



**THE PRACTICES, ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF SELECTED
ORPHANAGE INSTITUTIONS IN CARING FOR ABANDONED
CHILDREN IN HAWASSA CITY ADMINISTRATION; SIDAMA
REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA**

**COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE
SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
M.A. IN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT**

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ADVISORS' APPROVAL SHEET

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**THE PRACTICES, ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF SELECTED ORPHANAGE INSTITUTIONS IN CARING FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN IN HAWASSA CITY ADMINISTRATION; SIDAMA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE**” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Management, the graduate program of the Department/ School of Governance and Development studies, and has been carried out by **Mehalye Solomon Loha, ID. No. GPDMW/0009/14**, under my/our supervision. Therefore, I/we recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence hereby can submit the thesis to the school.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this MA thesis entitled “**THE PRACTICES, ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF SELECTED ORPHANAGE INSTITUTIONS IN CARING FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN IN HAWASSA CITY, SIDAMA REGIONAL STATE**” is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

BOFED- Bureau of Finance and Economic Development

EECMY- Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

MOLSA- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs

MoWCYA- Ministry of women, children and youth affairs

NGO- Non Governmental Organization

OVC- Orphan and Vulnerable Children

PEPFAR- President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

UCCJEA- Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

USA- United States of America

WCYAB- Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau

ABBREVIATIONS

Fig. - Figure

ABSTRACT

This study is conducted on the Practices, Roles and Challenges of Selected Orphanage Institutions in Caring for Abandoned Children in Hawassa City Administration, Sidama Regional State of Ethiopia. The study's objectives aimed to assess the practices, roles, and challenges of these selected orphanage institutions. To attain the above-mentioned objectives the research has employed a descriptive study design with a qualitative research approach. Furthermore, in this research data was collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document reviewing techniques. The findings of the study regarding the practices, roles and challenges of orphanages in caring for abandoned children revealed that these orphanage institutions are providing integrated institutional child care and support services that include shelter, food, medical services, educational services, clothing, recreational services, alternative childcare services, environmental protection services, and counseling services. The research findings also indicates that poverty, mental instability of parents, facing the challenge of having children with special needs and disabilities, marginalization from the community due to early age pregnancy and deviating from norms of the society, facing sexual abuse are the major causes of child abandonment. Moreover, the research finding further indicated that the selected orphanage institutions in the study area are facing various challenges like: very low awareness in the community about child abandonment and alternative services as adoption and foster care, inconsistent and frequently changing government laws and regulations regarding roles and challenges of orphanages in caring for abandoned children, lengthy bureaucracy from government stakeholders and imbalance between a large number of abandoned children in the study area while the intervention capacity of orphanage institutions is limited, inflation and rapid increment of material cost, lack of land access to build offices, were found to be among the major challenges of the child care organizations. Based on the conclusions made, certain recommendations such as raising more awareness about the rising problem of child abandonment and also local adoption and foster care in the society, working in more harmony with concerned government and non-government bodies to bring about solutions, were given.

Key words: Abandonment, Orphanages, Childcare

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

There are various dangerous situations that children face every day and abandonment is one of them. Abandonment is an act of abandoning or leaving away a child, mostly due to poverty or financial reasons. And there are orphanages that work alongside concerned government bodies to maintain and better the overall wellbeing of these abandoned children through different programs, facing and overcoming the challenges throughout the whole process. Abandoned children face grave danger, danger that could even lead them to death. In some cases, children abandoned in the night time face the hardship of acquiring respiratory diseases because of the cold outside, diseases like pneumonia are mostly common. In other unfortunate cases these abandoned children also face death, because of very low body temperature or being eaten by an animal or worms. So after being abandoned, these children ought to get immediate medical care and attention, which mostly is costly and challenging. Thus, orphanages through the help of stakeholders such as the Women, Children and Youth Affairs Department, Police, Courts, will bring in these abandoned children in a legal and formal manner and render their services to them. These practices of orphanages in caring for abandoned children starts from admitting the children into their institutions and ranges to provide food, shelter, education, keeping them healthy, and further enroll them into alternative childcare options such as foster care and adoption (Meskerem, 2015).

Delivering child care service in a formal setting was not the early time practice. Though sometimes it takes an informal future, placing a child to an alternative child care system is not a new phenomenon. In early days the family, neighborhood, the church and the local community were responsible to give the social welfare services. For instance, similar to Ethiopian culture, in America there was a customary practice for a relative to take care of the orphan child. In the absence of this kind of arrangements, then comes the institutional care; placing children in an orphanage. But the increasing nature of the problem of OVCs necessitated the need for the formal intervention from governmental and non-governmental

orphanages. And according to (Meskerem, 2015) orphanages face various challenges in rendering services for the OVCs in their institutions. Challenges concerning funding, malpractices from concerned government bodies, lack of proper documentation and so on are among the challenges faced by orphanages in the whole process of handling and giving services to abandoned children.

Throughout history, parents have been known to abandon their children, through means of infanticide, exposure, or donation to an apprenticeship or to convents. Currently, child abandonment is widely recognized as one of the social problems for most of the country. Historically the increasing number of the child population at risk was the factor behind the emergence of child welfare service. Family, among others, is the prime responsible institution for their new born. Relatives and the community at large also have a share in the process of giving care for a child. However, because of different reasons, family may not be in a position to adequately perform their responsibilities and the same is true for the relatives. In such instances, the state is duty bound to provide the service (Solomon, 2020).

The definition of child abandonment is culture-bound, and thus the form and interpretation of child abandonment may differ. According to UNICEF, abandoned children are children who have no home, either due to the death of or the rejection by their parents or the unavailability or rejection of their extended family. Rejection could be a result of serious economic problems, i.e., poverty, or it may be a rejection of the child per se. This definition is so broad that it may include: children who were physically abandoned in most cases during their early years, homeless children who have lost their parents and are found in child-care institutions, children who have been abandoned, or who lost their parents, or for whatever reason have been left without a supporter, and are on the streets. This category includes those children who are supporting themselves by working on the streets after the death of their parents, the collapse of their family, or after having been rejected and/or abandoned by the family. (Getnet, 2000)

The problem is not new. In the nineteenth century, "ragamuffins" were a familiar part of London's urban scene, and parents in Paris abandoned their children at the rate of 20 percent of the live births in the city. In his 1987 book, *Children of the Sun* Morris, West

tells of the survival of street children in Naples in the 1950s. What is new, rather, is the growing scale of the problem. The United Nations estimates 60 million children and infants have been abandoned by their families and live on their own or in orphanages in the world. In the United States, more than 7,000 children are abandoned each year (healthofchildren.com/A/Abandoned.html).

Under Ethiopian legislation, there is no clear definition of child abandonment. However, Criminal code criminalizes all kinds of child abandonment and neglect by imposing a penalty, fine or imprisonment, to the extent of removing family right in a grave circumstance. Despite the criminalization of this social fact, parents are continuing to abandon their children in a place not suitable for the children's health and wellbeing. In effect, the state took the abandoned children into child care institutions until they transferred to a new adoptive or foster family. The bad of abandoning children does not simply lie in the fact that the parent renounces parental responsibility, but, the real harm that a child is likely to suffer, either in long or short term. It tends to have serious consequences for the child and it is classifiable as a severe form of child neglect and abuse. Studies have identified that abandoned child in poor countries faces poverty, less access to education, traumatic grief, impaired cognitive and greater likelihood of being exploited as child labor (Solomon, 2020).

