus of this chapter is to discussing the street children's living conditions whereby explore both the rural push factors and urban pull factors for migration. It also highlights the various social and psychological impacts owing to their street life in the study area context. In the course of the discussion, study participants' views are succinctly presented. The participants' views are also complemented information from the field observation to draw valid conclusions.

This particular chapter is divided into five sections and discusses primarily street children's socio-economic and demographic profile, which helps to know the background information about the migrant children. The second section presents the reasons why the study participants left the family home life to street life. The third section highlights the urban pull factors for migration or factors that attracted the children into street life in the study area context. The fourth section discusses the major social problems street children have encountered in the study sub-city area. The last section deals with the psychological impacts of street life.

4.2. Profiles of the Street Children

Regarding the general socio-economic and demographic profile of the sampled street children. The study identified a total of 20 street children, 14 of them were males and the rest females. In terms of age, the studied street children were in the age category of 11 to 17 years old, suggesting most of the street children are under 18 years old. Most of them (both male and female children) have come from the surrounding *Woredas* of Arba Minch, including Kamba, Shara, Bonke, Kuyle and others are from Arba Minch town, including all the female street children. Vis-à-vis street children livelihood activities, it was evident that all the male respondents engaged in labor work and gain on average of 5-100 birr per day (Annex 4). However, the female respondents were a pauper. For example, *“one of the street children reported that she gets 10 birr per day while others feed themselves by begging”*.

As they noted that all the female respondents and most male respondents had attached with their friends but one of the male respondents lives with his mother. The other respondent also had an attachment with those in the bus station have a friend he lives in a rented house with his friends who came from the same village. In other words, most of the street children work and live on the street, which makes them more vulnerable to social and psychological problems they encounter by being street children. It is also clear that 19 out of 20 the street children live with friends while one of them live his mother, implying their life challenges as street children in the study area. About their time of arrival to Arba Minch city administration, most of the street children have been in the city since 2005 while others have arrived recently. In this case, most of the sampled street children are from Arba Minch town *Eidget Ber* (Konso) village (Annex 4).

4.3. Causes of Street Children to Join Street Life

4.3.1. Push Factors of Street Children from the Study Area

Although children need protection, must have access to quality education to reach their potential, but children can also play critical roles as agents of change in their families and communities. However, factors that lead children to the street are many and varied. Different studies on street children have mentioned poverty as a major reason for leaving the family home to the street, particularly in developing countries of South America, Asia, and Africa (Plummer, Kudrati & Yousif, 2007; Aptekar & Stoeklin, 2014). Frequently the public,

policymakers and social workers alike consider that children whose basic needs cannot be met within the household leave the home life to the street (Conticini & Hulme, 2007).

This study reasons that, although a single factor, such as poverty, can be an immediate factor to make a decision, the process of becoming a street child is usually the result of many intertwined problems inside the family home. For example, during the individual interview one of the street children vividly noted the multiple factors contributed to the children to join the street life as follows:

“As a teenager, I used to make some money from home to play games. While playing the game there I spend most of the time unknowingly and get home latterly. I did this repeatedly and one day the gates of our home were closed. So I was forced to stay out and sleep on the street. That was the first night I slept on the street. So the next morning when I went back home, I was punished by my father with a stick. However, the meantime, I lost my father and my elder brother in 2014 and I was forced to leave the home to the street due to the lack of necessities to support our life. These are some of the forces behind my street life. With the life anger in the street life, I had fought with my fellow children, harmed him and taken to jail for two weeks that was the most disappointing moment in my life. While I was in prison, my brothers and sisters were no longer in harmony with one another because of some differences in religion. So they decided to sell the properties our parents left for us. So I took my share when I was released and spent it carelessly. Since then I wanted to enjoy my life outside the home and enjoyed with money until I left nothing.”

From the above quote, it is evident to understand that multiple factors can be attributed and the migration itself was a gradual process. At first many of the study participants, singled out a single factor as the reason for leaving the family home. Nonetheless, as they discussed their cases in more details individually, it got clearer that it was more complex and intertwining. For instance, as indicated in the above cases, even though, at first, the boy singled out a lack of support for necessities as a reason for leaving home to the street, the process of becoming a street kid has started long before his abandonment of home life. While living in the family home, he used to steal money from home to play games and stay away from home for long

hours. He also slept on the street when the doors were closed. And the other intervening factors such as parental death (s), lack of family support, lack of necessities were also factors that precipitated the process of becoming a street child.

Therefore, the study result is in agreement with what Aptekar (1994) noted children often start their street life in a gradual process, at first by staying away for hours, or a night or two, and then gradually staying more days away from home. Similarly, this study claims that the long-lasting family-related problems inside the family house, such as, the death of parent(s), violence and consistent abuse, the arrival of a new male or women in the house or remarriage; and the tradition of physically disciplining children, can be factors pushing a child to become a street child.