Based on these perspectives, the study will aim to assess the roles and challenges of orphanages concerning abandoned children in Hawassa city, in two selected child care institutions namely: Netsanet Ministries and Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

There are a growing number of children without parental care in Ethiopia. One of the reasons for the lack of parental care in the country is child abandonment. Mostly babies of days-old and sometimes only hours-old are subjected to abandonment in Ethiopia. Mostly abandoned infants are found in a busy market place and in the waiting room of a crowded clinic. Government should engage in preventing infant abandoning in other areas of the country by creating awareness in cooperation with religious institutions. Like any other countries in the world, infant abandonment is observable in all regions of Ethiopia especially in cities and towns. However, the country lacks data on the number of abandoned infants in the country as a general and in the regions in particular (Tefaswork, 2019).

There are multiple studies that were conducted concerning orphan and vulnerable children. The significance of all stakeholders working together tirelessly to the best interest of these children could be assessed on these studies. For instance, (Kasahun, 2002) assessed the impact of NGOs in child wellbeing through child centered community development in Antsokia Gemza woreda. This study showed that most community has benefited from the program in which children were sponsored by the world vision. Likewise, (Hermon, 2020) examined the contribution of volunteers in addressing the psychosocial needs of OVCs in an orphanage in a case study of love and care volunteering team. This study identified the major contribution of volunteers in addressing psychosocial needs as well as challenges impacting their contribution. The other researcher, (Eyerusalem, 2019) assessed the psychological care giving pattern of child care institutions in a government orphanage center called Kebebe Tsehay in Addis Ababa. The study mainly focused on the interaction between the care givers and the children. As stated on the aforementioned literatures, they mainly focused on the roles of orphanage institutions and OVCs in general, not physically abandoned children in particular, and also without addressing the causes of child abandonment and the challenges that orphanage institutions encountered. Moreover, there is a dearth of similar studies conducted in Hawassa city. Accordingly, this study will address the Practices, Roles of the orphanage institutions in caring for abandoned children including the challenges these orphanages face in rendering services to abandoned

children, which may contribute new insights in the field of study and filling the literature gaps.

Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the practices, roles and challenges of selected orphanage institutions (Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association and Netsanet Ministries Inc) in handling abandoned children within Hawassa City Administration in Sidama Regional State of Ethiopia.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the Practices, Roles, and Challenges of selected orphanages in caring for abandoned children in Hawassa City Administration, in Sidama Regional State of Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the major social causes of child abandonment in the study area.
2. To assess the overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children.
3. To investigate the roles of the orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing of abandoned children.
4. To identify the challenges of the orphanages that constrains their social service provisions.

1.3.3. Research Questions

1. What are the major social causes of child abandonment in the study area?
2. What are the overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children?
3. What roles do the orphanages provide for abandoned children in keeping their wellbeing?
4. What are the challenges that constrain the orphanages in providing their social services?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study has a significance of serving as springboard for other researchers to make further study in this area. This study also has a significance of pointing in the overlooked direction of the roles of orphanages in the betterment in wellbeing of abandoned children. It also provides a way forward on how to improve the coordination of concerned gov't bodies, i.e. stake holders like the Hawassa City Women, Children and Youth Department, Hawassa City Police Department, Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, and orphanages to fulfill the best interest of abandoned children.

Another significance of this study is to fill the information gap in the study of abandoned children and how orphanages play a role on their wellbeing and everyday lives.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is focused on assessing the practices, roles and challenges of selected orphanages institutions in Hawassa city Administration. Accordingly, two orphanages in Hawassa city with higher numbers of abandoned children, namely: Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association and Netsanet Ministries Inc, were addressed in the study based on the data from BoFED and Women, Children and Youth Affairs Department, showing that these tow orphanages have the highest intake of abandoned children in the city. The study also focused on physically abandoned children who are living inside these orphanages, because their cases have been understudied in previous studies. And the study also focused on the roles that these orphanages play and the challenges they face, in the childcare process of abandoned children.

1.6. Operational Definitions

Child- under the convention on the rights of the child and ratified by the Ethiopian government on Dec, 1991, a child is any human being below the age of 18 years (Alem, 2014).

Child abandonment- the word 'abandonment' in its literal form means to leave, forsake or to leave uncared for. According to the UCCJEA of the USA, Child abandonment is

defined as “the failure to provide reasonable care, support, communication, or visitation with the child” (Solomon, 2020).

Vulnerable child- “a child who is below 18 years of age and whose survival, care, protection, or development are seriously threatened” (Alem, 2014).

Orphanage- “an establishment founded by a governmental, Non-governmental or faith-based organization to give care to unaccompanied children. An orphanage may also be referred to as a childcare institution, children’s home, or children’s village. A typical characteristic of an institution is that it is a group living arrangement with paid caregivers” (Hermon, 2020).

1.7. Expected Limitations of the Study

Because the study is a detailed descriptive of two orphanages, it may fail to be used for generalizations about other orphanages roles and challenges. Also it may fail to address the roles of and challenges faced by other orphanages outside of Hawassa city because of the limitations of financial and time resources. Also the focus of the study is to assess the roles and challenges of the purposively selected orphanages on the wellbeing of abandoned children and the challenges that they face in their service delivery, so it may fail to address the limitations of the orphanages themselves.

1.8. Organization of the Research

This research is organized in five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory part of the study, which consists of, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, operational definitions, expected limitations of the study, and organization of the paper. Chapter two consists of review of related literature relevant to the research. The third chapter deals about the research methods and methodologies, description of the study area and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter is concerned with data presentation and analysis of the study in different sections and finally the fifth chapter will consist of conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Child Abandonment

Parents or caregivers who have the right to custody of the child may expose or abandon the child in any situation which likely to result in danger in the life or health of the child. Exposed to danger are manifested through physical as well as psychological risk which potentially hamper the proper development of the child. Leaving a kid within the car for some time and drinking alcohol in front of the kids could expose them to physical and psychological harm respectively. Leaving a child in a dangerous situation commonly related to physical abandonment of the child. It could be broadly seen that, irrespective of the place of abandonment, all physical abandonment could lead the child into a high risk of harm or incur significant harm to the life and health of the child; because, at least, the child has fallen into unknown future destiny without securing safe development. (Solomon, 2020)

In 2007, the study conducted by the ministry of labor and social affairs, estimated that around 150,000 street children were living in Ethiopian major cities, and out of this, 40% of street children are found in Addis Ababa. In 2010, over 11,000 children were living on the street of the Addis Ababa without any parental or adult support and protection (Eyerusalem, 2019). According to the UNICEF classification of street children, those children who are abandoned or rejected by their parents are one part of the overall street children. The majority of abandoned children on the street life have shown common features that, they don't have a home to go to either because of the death of, or the rejection by, their parents. According to the Addis Ababa police commission report, between the years 2011-2019, nearly 2,696 runaway children were identified and reunified with their families in A.A and different parts of the country. Among them, 59% were females, and 41% left for males. Out of this number, 1766 of them had families within the Addis Ababa and the remaining 960 children were transported to their home village for reunification. The police data shows that between the year 2011 – 2019, 1836 children were physically abandoned by their parents or caregivers. On average, 204 children were physically

abandoned by their parents or caregiver in each year. Out of the total abandoned children, female and male cover 56% and 44% respectively. (Getnet, 2000)

According to (Solomon, 2020), there are different causes to why people abandon their children. Economic condition of a parent can be a cause to abandon their child. Women or parents living in poverty and have the small capacity to provide necessities of their children and unable to give the proper care needed for their children usually end up abandoning their children. The other cause raised by the researcher is, a broken marriage. Studies revealed that when family breaks in divorce or separation, it consequently leads to abandonment of the children. In addition to this, when young girls get pregnant before marriage or face an unwanted pregnancy due to sexual violence, they tend to experience shame and guilt in the fear of social stigma because of the accepted norms of the society, which then leads to secretly abandon their babies.