In addition to what has been mentioned, family related problems such parent(s) death, reorganization of family structure, that is living with stepparents and stepchildren, and parenting method of disciplining children or fear of physical punishment could be mentioned as the reason for children to leave their family home head to the street. In most cases, parental death affects children in many ways. As revealed in the account of the above-mentioned quote, the parental death leaves him and his siblings with little or no help. Consequently, lack of emotional support, lack of financial support, lack of guidance and controlling misbehavior mostly characterize such houses. Therefore, over time, parental death could lead children to look at some other options to the problems they are facing within the house due to the absence of guardians or family support. So, as indicated in the quote and others account, street life could be used as the possible option to leave the home life.

The other street children migrated from one of the nearby *Woredas*, Mirab Abaya, aged 12 years old explains that he has left home to the street life because of violence and consistent abuse inside the house, resulting from the reorganization of family structure (That is coming and living with stepparents and stepsiblings). During the individual interview with the study participants, the boy indicated his anger with the consistent domestic violence and abuses were the reason for leaving home to the street life as summarized below:

“I am 12 years old, born and grew up in the neighboring village of Mirab Abaya Woreda. I live with my families. But, I am not sure about who is my real father that I used to ask my mother. She refuses to tell me whether he

is dead or alive. However, my stepfather always hurts me and my mother by using abusive or exploitative words. Sometimes he used to hit me seriously by almost anything he has at hand. So, I had been in this unbearable and miserable family relationship for long. Then I heard that my relatives were living in Arba Minch town near the largest market in Sikella sub-city then I decided to go there. In Arab Minch too, my relatives were not willing to accept me and they pushed me out to look for my real father, which my heart was so broken and I wanted to join fellows' street children, migrated alike. Thus, my decision was about survival, if I go back home the sufferings will continue. Staying with a relative was not successful and no alternative than living with my fellows on the harsh street life where everyone sees you as theft and sense good for nothing!"

Thus, one can understand that sometimes the physical punishments are harsh and unbearable: for instance, being bound, hung by their hands, flogged and starved. Therefore, this mode of family relationships leaves children under tension for any kind of faults they were doing in their childhood. The quote above aligns with the previous studies that reported violence and consistent abuses at home as an important reason for leaving home to the street (Conticini & Hulme, 2007; Plummer *et al.*, 2007; Aptekar & Stoeklin, 2014).

From the participants' recount, their peer friends who had a prior street experience motivated these children. As already mentioned, being a street child is caused by many interwoven problems rather than a single factor. Thus, for children living with the various domestic problem, the information they receive from their peers can easily convince them to leave their family home. While unfolding the reason for leaving home, one of the street children notes her experience as follows:

"It has been four years since I left my home village. My villagers who used to live in Arba Minch were the one who used to tell me everything about it whenever they come to our village. They shared their experiences that they can get money easily from tourists coming to Arba Minch, engage in different livelihood activities than suffering from the destitute life with the poor families who hardly understand me. I am meant to work everything from morning to evening, cook food, washcloths, look after my brothers

and sisters, keep the home clean while I did know such a freedom in the beautiful Arba Minch. I felt that I missed my opportunities and decided to migrate to Arab Minch with fellows and ended up a street girl, the promises were quite the opposite and remain desperate.”

Children, who live on the streets, sometimes visit their parents’ before they return to the street again (Auya & Oino, 2013). Other children are reintegrated with their parents by the agencies working with the street children. However, the reintegration program does not recognize the reasons that caused children to leave home as it is mainly concerned with removing children from the street to avoid their visible presence (van Blerk, 2013).

Nevertheless, many children do not stay long in their parents’ house because of the continuity of the previous problem inside the home and that the children cannot do at home the things as they got used to doing in the street. This can lead children to feel, as Ursin (2011) called, ‘at home in the street.’ This means “*when children maintain a fantasy of returning to their families, but when they carry out this dream they are often rejected, resulting in a longing for the acceptance and status of the street*” (Ursin, 2011: 227). Thus, whenever children visited or attempted to reintegrate with their parents, they did not manage to stay for long. Sometimes they also bring other children to the streets. In the individual interview, one of the participants said:

“I left my home life to the street with my friends from the home village after having information about Arba Minch. What I heard about Arba Minch from my friends, they told me that Arba Minch is such a big city and there are numerous options to live. I expected to work and live a better life, not to sleep on the street. I was not expecting street life when I was leaving home. Even I did not have any awareness or idea about street life. However, the description was never true that lead into a miserable life that everyone ignores you and feels manner-less, thief, arrogant, and many more that hurts me a day and night”

From the above quote, it is apparent that children who were going to visit their parents and who were reintegrated by institutions, governmental and/or non-governmental, had a major role in influencing their peers along with other domestic problems. This is also line with the

commonly identified rural push factors for migration including, a family situation which make home life unattractive which may include poverty, big family size, family violence, abuse, school abandonment and inadequate parental guidance (Graham, 2011; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

The other street children shared why he has joined the street life as follows,

“My name is Bedilu. I am 14 years old. I came from Ediget ber [Konso Village], Arba Minch. I live with my mother and my step father. I came to the street life in 2014., due to a frequent conflict between my mother and my step father, he usually gets drunk and beats my mother. One day, he asked my mother to choose between I and him. He literally said, if you want to live with me I want to give you a chance to choose between me and your son! Soon, I left my home and joined the street life!

From the above quote, we can understand that, continued disagreement within the family and living with a stepfather has a potential to push the child to a street life. Thus, it is imperative to be the right model for children than showing them a deviant behavior, which harms his or her life forever.

Apart from the migrant children’s life experiences and feelings regarding the rural push factors, semi-structured interviews and summary of the field notes vividly indicated that factors including economic (poverty), disagreement with stepmother/father, family divorce, peer pressure, being orphan and lack of alternative as major push factors. Evidence also suggests that a large share of the world’s children lives in poverty and will be severely affected by sustainability problems (Von Braun, 2017). This study result is in agreement with the empirical studies reported in Ethiopia. For example, De Oliveira (2000) observed factors such as, sexual abuse, violence in the neighborhood, abandoned by parents, death or diseases of one or both parents, peer pressure, violence at home, became attracted to or comfortable with the street life, physical abuse and lack of a sense of belonging were found to be causes of why street children go to the street. More importantly, poverty causes their families to disintegrate and these results in street children phenomenon (Ayub, Kumar, & Shora, 2014; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen, Jima, Abbas, & Abia 2016). Therefore, it is evident to argue that the rural push factors range from poverty (economic), socio-cultural (sexual

abuse), conflict at home, peer pressure, and to family deaths were the main pushing factors of the street children in the study area.

4.3.2. Pull Factors of Street Children to the Study Area

In Ethiopia, the growing number of street children is one of the most serious urban social problems. Street children in Ethiopia have become a countrywide epidemic, with over 100,000 children living/working on the streets of Ethiopia's cities (Kebede, 2015). It is argued that improved communication facilities, such as transportation, the impact of television, good network communication, urban-oriented education and resultant change in attitudes and values also promote migration. Other factors such as the presence of relatives and friends in urban areas, desire to receive an education which is available only in urban areas are factors responsible for migration. The closeness of cultural contacts, cultural diversity, great vitality, individual attitudes is also associated with migration (Graham, 2011; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016). On this account, one of the migrant children from Kamba Woreda vividly noted the pull factors that attracted him to come to Arab Minch in 2013 as follows:

“I am 15 years old, born in one of the rural villages in Kamba Woreda. I was living with my families. Unfortunately, in one of the market days [Saturday in 2013] I just wanted to see Arba Minch with the hope that my life will be changed, hope there will be no poverty, better health, and education as I heard that there are children like who work in daytime and learn in the night program, which I planned to continue my education. With these multiple hopes, I came to Arba Minch and it has been five years that my life is on the street where life is so challenging. Let alone to continue my education, I even hardly get enough meal for my daily survival where my entire hopes have been lost in the destitute street life!”

It is evident to understand from the above quote that urban pull factors are not always as expected when leaving families and it may end up quite the opposite as most migrant children experience such a challenging situation. On the other hand, most of the children reported that they left home with their peers, they had through the friendship network they formed while living in their family home. Hence, when children leave their family, they would come to the street with their peers who had street experiences and they would keep their friendship. As

described by one of the participants that how the peer pressure or influence motivated him to join the urban life as follows:

“I was born and grew up in one of the villages in Bonke Woreda. Most of the children from our village migrate to Arba Minch whenever I drop out of school, quarrel with family, face any difficulty as opportunities are out there to work as a daily laborer in the bus station and in the market centers in the form of loading and unloading as my villagers informed me. Due to these reasons, I have left my families and it has been four years that I have been on the street and he [pointing to his friend] was my friend on the street since the first day. I have known him back home. Of course, my friend had prior experience on the street. After coming here in Arba Minch, through his social network, I was also able to know other street children.”

Similarly, some street children reported that they [Friends] even covered the transportation costs for us to “join the glaring urban life” owing to peer pressure to come from home village to the destination and keep their friends afterward. However, this does not mean that all children who left their home village by the influence of their peers’ succeeded in keeping and maintaining their peer friendship afterward. While describing during the individual interview, one of the new migrants in the discussion noted that, the peer pressure as a source of inspiration but ended up the other way round as:

“I left home with my peers who had prior street experience. They even paid the transportation for me until I arrive at Arba Minch bus station and then we walked from there to the St’ Gabriel church on barefoot. Since life is mobile, they abandoned me soon when we reach to the St’ Gabriel church on their way to find their meal. So I was rejected and left alone then. What is disappointing is that the promises as villagers have never been materialized, they joked in my life!”

This study also identified other circumstances that can be taken as an urban pull factor, which is the joint street activities. In the street, especially, the nighttime brings many children together either to have fun by playing different games, for example, imitating what they watched from movies, or chewing *khat*, singing and dancing or sleeping together. Nevertheless, it is not simple to participate in children’s joint street activities. Despite the

challenges at first to participate, the more activities that the individual share with another, the more likely it is that they will become interpersonally tied through friendship. Many as an opportunity to form friends despite initial challenges use these nighttime activities. This result agrees with what Froerer's (2010) discussion of peer friendship in that friendships tend to develop when individuals are placed in a context where people regularly participate in joint activities. While explaining who the make use of the joint street activities with the fellow street children, one of the participants vividly noted as:

“I was 11 years old when leaving home to the street life in Arba Minch town. My first night was full of a surprise since I saw children having fun. However, I was alone and a bit away from them. The darkness worried me a lot. Hence, to avoid my worries and loneliness, I approached them. Then, it was not simple to join them. In the meantime, one of them called me and asked to sing a cultural song of mine and dance as well. You know, they were doing this deliberately to mock and tease and create fun of it when they encounter someone newly arrived at their surroundings. As a result, I had no option than sing the cultural song and dance for what they have asked me. In the next morning, I started to play, eat and walk together. We are still friends afterward.”