2.2 Historical Development of Institutional Child Care in Ethiopia

Social welfare in general and childcare in particular was not organized in a formal way at previous times in our country. It was delivered based on religious and customary practices. However, handling the service becomes necessary for both government and non-governmental organ. Thus, the Royal Family, Ethiopian's Welfare Association and the Ethiopian Red Cross association had started to take part in delivering the service. The Royal Family had established an orphanage in the second half of twenty century. Hailelassie welfare foundation was also established with the purpose of giving the social welfare service (Hizbaynesh, 2005).

During Derge regime, both government, non-governmental voluntary organization had given attention to the matter and started to provide the social welfare service to the society under the control of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs later caused the establishment of 106 orphanages including children Amba which was established in 1979 in Zeway (MOLSA, 1989). At the time, projects in relation to the childcare service were coordinated through the national children's commission. Orphanage established by Addis Ababa city residents council and Jima city residents general council were the two voluntary based initiatives during that time. At the time there were 34 orphanages running by Ethiopian

Orthodox Church and 16 orphanages running by Ethiopian Mekaneyesus Church (Yeneneh, 2003).

Currently, under the regime of the government of Federal Republic of Ethiopia there are various laws which are enacted to address the matter and there are also different non-governmental and public orphanages (childcare institutions) rendering the service. According to (UNICEF's 2013 report there are about 225 orphanages found in Ethiopia in the year 2013. (Yeneneh, 2003)

2.3 The Role Given for Orphanages (Childcare Institutions) in Ethiopian Context

There are different circumstances which can be taken as a reason to place children in care institutions (orphanages). Some of these are situations where parents lack the capacity to render the required care because of disability and poverty. There are also other circumstances like child abuse, chronic neglect, and separation of children from their families due to natural disaster.

When we come to the case of Ethiopia, the FDRE Revised Family Law under article 220-228, gives priority to parents and relatives of the child to be his/her legal guardian. But in situations where parents are absent because of various reasons, article 229 gives the function of guardian or tutor to an institution of assistance like orphanages established for this purpose. The FDRE Revised Family Law under article 190 states that the agreement of adoption shall be made between the adopter and the guardian of the adoptee. Based on this article, the same law on article 192 allows for the government or non-governmental orphanages to give any child under their custody to adopters. This gives orphanages the power to decide on the fate of a child to be adopted or not. In addition, Ethiopian alternative childcare guideline specifies the role of orphanages on the case of adoption and also gives them the responsibility to protect a child under their care from abuses of any kind and give proper services for his/her healthy growth. Moreover, establishing and strengthening networking among other institutions to promote experience sharing and collaboration is the other duty stated by the guideline (MoWCYA, 2009).

2.4 The Main Components of Services for Orphan and Vulnerable Children

The Ethiopian Standard Service Delivery Guidelines document and PEPFAR OVC and Global AIDS program contains major core service areas which are considered critical components of a set of services for programming targeting orphans and vulnerable children, and abandoned children are usually included in OVC.

2.4.1 Shelter and Care Services

The Delivery Guidelines Document of 2010 shows that shelter and care services strive to prevent children from going without shelter and work to ensure sufficient clothing and access to clean safe water or basic personal hygiene. An additional focus is ensuring that vulnerable children have at least one adult who provides them with love and support.

Children and youth affected by HIV/AIDS often face an immediate crisis in the home. Meeting their immediate needs is vital to their current well-being but is also critical to their future. Basic or “core” needs include food/nutrition, shelter and care, protection, health care, psychosocial support, and education. Illness in the family or the loss of a parent or parents is extremely disruptive for children, and often seriously disadvantages their chances for obtaining basic living needs as well as for securing a place in school or future employment. According to PEPFAR OVC program the HIV/AIDS epidemic overloads impoverished communities to the point where many children are left without suitable shelter or care. Those children who find themselves without a caregiver become highly vulnerable to abuse and stunted development (PEPFAR, 2006).

2.4.2 Food and Nutritional Support

These services aim to ensure that orphan children have access to similar nutritional resources as other children in their communities. According to PEPFAR OVC and Global AIDS program of 2006, food and nutrition are important components of OVC support. Malnutrition underlies more than half of the deaths in children under five in developing countries. The Emergency Plan works in many communities broadly affected by food insecurity. Food-security issues are extremely complex, and other organizations and international partners have strong comparative advantages in providing food assistance.

2.4.3 Protection Services

The core values of this OVC guidance are rooted in the principles of child protection - developing and implementing programs that place the best interests of the child and his or her family above all else. Thus, programs should include efforts to confront and minimize the reality of stigma and social neglect faced by OVCs, as well as abuse and exploitation, including trafficking, the taking of inherited property, and land tenure (PEPFAR, 2006).

On the Standard Service Delivery Guidelines, legal protection services aim to reduce stigma, discrimination and social neglect while ensuring access to basic rights and services protecting children from violence, abuse and exploitation. However, these legal protections lack consistence and adequate services for orphans and vulnerable children in Ethiopia.

2.4.4 Psychosocial Support

Document of (PEPFAR, 2006) showed that healthy child development depends a great deal on the continuity of social relationships and the development of a sense of competence. Children and their caregivers need love and emotional support, and the opportunity to express their feelings without fear of stigma and discrimination. Programs should provide children with support that is appropriate for their age and situation, and recognize that children often respond differently to trauma and loss. OVCs sometimes turn to drugs and alcohol as a means of coping with this trauma. Programs must provide support to avoid these counterproductive activities.

2.4.5 Education and Training

These services seek to ensure that abandoned children receive educational, vocational and occupational opportunities needed for them to be productive adults. Research on children and AIDS demonstrates that education can leverage significant improvements in the lives of orphans and other vulnerable children. Schools not only benefit the individual child, but can also serve as important resource centers to meet the broader needs of communities. Schools can provide children with a safe, structured environment, the emotional support and supervision of adults, and the opportunity to learn how to interact with other children and develop social networks. An education is the key to employability and can also foster

a child's developmentally important sense of competence. In addition to, education is an important area for leveraging additional resources at both national and local levels. Partnerships with education programs sponsored by external donors and governments often provide resources that can help to ensure that children affected by HIV/AIDS and other problems have access to education. (Alem, 2014)

2.4.6 Other Childcare Alternatives

It is more than obvious to understand that the place where children grow with full satisfaction is at their original home; with their biological father and mother. The presence of some problem at their home even can't override the benefit it has for children's growth. In circumstance when a family fails to exercise its duties and responsibilities due to various reasons like death, placing a child to different child care alternative will be an option. Though the child in this condition is assumed to be the responsibility of the society at large, child care service is delivered formally through authorized bureaus; be it private or public (Alem, 2014).

Coming to Ethiopia's context, the Alternative Child Care Guideline specifies the type of care that should be given for a child and sets the priorities between the alternatives. These alternatives are, according to their priorities; community-based child care programs, reunification and reintegration program, foster care, adoption and institutional care service. Adoption is also one of the child care alternative the guideline specified to provide care for children who have no one to give the required care, particularly for orphaned and abandoned children. The guideline gives the priority for local adoption than intercountry adoption. It also has specified detailed procedure that should be followed before giving a child to adoption. But as this alternative is placed as a fourth alternative and viewed to provide care for orphaned and abandoned children, the guideline expects concerned bodies to choose this option after exhausting the first three alternatives; community based care, reunification and reintegration, and foster care (Meskerem, 2015).