From the above quote, it is clear that joining the nighttime activities was started as an opportunity for the newly arrived children to form the peer friendship by approaching the experienced street children to avoid the uneasiness of the night and loneliness. However, it is not simple to join since the child could face many challenges from those children who already had prior experiences, as stated in the above children's life experience as a new entrant. This way of forming a friendship could also happen in the daytime.

Apart from these, the street children often enjoy their days doing many things jointly, for example, playing football, the freedom they have was one of the urban pull factors in the study area context. This was noticeable among the street children who were living nearby the St' Gabriel Church, an open space facing the pubic burial grounds. Upon the first arrival, many children reach the open space easily, due to the accessibility of the place. Thus, while watching the matches between groups, forming a friendship could happen as described by one of the young participants as:

“Upon leaving home, I directly went to the nearby open space of St’ Gabriel Church. While watching street children who play football, I asked to join them as arbiter first and then to play. Therefore, we played together and started to hang out. Then afterward, we are friends still.”

The high expectations for better access to livelihood activities were taken as one of the pull factors that motivated the studied street children to join the urban life in the study area. Thus, one of a young girl shares her experiences as follows:

I was born in Shara, a locality in nearby Arba Minch town and grew up with a large family. Due to the family size, no one gives attention to my education, and in most cases, we the daughters, including me were not treated equally with the boys. This is because they have the freedom to go to school on a regular basis, play games in the afterward, and many others. While for me that looks far from reaching it with my family. Thus, I decide to have better access to my education if I go out of the nearby town [Arba Minch], where I can sell lottery tickets on the streets to support my education. However, being a girl and a student living on the street. I sometimes find it difficult to work on the street, and to do school work. This is because I don’t have a house to sleep in. This thus has a big impact on what I have an interest in my education, but the money I earn is so meager that life is precarious. One thing that also worries me is the food I have to eat that I even think about it in class while I’m in school. I also eat based on what I get from begging or the profit I make from selling the lottery tickets. Sometimes I come here without eating lunch, but finding the money for education is always a problem, which was a core pull factor to come to here and the expectation unmet.

From the above quote, one can understand the expectation for better access to education and own livelihood activities being pushed by family ignorance and workload at home has results to join the street life. The expectations are not always true, which brought frustration and ended up as unexpected.



Figure 4.1: The livelihoods challenges of street children in Sikella sub-city, Arab Minch

Source: Field photo taken by the researcher, 2019

In general, for the quote extracted from the migrant children and the notes from the field, the pull factors are those factors that make street life very attractive, encourage children to leave home, and includes desire for independence, financial security, enthusiasm and glamour of living in cities, and some hope of raising ones' standard of living (Besnet, 2010). To sum up that the pull factors for children migration can be seen as high peer pressure, glaring urban life (hope for a change), in search of money, better urban life, hope that there are no poverty and unemployment challenges, hope for better health, education and other services, as the reasons (pull factors) for their migration. Furthermore, "better job opportunities", "better health services", and "other glittering of urban life" were found to be important motivating factors to leave their places of origin.

4.4. Social Problems of Street Children

The focus of the social problem is on how and why people come to understand that some condition ought to be viewed as a *social problem*, that is, how they socially construct *social problems*. Evidence suggests that, poverty and illiteracy, discrimination and lack of accessible resources, violent environment, stigmatization (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Hansen, 2016; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016). The study found out that the city administration

does not provide social services for the street children, owing to this, they failed to meet their needs such as water, food, health services, and other necessities.

In this connection, one of the serious challenges in street life is getting access to food. In most cases, the way they access food entails psychological pain because of the insults and degrading remarks the public makes. Therefore, the children have to be courageous enough to scrounge food (leftover) from restaurants or hotels. This, however, does not mean that all people react in the same way. Despite the challenges, whenever the children succeed in finding food, they share among themselves. In an individual interview one of the participating street children shares his experiences as follows:

I am a young boy aged 13 years old migrated from the nearby Woreda. In search of food whenever if someone gets something to eat, I often eat with my friends, it is a must to share. This is because of the nature of street friendship unless it would leave you alone without help whenever you are in trouble. You know, you may not get food and money all the time, thus, if you do not share with your friend what you have today, no one takes care of you in another time.”

From the aforementioned account, it is evident that sharing could be helpful to maintain social capital through street friendship and keeps one’s survival as well as peer friends. The reciprocal character of sharing is important. When someone shares, another time the peers will share him or her. In the street life, it is also evident and known among street children that they could not get food all the time, i.e. access problem. Therefore, by sharing the food, they cope together with the access problem because they would get food from their peer friends in moments they do not have anything to eat. However, leftover food is not the only sources of food for children. Sometimes they buy food with the money they collected through *Kifella or Shikella*⁸.

⁸ *Kifella or Shikella* is a kind of begging or strategy commonly applied by the street children as a source of income when they face hard times.

It is also evident that the children live in the unhygienic and hazardous environment, and street life exposes children to accidents and injuries. Food and water can be contaminated, and the insects, animals, and humans can constitute sources of physical danger (Mizen & Ofose-Kusi, 2010). The absence of a support system from society aggravates the problem. The study participants expressed how children's peer friendship is an important source of support or care for children when they get ill.

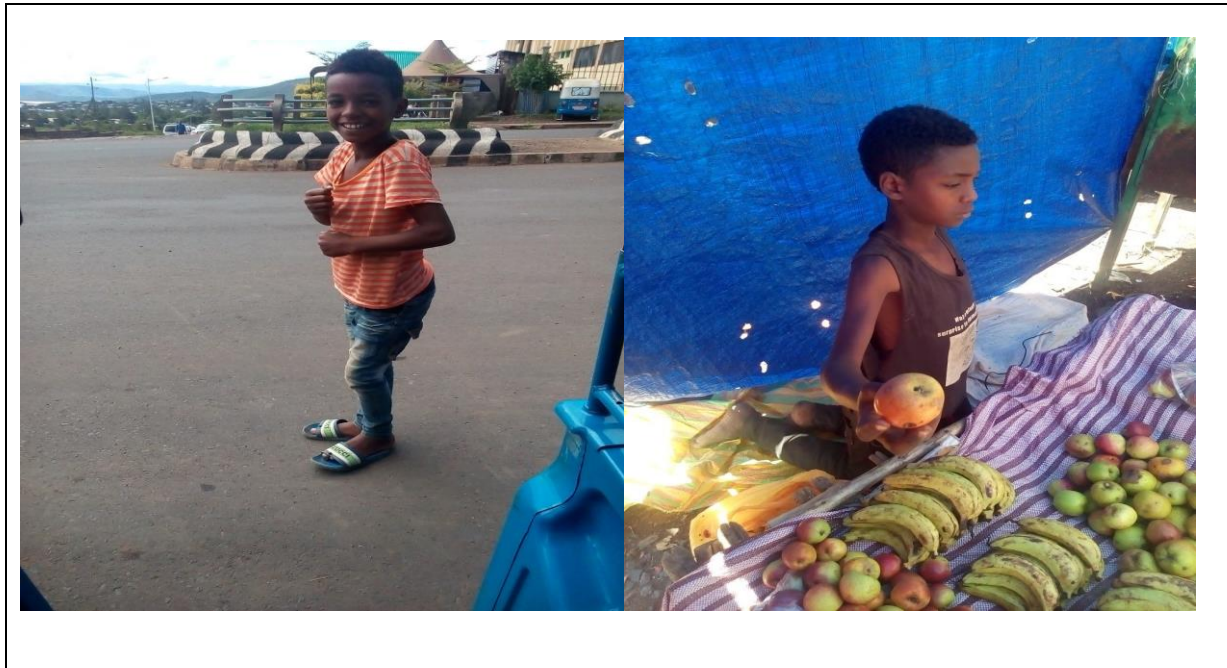


Figure 4.2 : Coping strategies of street children in *Sikella* sub-city, Arab Minch

Source: Field photo taken by the researcher, 2019

For instance, during the group discussion, one of the participants noted his views as:

“I have been ill. They care for me and we care for each other. Whenever someone gets sick, we run one after the other to beg people to help him get cured. You know... I cannot have been okay without their [friends support]”

The other participant, also mentioned that:

“One day another friend of us was sick and in his case the sickness was recurrent. You know what I did, I spilled some gears on my face and

begged as I have got diabetes, got some money that we used to take him to the health center and he has recovered”

For the quotes above, it is understandable that when someone gets sick, it hinders the child from earning money or food (laborious or begging). During such critical times, peer friends play an important role in the provision of care, this might include financing, sharing of food, helping to get access to medical services and helping each other in treating the health problem of friends. However, children must be embedded in a very good peer friendship to be treated in this way. In general, caring for one another can be a very good way to express peer friendship and a way to build it in street life.

The other critical challenge that the street children face is the community wrong perception about them. In this regard, the street children themselves know well these community pejorative views, but they also know people who understand their livings and are compassionate and considerate of them. In the individual interviews and group discussions, participants said:

“some people simply assume us as a deviant owing to the things they see when we were doing and some other people are really scared of us. They try to keep their things securely whenever they see us wherever we are.”

The other participant also said:

“The languages we are using is quite offensive, it is full of disgusting, and insults for others, but it is normal in our street living environment. The way we dress also discourage people from coming and getting closer. People consider us evildoers.”

From the children's' life experiences, the study asserts that the societal view of street children is partly the result of children's street lifestyle and their street makeup in contrast to the usual social ways of daily life. Pejorative reaction to street living is the result of society's long-held view of childhood and children's place and status in society. In the individual interview, one of the respondents asserted that,

“street is not a living place rather it is a place for different daily activities takes place, but, the presence of children in the streets has been creating the problem.”