2.5 Basic Needs of Abandoned Children

The psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a theory called hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy extends from the basic needs for survival through the search for self-actualization. Accordingly all human beings have a basic survival needs that is the needs of food, warmth, and shelter. Once these needs are satisfied we will be motivated by the needs for safety and strive for an environment in which we feel physically and emotionally safe and secure. At the next we seek experiences that feel loved, cared for and accepted by others. Beyond this we seek to feel over self-esteemed and reach at higher order needs, self-actualization. The theory is applicable at all ages from early childhood to children who achieve goals and fulfill these potential as adults (Thomas, 2005). No two children are alike. Some children have impairment and others may not have. However, all children regardless of individual differences have needs (UNESCO, 2001). The needs of children are categorized as physical, emotional, spiritual, mental and social.

These needs are concluded as physical needs which incorporates the needs of food, shelter, clothing, school uniforms, and fees and basic health care; emotional needs which are the needs for love, security, encouragement, motivation, care, self-esteem, confidence, sense of belonging, understanding, etc. The mental needs incorporate the formal and informal education and skill development; Social needs are essential for integration in to the community without feeling stigmatized or difference. Spiritual needs are beliefs in a higher being, which enables them to develop a hope for their future (PEPFAR, 2006).

2.5.1 Physical Needs of Children

According to (Killian, 2003), children have many physical needs which include material/financial needs for clothing, shelter, school basic survival needs such as food, health care and hygiene. The simple provision of financial and physical needs is simply not sufficient enough for children to grow into healthy and well-adjusted adults in future. The physical needs often appear to be the most urgent basic need. But the emotional needs of children who have lost a parent or both should not be forgotten. Having a parent becomes sick and die is clearly a major trauma for any child, and may affect them for the rest of their lives (Madorin, 1999).

2.5.2 Emotional Needs of Children

Children need to love and be loved and a sense of belonging to society. Children are also viewed as needing a voice to be heard and to feel that they are important and valued in their communities. The basic sense of being a worthy individual who is important to those who love you, is an essential part of being a human being. Psychosocial support has been defined as an ongoing process of meeting emotional, social, and mental and spiritual needs of vulnerable children, all of which are considered essential elements of a meaningful and positive human development. It goes beyond meeting children's physical need. It places great emphasis on children's psychosocial and emotional needs, and their need for social interaction. Orphans and other vulnerable children require psychosocial support because of the trauma and stress they have experienced in their lives because of parental illness and death, poverty and violence. When children are distressed in any way, their emotional needs become critically important and the basic sense of being a worthy individual who is important to those who love them is an essential part of a human being (Killian, 2003).

2.5.3 Social Needs of Children

In African culture, the individual exists in relation to other people in the community. Social needs-on the social learning theory is viewed as a child was a blank slate on which experience writes on. He held that a child learns to be what he/she becomes, usually in a social context. He believed that with the correct techniques anything could be learned by almost anyone (Bowlby, 1982).

2.5.4 Cognitive Needs of Children

The cognitive theory of Piaget focuses more on the development of thought processes (reasoning) and stresses the child's active role in determining his/her developmental level. Each stage is associated with the development of certain kinds of behaviors and reasoning strategies (Wood, 1981). Accordingly there are three main categories of cognitive needs:

- i) Formal education where we are taught from infancy what we need to know and then attend school to help us to survive within an industrialized society;

- ii) Informal education where we learn by observing others, their reactions and also learning what it takes to be part of particular community setting;
- iii) General life skills and general knowledge. Each stage is associated with the development of certain kinds of behaviors and reasoning strategies.

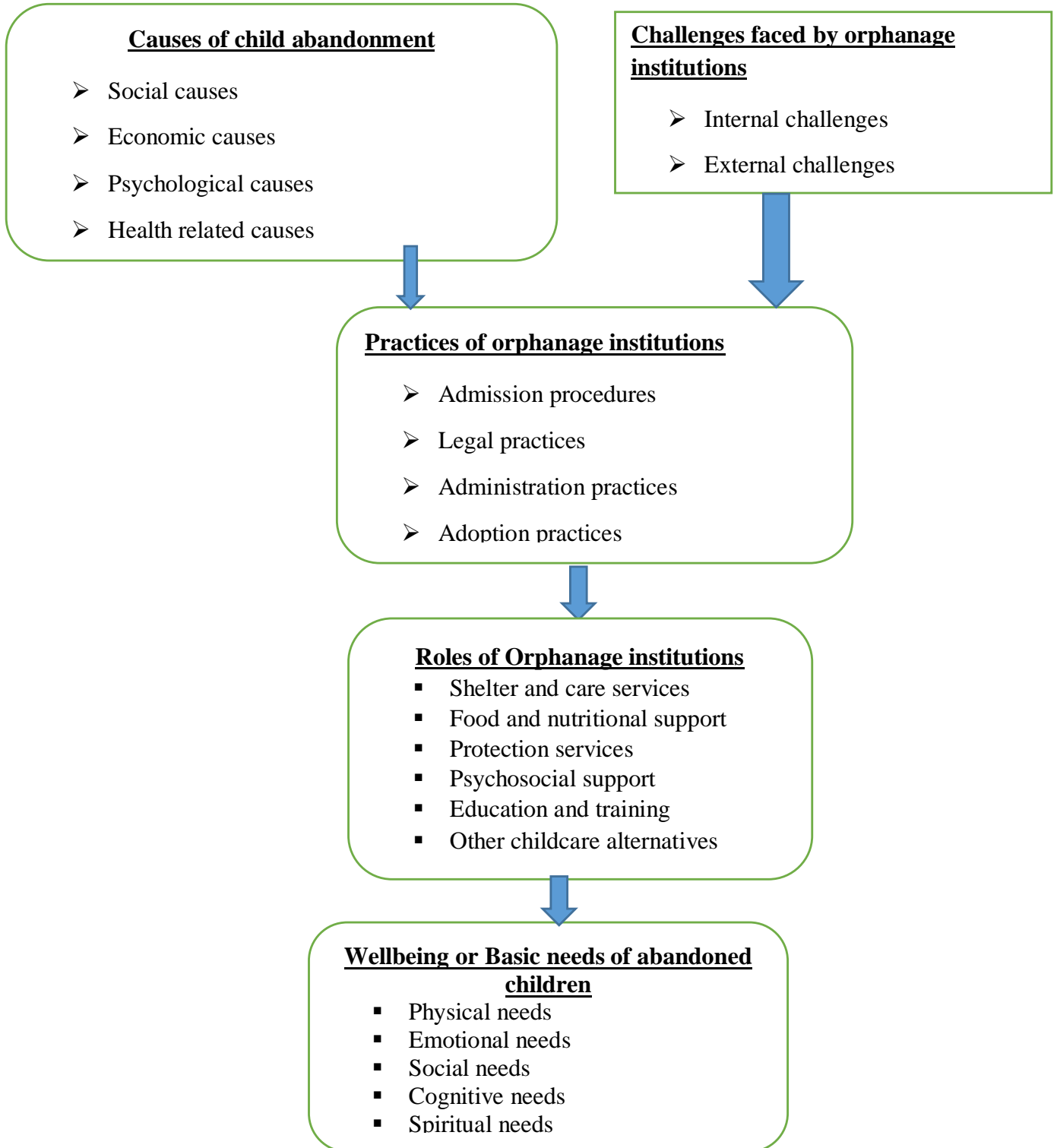
2.5.5 Spiritual Needs of Children

It is through our belief in the Higher Being that we develop a sense of hope in the future. Being able to pray in times of hardship enables us to cope and deal better with life's challenges. It gives us a sense of purpose and also enables us to think beyond the hardships of the present life circumstances to a life hereafter (Killian, 2003). This aspect is seen as more crucial in the context of the present study of evaluation of a psychosocial support programs for vulnerable children. Without spiritual support most of the children would have ended up not being able to cope with challenging circumstances, poverty and violence (Madorin, 1999).