Children have known these opinions from daily police reaction and one of the participants noted that:

“police disrupt us endlessly. We usually make homes out of plastics, but whenever they came, devastate our houses.”

Children most of the time blame the society failing to understand the way they were raised and lived at home before coming to the streets and the many problems they are facing. Given this, one of the children vividly stated his views as:

“I do not know how society is accepting us, do you think living on the street is our choice, look it is not. You know, in the street nothing makes you happy. Our daily life is full of dilemmas and challenges. The weather can be awful sometimes, bitter cold and often rainy, which no one feels your pains rather mocking at you as you are valueless street children.”

The sudden attack by the polices and security people have been one of the major challenges that street children face in the study area. While describing the desperate situations, one of the participating children said:

“You know, some of us do not have the power to defend ourselves whenever the security guys beat us Police officers also try to scatter us from our places, especially at night, but when we are in groups we sometimes negotiate and the other time we show each of us a code to leave those places when the police officers are approaching.”

However, in resolving the problems, one of the street children noted his way of negotiating as:

“We do not like to fight and we always try to solve peacefully at first, but if not, we will all stand together and fight to protect one another when it comes to the worst situation.”

In addition, lack of sufficient health care causes, malaria, and other transmitted diseases include, HIV/AIDS are some problems that the street children face in the study area. The children were also exposed to sexual abuse where there is no protection of law to both sexes. As a child, she/he should get rest; until midnight, it is impossible to get rest because they are disturbed as people walk around, which even keeps their lives at risk. In this connection, most of the time, female street children get a problem due to their place of residence as they live nearby Tourist hotel and in most cases; the drunk people opt to rape them. On the other hand, both male and female children were under the attention of police because most of them are suspected as a criminal whether they do the crime or not. Evidence from previous studies supports this reality.

In this case, common sources of violence are the police, gangs, drug peddlers, pimps, other street children, families and sexual partners (Diriba, 2015; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016; Hansen *et al.*, 2016). Being new to the city, most of the new migrants face car accidents along with the weather condition along with the negative views of the people to the street children, which also frustrates their lives in the street. This result is in agreement with the empirical studies that the negative attitude may be a result of the society's inability to care for its people (Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Hansen, 2016; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

4.5. Psychological Problems of Street Children

It is evident that “psychological disorder or problem” is sometimes used to refer to what is more frequently known as mental disorders or psychiatric disorders. Mental disorders are patterns of behavioral or psychological symptoms that influence multiple areas of life. These disorders create distress for the person experiencing these symptoms.

Due to the recently increasing problem of sexual abuses, street children are highly suspicious of newly arriving children to include in the group. One of the street children explained his reservation as follows:

“One thing that makes us suspicious nowadays is the case of homosexual acts. They [bigger ones] take advantage of the little children, especially newcomers. They come to join us looking innocent and when you let them, they try to force or rape children to do sexual acts, and others also come

and try to fool the kids or newly arrived children with incentives and take them to restrooms to rape.”

The above quote reveals that there are people, including children coming to the group looking innocent but abusing children. In this regard, the study revealed that most of the time those who came from the rural area were feeling fear because of robbed their pockets and kicked off by senior friends. They also indicated that people who come from other palaces mainly abroad, which torch their mind, sexually abused male children. To support this view, during the individual interview, one of the participants noted his view: *“I have even been asked by a gay man to sleep with him and spent the night with him.”*

As children noticed in the above quote, they have the information and know when people come to their group with ill-conceived intentions especially, at night. For example, when people come and give much money than they expect, it often makes them suspicious. However, children treat also accordingly. If that person has tried to do this anywhere, anytime, as they said, children know it. They will do everything to defend themselves collectively with group members. In the individual interview, one participant said:

“Once a man came to join us looking drunk to our sleeping place to spend the night with us whereby trying to sexually abuse a small kid. Then, we kicked him almost to death and chased him, however, he escaped before we report to the police.”

The other participant highlighted his concerns as *“if anyone asks us to carry goods for them at nighttime, we say no unless we are three or four.”* These are the various protective strategies, to increase their level of safety on the street.

Owing to these acts, in some cases, we can observe the behavior of children who spend their time in the bus station are emotional and insult anybody without respect, which could be a reaction to what happened to them as evidenced by hunger, homesickness or other problem they face in the street.

In the street life, one of the most important aspects of a group that cannot be avoided from the discussion is children’s connection to drug abuses. Despite the difference in the types of drugs consumed in different settings, on the street, everyone is an addict at least to one. This

is because the children's daily social routines expose them to drug use. In the street, all types of drugs, children frequently use including both legal and illegal, such as Khat, Arqe (liqueur), and cigarette among others.

In his attempt to explaining how a participant started smoking and using other drugs, one of the participants mentioned his anger as:

“A young boy aged 10 years used to buy tobacco for people around him. One day after I bought the cigarette for one of the guys he is familiar with and he gave me two birr and then I wanted to do the same thing as he did. I smoked during that day for the first time and started bleeding and but then afterward I started to feel like my peers in advance since no one can mock or tease me for not smoking.”