2.6 Theoretical Frame of the Study

There are several developmental theories related to child care and development. This study used attachment theory to assess the practices, roles and challenges of orphanages in caring for abandoned children in the selected orphanage institutions. Attachment is an emotional bond with another person. (Bowlby, 1982), believed that the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. He suggested that attachment also serves to keep the infant close to the caregiver, thus improving the child's chances of survival. (Bowlby, 1982) and others also proposed that children are born with an innate drive to form attachments with caregivers. And the secure attachment that existed between the child and the caregiver or parent will be compromised when a child is abandoned.

2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Own construct, 2023

Fig 1: Conceptual frame work

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Study Area

This study will be conducted in Hawassa City Administration, Sidama region. It is located 273 km (170 miles) south of capital city of the country, Addis Ababa. When the Sidama Region was formed in June 2020, the city became part of that region. The town serves as the capital of the Sidama Region and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region. It lies on the latitude and longitude of 7°3'N 38°28'E and an elevation of 1,708 meters (5,604 feet) above sea level. Its name comes from a Sidamic word meaning "wide body of water".

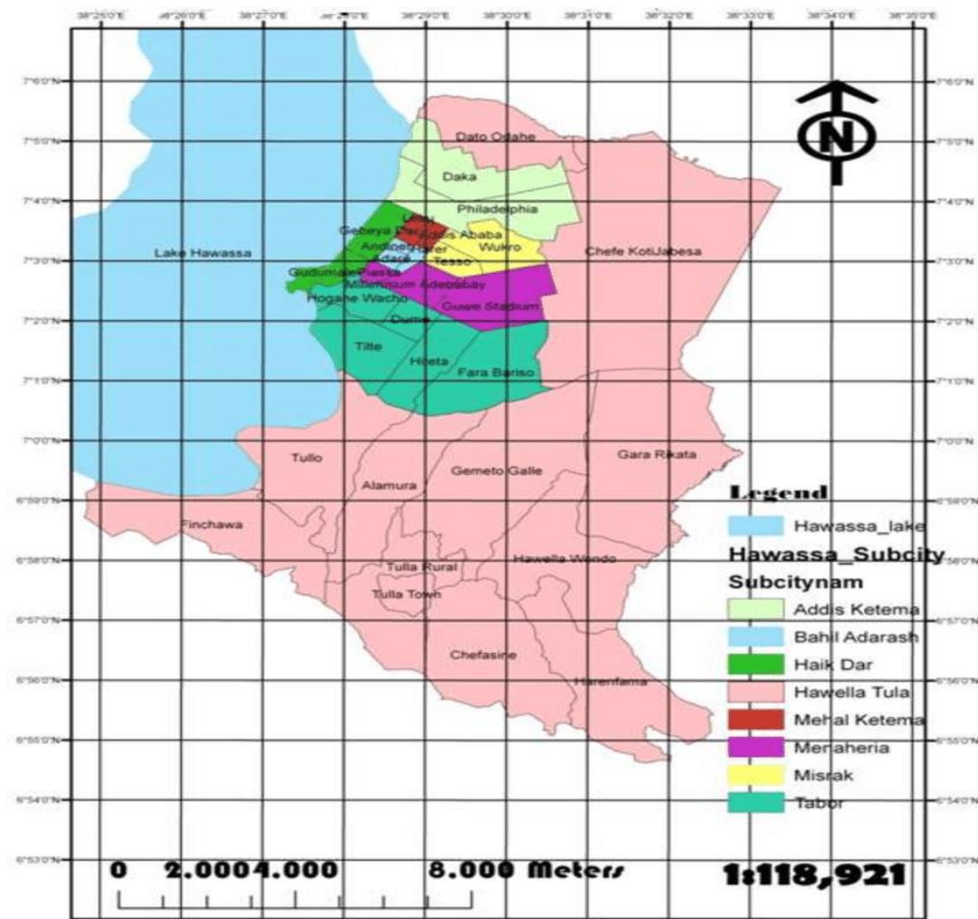


Fig 2: Map of study area

Source- Hawassa City Women, Children and Youth Affairs Department

3.2. General Overview of Childcare Institutions in Hawassa

According to Hawassa city administration BOFED data, there are around 34 non-governmental childcare institutions rendering a care service for orphaned and vulnerable children in the city. Namely, Manna child sponsorship, family aid and community development, Bethany Christian services Global, Ellipse International Ethiopia, Rehoboth Supporting and Development Organization, Bethel Street Children and Family Aid, Yehiwot Berhan Church of Ethiopia Development Association, Mary Joy Development Association, Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Church Development Commission, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Eyesus Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY) with two projects, Ethiopian Genet Church Development and Welfare Organization with two projects, Center of Concern, Hawassa Children's Organization, Ajuja Children Association, Let Us Change Association/Beteseb, Shape Ethiopia, Volunteer Action for Community Transformation, Ethiopian Muluwengel Church Development Organization with two projects, Barnhemnt Hawassa Children Care and Support Association, Grand Vision for Community Support and Development Association, Ewnet Children Development Association, Netsanet Ministries Inc, Barkot Children Ethiopia Foundation, Bright Hope for Ethiopia children Association, Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association and Shiny Day Social Services Association. These non-governmental charity organizations, located in Hawassa city, are currently rendering childcare service for OVCs. This research will assess the case of two purposively selected institutions, of the above-mentioned institutions based on the general and specific objectives of the study, namely Netsanet Ministries and Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association.

3.3. Study Design

Descriptive research design with qualitative approach was applied in the study due to the nature of the research. Due to the nature of the study, in-depth and extensive qualitative data was employed by taking into account the views and opinions of the staff in the orphanage institutions and the stake holders working together with them. Accordingly, the qualitative data was collected through in-depth interview, observation, and document

review by selecting two orphanage institutions from Hawassa city for in-depth investigation.

3.4. Target Population

The unit of analysis for this study was two of the selected orphanage institutions that are working on abandoned and vulnerable children within Hawassa city administration. Accordingly, the staffs that are working under the two selected orphanage institutions and also concerned stakeholders that are jointly working with these orphanage institutions were taken as target population of this study.

3.5. Sampling Techniques and Procedures

This research is intended to assess the roles and challenges of the orphanage institutions in giving services to the abandoned children. Out of the total child care institutions available within Hawassa city administration, two of them were selected purposively based on the size of abandoned children cared under the institutions, types of service provided and their capacity in providing the service. These institutions were the ones providing institutional care in orphanage homes. Then 7 sample respondents from the staffs of each selected institutions, 14 altogether, were purposively selected based on their position and proximity to the cases under investigation. In addition, in depth interview was conducted with staffs who work closely with the abandoned children which are supervising caregivers, childcare managers. And 6 sample respondents from concerned stakeholders that are jointly working with these childcare institutions were also interviewed.

A total of 20 respondents, which are working closely with abandoned children and selected purposively, were interviewed.

3.6. Data Sources

In this research both primary and secondary data sources were used to attain the necessary and reliable information based on the basic research questions.

The major primary data sources for the study were institutional managers or country directors, project managers, and social workers of the institutions that are selected in the

study area. This is because they are the front-line respondents and able to share their experiences on the existing problems. Moreover, concerned governmental officials and experts were also used as primary data sources of the study.