From the above children views, it is clear to understand that new entrants' behavior can be affected and even modified by their closest peer friends' influence due to their presence and social interactions in the same street environment and children own view and response to children's peer influences.

Some adults in the presence of their children verbally insulted children who were living on the streets. Their difficulty is evidence from the following statements from as explained:

“The local communities are not good enough; they consider us as street kids and a danger to their surroundings, including kids. They also label us ‘thieves’, ‘bag bonds, smokers’, ‘glue sniffers’ and ‘alcohol abusers’, while they have no idea who we are. It is hurting to be called street children when we are not responsible for our situations. Off course, some of us left our family homes just by our own faults, nonetheless others like me are orphans and our relatives are not prepared to accommodate us.”

On top of this, female respondents “feel fear of rape; feel dependency due to their livelihood”. Empirical evidences support this truth, some of the psychological difficulties may be evident prior to the onset of substance abuse, although psychological functioning often worsens over time in individuals with substance use disorders (McWhirter, 2004; Ayub *et al.*, 2014; Diriba, 2015; Chimdessa & Cheire, 2016).

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the overall concluding remarks and recommendations of the study. The first section presents the summary of the major findings of the study. The second section provides a brief conclusion drawn from the study. The last section pinpoints the possible recommendations forwarded to address the problems identified during the study.

5.2. Conclusion

The study was conducted in Arba Minch Sikella sub-city, to explore the risk factors and living conditions of children's living on the streets in Sikella sub-city of Arba Minch City Administration. From the study, it was noted that most of the street children under the age of 18 years old and living on the street of the city. Most of the street children face livelihood challenges due to the nature of livelihood activities they are engaged in. The study found that children were come to the street because of different reasons. The major push factors include, economic (poverty), disagreement with stepmother/father, family divorce, peer pressure, being orphan and lack of alternative as major push factors.

On the other hand, it was revealed that the pull factors consist of peer pressure, glaring urban life (hope for a change), in search of money, better urban life, hope that there are no poverty and unemployment challenges, hope for better health, education and other services. In other words, migration in the study area is largely related to economic and social factors. The majority of these children have come to the street because of poverty and conflict with their guardians. Death of parents, family breakdown, and peer pressure were also other significant factors contributing to street life as found in this study. The results of this study also indicate that the majority of children were exposed to street life because of push factors than pull factors.

Street children who work and live on the streets of Arba Minch Town are found to be vulnerable to wide and extreme violations of their rights. Their family members, relatives, and the town communities verbally, physically and sexually abuse them. Harassment by police and by older street boys are common problems faced by the street children.

Street children use several strategies to survive the difficult conditions of the streets. The study result indicated that street children employed different strategies to cope up with the street life challenges, including, begging for food, begging for money, and other necessities. On the street, the majority of children were engaged in menial jobs such as carrying goods, shoe shining, and street vending (selling small items). In addition, some of them turned to beg as a survival option when they have no other way of sustaining themselves.

Following their migration to the street, children have faced both social and psychological problems. Lack of sufficient health care causes, malaria, and other transmitted diseases include, HIV/AIDS are some problems that the street children face in the study area while disparate feeling of fear, sexual abuse, use drug and alcohol, and fear of rape is the major psychological problems the street children faced in the study area.

In general, a factor that pushes and pull the street children are of social, economic, personal and contextual while both the social and psychological problems have adversely affected the lives and livelihoods of street children in the study area.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the major findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following points were forwarded as ways out at least to address the problems in the study area.

The street children in the study area have mirrored that there is an inadequate commitment by the government in prioritizing the problems they faced. The street children are expected more attention and responsibilities from the government to rehabilitate and enable them to live a normal life. Therefore, the study calls for active participation of the decision-makers and academicians in drawing a roadmap of social intervention for addressing the problems of street children.

As the study suggested that, most street children have been suffering the streets of the study area and applied livelihoods strategies, which are not sustainable. Therefore, the immediate needs of the children should be addressed by providing some sort of night shelter offering security and protection. In doing so, this must be regarded as a treatment center that, once the situation of the child is assessed, then responds by providing training, reunification, alternative family structures, family support, fitting the study area context.

Considering livelihood strategies are both dependents on the opportunities presented and affected by the social, economic, institutional/governance and environmental contexts in which street children operate their livelihood activities. This is because their livelihoods are highly determined both by the quality and by the number of their accessible livelihood assets. Thus, it is important to empower street children for better livelihood options with what capacities and skills they own. To put into practices, various trainings and capacitation and/or mentoring can be given by actors, such as Arba Minch Town Municipality, Finance and Economic Development Office, especially Population Department, Gamo Zone Social Security Affairs Office, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working on the issues as well as Arba Minch University under community service schemes.

One of the challenges of street children and the results of conventional wisdom is the misconception street children and/or attach street children with problems only; thus, it is recommended that street children should not be seen from the negative perspectives only rather the multiple roles (daily laborer, supporting family, and capacitating themselves) they play should be considered seriously. Therefore, actors such as Save the Children, UNICEF and others who are working on street children issues in collaboration with Arba Minch University can create and strengthen societal awareness'/outlooks/ towards street children in the study area.