Secondary sources such as children's documents, office reports from the selected orphanages, police reports of the children, letters from government stakeholders were reviewed to substantiate the information gathered from the primary sources.

3.7. Data Collection Method

3.7.1. Observation

The researcher conducted observation and visited the targeted childcare institutions in Hawassa city to personally observe and record facts about the childcare environment, challenges, and the overall practice, since on sight observation of the institution or the orphanage is vital in qualitative research. Non participatory observation was used.

3.7.2. Interview

The researcher interviewed managers and social workers, head nurses, childcare managers in the selected orphanages to gather information about the practice of taking care of abandoned child and the challenges they are facing through the process. In addition, different stake holders like Hawassa city police, Hawassa city WCYAB (Women, Children and Youth Affairs Bureau) were interviewed since they closely work with childcare institutions. Caregivers who work with the abandoned children for a long time were also interviewed. Self-administered interview questions were be used for the interview.

3.7.3. Document Review

Review of basic documents such as children's letters and police reports, reports of the orphanages, childcare manuals, and records of abandoned children's files have been made under this study. In addition to his other relevant literatures were also reviewed. This helped to provide a greater context for the assessment results, to verify findings of the study and corroborate information collected from the interviews.

3.8. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was applied in the study. The qualitative data obtained using, in-depth interview, observation, and document review was analyzed with narration and theme interpretation.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Prior to the data collection the researcher took a supporting letter from Hawassa University to get the necessary data from whom they concerned. Besides, during the time of data collection, the researcher asked a written permission from community social service workers who are regularly working on the orphanage and other offices to provide the children care and support services. After permission has been granted, the researcher took consent from the research participants. The participants were asked whether or not they are willing to participate in the research. The researcher respected the participants freedom to choose to participate in the research or not as well as to choose to discontinue participation at any time. Furthermore, the researcher has provided, to the participants pertinent information about the planned research including the purpose of the research, the likely benefits of the research, the procedures to be undertaken, the duration, and the right of the participants withdrawn their consent at any time. During the data collection and presentation, the privacy of the research participants would be respected and information gained from them would remain confidential and anonymous.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this part of the research, the data collected by interview and personal observation are presented and discussed in detail.

4.1. Personal Information of Study Participants

The general objective of the study was to assess the to assess the roles, overall practices and challenges of selected orphanages in managing abandoned children's wellbeing in Hawassa city administration, in Sidama regional state of Ethiopia; the case of Ebenezer Supporting and Development Association and Netsanet Ministries Inc. To achieve reliable, relevant, and significant data about the case under investigation, twenty individuals were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Out of the total sixteen respondents of the research that are working in the two orphanages, ten of them are working in managerial positions in the orphanages, and out of these ten respondents, two of them are working as Country Directors in the orphanages, two of them are working as Project Managers, two of them are working as Childcare Managers, two of them are working as Social Workers, two of them are working as Head Nurses, and the rest six are working as Supervising Caregivers. And the rest four respondents are stakeholders who are working closely with the orphanages, two of them are working in the Hawassa city women, children and youth affairs department, as Child rights protection team officers and team leaders, and two of them are working in the Hawassa city police department, as women and children department police sergeants.

In respect to the age of the respondents of the research, fourteen of them are between twenty-five and thirty-five, one of them is forty, two of them are forty-five and one of them is sixty. In addition to the age of the respondents when we observe the sex difference of the respondents, sixteen of the respondents are female and four of them are male. And in respect to the nationalities of the respondents, nineteen of them are Ethiopian and one of them is American.

According to the information collected from the informants of the research, seven of them have attained their bachelor's degree from different universities with social sciences of studies, one of them also have an honorary doctorate from Christopher Newport University in Virginia in USA, and three of them have attained their second degree from different universities, three of them are Master's degree holders, two of them have Bachelor of Science degree in nursing, and five of them are diploma holders. Among the respondents of the research one of them have twenty years of work experience, two of them have fifteen years of experience, eight of them have ten years of experience, four of them have eight years of experience, and five of them have five years of experience.

In addition to the above characteristics of the research respondents, both of the orphanages were established with a similar objective that is, to provide childcare for the most vulnerable children.

Regarding their fund and budget, both the organizations are supported by different protestant churches and voluntary individual donors from the United States of America.

4.2. Major causes of child abandonment in the study area

In response to the major causes of child abandonment in the study area, the responses of country directors, project managers, social workers, childcare managers, head nurses, and stake holders from women, children and youth affairs and Hawassa city police department. Poverty, mentally unstable status of the parents or the women, facing the challenge of having children with special needs and disability, fear of marginalization and stigma from the community due to deviation from norms of the society, facing abuse are the major causes of child abandonment. All the research respondents for the interview were summed up and presented henceforth, as the researcher translated and grouped the responses). As a previous study of (Solomon, 2020) shows many factors and cause for people abandoning their children, and poverty is the major cause of it, this study's findings also in agreement with the previous study, reveals that among the cause of child abandonment, poverty is the major one and is underlying almost in all the other causes of child abandonment like facing the challenges of having children with disability and special needs and furthermore.

During the interview, the respondents were asked to answer about the major causes of child abandonment that they face working on this area. All the respondents of the research provided their answers about the main causes of child abandonment they face working on this area. Most of the respondents of the research stated poverty as the major cause of children being physically abandoned. As the city of Hawassa grows and expands numerous people are migrating to the city in search for making a better life for themselves and their family but the actual facts on the ground will turn out to be different than their expectations, which will make their lives harder by the day, so eventually they will end up abandoning their children. As the respondents continued to respond to the question of why people abandon their children, the others responses were also stated, these are unwanted and early-age pregnancy, divorced parents, and death of parents.

According to the respondents, most of the time the cause for child abandonment is either directly or indirectly connected with poverty, hence poverty is embedded in all the causes of child abandonment. Country director one added that lack of education and access to resources and medical care can also be the cause for child abandonment. In supporting this idea, both head nurses and stakeholder one added that most women that came from rural areas, which also live in the city's peripheral areas do not have enough knowledge and access to medical care and most of these women even give birth in their homes, then adding to that most of these women have no one around to support, which then leads them to abandon their children.

Head nurse one also stated that *“the unstable mental status of the women who are mostly single mothers, is also one of the major causes for child abandonment. According to government hospital records mentally unstable mothers even abuse the children, sometimes even attempt to kill the child, in the worst cases. There are also abandoned children with special needs and different diseases such as spinal bifida, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, autism, down syndrome and so on. These diseases are very tough and complicated and they affect their spinal cord, their brain matter and make them unable to use their lower body parts, or sit or support their head and neck on their own, and also affect their mental, physical and overall growth. Most of these children are unable to do*

anything on their own, without the help of another person; most of them cannot even chew and use the toilet or potty. And in some societies such diseases or disabilities are still considered as a curse and when some people sense any different and unusual thing on their child, rather than going to a hospital to get the suitable medical help needed for their child, they tend to abandoned their child, in fear of stigma from the community. This is a common phenomenon in this area of work, in fact in our orphanage we have eighty children with special needs, with such cases I mentioned above.”

Another stated cause of child abandonment is stated by stakeholder two from women, children and youth affairs office, which is in a situation where blood relatives in the society give birth to a child. This act of incest is considered a “taboo” in the society so the discrimination and marginalization from the society will force them to abandon their children.

Country director two explained that there are also children that were abandoned because of harmful traditional practices in some rural areas by stating the following *“our orphanage not only receives abandoned and vulnerable children from the city of Hawassa, but also from the rural woredas and small towns in the Sidama region and also the South Omo zone, which is called ‘mingii’.* In some of these rural communities, if an unmarried woman gives birth, it is seriously considered as deviating from the norms and values of that society, so that women will be a cast out in the community, who will be marginalized, this in turn will push the women to stand alone economically and socially, and poverty will strike. That is a push factor for the woman to abandon her child and strive to support herself. Some of these societies in South Omo have a very harmful traditional practice of physically abandoning children in cases where a baby is born from blood relatives, if a baby’s upper milk teeth grow first before the lower one, sometimes even when the first born child is a girl. In our orphanage we have managed to rescue twenty children who were victims of abandonment because of the ‘mingii’ harmful traditional practice, with the big help of the zone’s women, children and youth department. These marginalizing and harmful traditional practices are putting children in grave danger and making the problem of child abandonment a strain in the community”.

Adding to this social worker one stated that poverty embedded causes of child abandonment are pushing people to abandon children in the worst places a child could be. There are children who were abandoned in toilets, in remote parts of the city where they face an attack from hyenas, where they are very much vulnerable to acquire various diseases. Social worker one also continued stating about how children in such cases were taken into the orphanage she is working in, *“there is specifically a 1 year and 6 months old girl who came to our orphanage in the middle of the night with one leg bitten off by a hyena. When she was abandoned she was ten days old and she was abandoned at a small forest in the ‘Tula’ sub city, where she was attacked by a hyena and her scream called the patrolling police around and she was rushed to the referral hospital and our orphanage was called to take her in and cover the medical expenses. After the necessary surgeries were done, she came to the orphanage to be well taken care of in the institutional care program. There are more cases like hers. The unstable mental condition also puts children in a dangerous situation where they face abuse and even an attempt to kill them. One baby girl that was abandoned at 1 month old, had marks of strangulation on her neck and we rushed her to the hospital as soon as she came to the orphanage and the doctors were even shocked, but right now she is safe and healthy with us”*.

The police sergeants also notwithstanding the above statement of social worker one, stated that they find children in the most horrific situations and places. They consider children abandoned in hospitals and health stations luckier than the other children who are abandoned on the road in the middle of the night, in a far forest, in rural areas where it is hard to reach them, in toilets, in some cases children are abandoned almost buried under dirt, left for dead. They have been facing various child abandonment cases working in this department.

In supporting this idea, social worker two and police sergeant two also stated *“students that face early and unwanted pregnancy due to various reasons like rape, tend to abandon their children because of fear of facing their parents, so end of school season is the time that many children are abandoned and these orphanages the frequent ones to be called by us to receive these abandoned children”*.

In general, from the above information received from the informants of the research through interviews, it can be understood that poverty is embedded in the causes of child abandonment in one way another. The major push factor for the women or people to finally abandon their children is majorly traced back to being impoverished and destitute, unstable mental status is also a major and overlooked cause for child abandonment. The harmful traditional practices that put children in a far worse state than abandonment also still exist in some rural societies and are also major causes for the growing problem of child abandonment. Other causes of child abandonment such as, unwanted and early pregnancy, rape and abuse victims abandoning their children also add up to the increased numbers of abandoned children in the orphanages.

4.3. Overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children

While analyzing the overall admission and childcare practices of the selected orphanages in caring for abandoned children, the respondents of the research were asked to explain the eligibility criteria for the admission of abandoned children into their orphanages, and why these criteria are important, and the responses are grouped and presented.

All the respondents tended to define childcare in their own understanding. Their definitions are summed up into the statement that, childcare is giving attention to a child's mental, physical, nutritional, social, educational and medical needs that are required to fully develop into a productive member of society and physically abandoned and genuinely vulnerable, orphaned or children with special needs and disability, who have no one to take care of them are eligible to enter to the orphanage and get the support they desperately need.

Both social worker one and two stated that, in any organization, there is always a way or pattern of doing things, a right and legal manner for the work to be done. So by this underlying fact, the orphanages have a legal path and manner of admitting abandoned children into their institutions.

Social worker one continued to state that, there are accepted guidelines that guide the orphanage in the proper and legal way of accepting abandoned children into their institution. As the orphanage works alongside government stakeholders such as, the Hawassa city women children and youth affairs, there are shared criteria of admission of abandoned children.

Project manager one stated that children who are eligible to be admitted to the orphanage he works in must be physically abandoned and genuinely vulnerable, orphaned or children with special needs and disability, who have no one to take care of them. These are the most in need children that beg the attention of this orphanage.

Social worker two explained out the eligibility criteria as *“first and foremost, the police are mostly the first ones to find these abandoned children, and then the police has to write a notifying letter for the specific sub city women, children, and youth office, and the Hawassa city women, children and youth affairs department, in order to find a suitable orphanage to place the abandoned child, and with that letter, the sub city women, children and youth office and the women, children and youth department police also, will in turn write a letter for our organization to receive and take care the abandoned child. This order of legal letters is very important because, the orphanages cannot take any abandoned child without the knowledge and approval of the women, children, and youth affairs department. And every abandoned child must have a police report that states all the information of the child’s whereabouts and the place of abandonment, the orphanage it entered and other necessary information, and this will come in handy in the future of the child, and also for local adoptions or foster care processes”*.

As the head nurse one explained, it is important that children who were abandoned in hospitals and health station must have a letter consisting all the necessary information about their time of birth (if they were born in that specific hospital), and also a record of their medical status. This information is very much needed in order to properly address the medical needs of the abandoned child, and also to protect other children who already are living inside the orphanage from any communicable disease that might come through the newly abandoned child. Sometimes there might be cases of tuberculosis, pneumonia,

hepatitis, HIV/AIDS or other communicable diseases and when a newly abandoned child arrives at the orphanage, his medical condition needs to be checked and known, in case the child needs an isolation room or if the child needs an immediate medical assistance.

Country director one also stated that the legal procedures and letters are essential to provide the help needed for the abandoned child. But any child that is abandoned and vulnerable, without parental care and that needs help is eligible to enter their orphanage, since it is the orphanages social duty to provide the needed support and care for these abandoned children.

All the respondents of the research stated in agreement that the admission and eligibility criteria followed by the selected orphanages have a great importance in order to address the right child, which is truly in need and vulnerable and abandoned. It was further explained that in some cases there might occur a mix up or a biased beneficiary selection. This was further explained by social worker two, according to her:

“As much as it is hard to state these discrepancies rising mostly from the women, children and youth police department, there have been some cases in which children who had parents and who were not abandoned were presented as abandoned children in order to enter the orphanage and get the support provided by the orphanage. This bias creates a complication and disrupts the work process of all parties included and also decreases the chance of a truly abandoned child out there. We have cases like this which create a gap in the working environment because when a child’s police report is mistaken for what it is not and the orphanage finds a suitable adoptive family to place the child with, then it will become a big legal issue, since the child is not truly abandoned and has a known and active family, in that case that child must be reunified to its biological families. So this is a series issue which needs great attention. There are proper ways in which a family that lacks the capacity to raise their children can get the suitable support from our orphanage in other programs and activities in the orphanage so that would be the wise way to direct people that need support from the orphanage”.

The other significance of the proper admission paperwork, from the right government offices, as obtained from children’s files and police reports and as stated by the respondents

of the research, is also to avoid overcrowding numbers in the orphanages. The orphanages have their own capacity of intake and care for abandoned children, so there needs to be a balance between the capacity of the orphanages and the number of children that are sent to the orphanages. And the proper and legal letters can help a great deal in managing to achieve this balance. The selected orphanages also have a wide door of admitting abandoned and vulnerable children to their orphanages. By definition of child, which is under eighteen years of age is eligible, starting from newborn infants. But older children that can identify their parents or relatives or place of his residence, tend to be reunified to a capable parent or family member.