It is suggested to create a number of awareness and discussion forums on the prevention and protection aspect of street children coming to Arab Minch town. This can be achieved through the provision such trainings at different places, including sources of migration.

Given huge number of migrant children have joined the street life forced by number of push and pull factors. They have been facing challenges, including sexual violence and oppressed in Arba Minch town. The children harassed are more likely to involve in criminal acts and disturbing the normal functioning of the community in the town. Therefore, stakeholders working in the areas of street children, such as municipality, Women Youth and Children Affairs Offices, Police and Labor and Social Affairs offices should take the lead for rehabilitation of migrant children, in general and street children, in particular.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you from?
3. When did you come to here?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. How much do you get per day?
6. Where do you stay here?
7. With whom do you live?
8. How often do you sleep on the street?
9. What are the reasons that you have left your families (push factors)?
10. Why did you come to here (pull factors)?
11. How do the communities perceive you?
12. What are the major challenges on the street?
13. What happened to you because you are living in the street?
14. What is your plan to come out of your challenges on the street?

Annex 2: Group Discussion Guideline

1. Can you introduce yourself in details?
2. When did you come to here and why?
3. How often do you sleep on the street?
4. How do you spend your time in the morning, afternoon, evening and hours of sleep?
5. How do you from group?
6. Where and/or how did you learn these norms or from where did you get them?
7. What type of livelihood activities are you engaged in?
8. How do you see life on the street?
9. How do the local communities and policy force perceive you?
10. Can you tell what motivated you to leave your place of origin?
11. Can you explain what factors attracted you to be here in Sikella sub-city?
12. What are the major social problem you encounter?
13. What are the major psychological problem you encounter?
14. What happened to you because you are living in the street?
15. How do you react when outsiders attack your group member?

16. What do you think should be done for you to resolve problems you encounter?

17. Who should do what?

Annex 3: Observation Checklist

1. The social services children get in the streets of *Sikella* sub-city;
2. Place of children's' residence of the street children;
3. Type of livelihood activities children are engaged in *Sikella* sub-city;
4. The daily routines of the street children in *Sikella* sub-city;
5. Social problem street children face in *Sikella* sub-city;
6. The overall living conditions of street children in *Sikella* sub-city.

Annex 4: Summary of the Field Data

No.	Questions	Sex	Analyzed Data	Remarks
1	Age	M	11-14	All sample in the case are below eighteen (minors)
		M	15-17	
		F	11-14	
		F	15-17	
2	Woreda/Town	M	Arbaminch town	Most of them came from Arbaminch town <i>Eidget ber</i> (konso) village
		M	Zurya woreda	
		M	Bonke	
		M	Kamba	Street children from wereda were few
		M	Mirab	
		M	Dita	
		F	Arbaminch town	
3	Years of arrival	M	2005-2011	Most of street children arrived at 2005 the rest were in recent year
		M	2009-2011	
		F	2005-2011	
4	Livelihood	M	Labor work	Labor work is major for male and pauper is for female
		F	Pauper	
5	Daily income	M	5-50 Birr	On the Average the sample table shows each person earn 40% daily
		M	51-100 Birr	
		F	10 Birr	
		F	No income	
6	Living attachment	M	With his mother	Except one individual 19 of them live with their friends
		M	With their friends	
		F	With their friends	

7	Years of staying	M	3≤Years	Most of them stayed for short time but 9 of them stayed for 4-6 years
		M	4-6	
		F	3≤4	
		F	4-6	
8	Reasons for leaving family home (push factors)	M	Economic problem Quarrel with step father Quarrel with step mother Family divorce	9 of them faced personal problem the rest have family problem Economic problem
		M	Peer pressure	
		F	Economic problem Quarrel with parents	
		F	Orphan Lack of alternative	
9	Reasons for coming here (pull factor)	M	Peer pressure	The study shows as pull factor to town 12 of them due to peer pressure 8 of them have no option but to earn income
		M	Urban attraction	
		M	Seek money	
		F	Peer pressure	
		F	Having no option	
		F	Seek money	
10	Community perception	M	Quarrel and steel money from pocket	Few children were stolen but most of them have comfortable life
		F	Peaceful no problem	
		F	Peaceful no problem	
11	Major challenges	M	Sexual abuse	Frequently street children break law so they are under attention of police and sometimes they said no problem, and also there is sexual harassment in both sexes
		M	At rain time	
		M	Polices attention and suspicion	
		M	Some of them said No problem	
		F	No problem	
			Sexual abuse Police attention	
12	Special problem	M	Motor cycle accident	Motor cycle accident, unincapability of adapting the weather condition, home sickness, school dropout, sexual harassment, illness, under prison
		M	Sexual abuse	
		M	Illness	
		M	Weather condition	
		M	School drop out	
		M	Police suspect as	

			criminal person	They want to save money and start business some of them want to learn and change themselves and others few children they do not want to forecast the future.
		F	Illness	
		F	No problem	
13	Future condition	M	I want to learn and change myself as well as others	
		M	To save money and start business	
		M	I want to continue learning	
		M	Return back to family	
		M	To say forever	
		M	God knows	
		F	I want to learn and change my self and others	
		F	God knows	