The overall childcare practices of one of the selected orphanages discussed, by country director one states that, the orphanage she leads generally focuses on staffing qualified employees who are trained on child development and proper care. Also continued to state that the orphanage has security cameras to ensure all staff are treating children fairly and have frequent trainings for staff. The orphanage also sends most of the students to private schools and involves them in extracurricular activities. The orphanage generally has a family-like or family-based setting and environment in order to help the children get the necessary support they need.

Project manager two also in agreement with this statement, explained that, the orphanage he works in has an overall childcare system that includes providing the necessities of children, starting from providing food, shelter, education, medical care and treatments according to their condition, and psychological support.

The researcher also confirmed this during the observation, that the selected orphanages provide an integrated institutional care and support which comprises food, shelter, medical, educational, tutorial, school fees, school material, clothing, and recreational services and so on), also providing an environment that allows the children to have a family-resembling, peaceful and loving atmosphere. The caregivers are even called as “mothers” of the children and the attachment they have with these children is profound and important for the proper growth of the children.

4.4. Major roles of the orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing of abandoned children

While investigating the major roles of the selected orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing of abandoned children in the study area, the respondents of the research were asked to explain the major roles and the responses of are grouped and presented. As (Eyerusalem, 2019) previous study suggested that the interaction of the children with the caregivers is very essential to the children's wellbeing and growth, and the findings of this study also supports that the attachment between children and their caregivers has a great deal of impact in the children's mental, social and overall wellbeing and future.

Country director two explained that the major role that their orphanage provides in maintaining the wellbeing of these abandoned children is keeping or safeguarding their right to life. The right to life for an abandoned child is the most basic thing that first gets jeopardized, as soon as they get abandoned. When a child is abandoned, saving the life of that child is the utmost priority of the orphanage by any means necessary. After their lives are saved and their right to life is secured, the orphanages also play a role in continuing to safeguard the rights of these abandoned children, by creating a safe environment where they can have protection and a harassment and abuse free life, and support them to be their best selves.

Social worker one added on this, by stating: *“as soon as the police find an abandoned child on the road or in a ditch somewhere, I'm the first person they call, even if it is in the middle of the night, I wake up to answer. And usually when the child is abandoned in the middle of the night, they are completely vulnerable to be attacked by many things. The cold chilling weather in the night also affects their lungs and the first important thing to do is to bring them to our orphanage because we have five full time nurses and one part time doctor which can provide them medical assistance as fast as they arrive at our compound, and if they need to go to the hospital our nurses are on duty to take them to the hospital as fast as they can. Time is of a great value in such cases, because we have witnessed many cases where the police waited for a patrol car to bring the abandoned child to our orphanage and the child died on their hands. These are very heart aching cases. So saving the lives of*

abandoned children is the major role we have in keeping the wellbeing of these abandoned children”.

The other major roles of the selected orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing of abandoned children were discussed by childcare manager one and two. They both discussed that, after the priority of saving the lives of these abandoned children, and then comes the important role of feeding them. The variety of the age difference of the children necessitates the variety of feeding patterns the orphanages have. There are professional cooks in the kitchen who work the whole day, who prepare food for every specific group of children. The infants are provided with formula milk until the age of one, which is very costly. And children with special needs are provided with non-solid and grinded food, which is blended with milk, since they cannot chew. Then children above one year and older children have also solid and healthy food based on the feeding program. Having healthy and nutritious food is essential for the healthy growth of the children so the orphanages attend the responsibility of keeping the wellbeing of the children through providing healthy meals throughout the day. The children in the orphanages also are provided three meals and two snacks a day, which makes a total of five meals a day.

The researcher’s observation confirmed that one of the basic needs of human, which is food, is provided by the selected orphanages. The researcher also observed feeding processes of the selected orphanages throughout the day and according to the feeding programs. The children in the care of the orphanage have five meals a day and the similar age group of children eat in their group homes inside the compound which creates a sense of family and a home.

All the supervising caregivers also stated that the selected orphanages provide healthy food for these children, clothing, and education for the school-aged children, medical assistance and the necessary provision for these abandoned children.

Head nurses one and two also emphasized on the high stake medical care the selected orphanages provide for the abandoned children. The medical expense is for the infants and children with special needs, is very costly. And the abandoned children are coming to the orphanage from different places and settings so it is a must to give great attention to their

health and medical wellbeing. Almost all the abandoned children have low immunity because they lack breast milk, which is very essential for a newborn child. And the abandoned children with special needs have various health complications and problems that need much attention, follow ups and checkups, followed by medications and admissions to hospitals and treating them as needed.

On her previous study, researcher (Meskerem, 2015) asserted that orphanage institutions have a great impact on facilitating alternative childcare services to the best interest of the children, this study also in agreement with the previous study by (Meskerem, 2015) has a finding that reveals these selected orphanage institutions' vital role in serving the children's best interest by exhaustively facilitating alternative childcare services as local adoption and foster care and placing the abandoned children to willing and best fitted local families. Social workers one and two explained about the selected orphanages' roles on exercising alternative childcare approaches such as foster care, local adoption and reunification. The orphanages they both work in thrive to find suitable local families that are able to raise these children just like their own. The orphanage in collaboration with the Hawassa city women, children, and youth affairs department and Faith Based Organizations, creates an awareness creating interventions and meetings in which they have discussions about these alternative childcare approaches and suitable and willing families will come forward to apply for local adoption program. There are criteria for these programs both from the women, children, and youth department (the government's side) and also the orphanages' side. These are the willing families will submit different paperwork such as medical certificate, marriage certificate, letter from the police that assures that they are free from any crimes, letter that states their monthly income, a letter from their church or mosque.

These criteria are important to make sure that the family is socially, economically and health wise able to raise that child, in all the ways the child deserves. The social workers also added that these abandoned children need local families that can raise them as their own children, and there still lots of children that need such kinds of families, because it is better for them to have a loving family and loving parents and home, beside the orphanages. These local adoptions are finalized at the court after the willing and suitable families, the

orphanages make an adoption agreement and the Hawassa city women, children, and youth department approves it.

Childcare managers one and two both stated that the selected orphanages also play a role in shaping these abandoned children's spiritually by teaching them to give back to their community, in holiday and other occasions the children will go out in the community or to other orphanages to give gifts fir to other children and the people around the selected orphanages. The childcare managers and the supervising caregivers take the children for recreation and relaxing events and places for swimming, playing and taking a walk outside the compound to maintain their mental health, in addition to counseling and discussion sessions where trust is built. The children above five years of age are the ones who will actively be doing these activities and on Sundays, they will go to faith of their own choice. The school-aged children also attend school and they have tutorial sessions. The girls have a female tutor and the boys have a male tutor, in order to help them achieve good grades in school and make their way to the future they want.

4.5. The main challenges that constrain the orphanages in providing their social services

Concerning the challenges which affect the everyday activity of the selected orphanages in Hawassa, the responses of all the respondents were summed up and introduced below.

Country director two stated that the biggest challenge for such orphanages including the orphanage he leads is the problem of land. *“We have been asking the government to give us land to build our own larger place for children, for the past ten years but we are still in rental homes with the children. There is always lengthy fruitless bureaucracy in the concerned government offices and they end up giving the land they promised to give us for another purpose. The cost of raising these abandoned children is very expensive and by raising them, not only are we helping these children, but we are also helping the community and the government, we are keeping these children from the streets. But the concerned government bodies are reluctant to support us in our need, which makes our work very hard”*.

All the respondents stated that the current inflation especially on food and other items is affecting the selected orphanages in their day to day activities. Project manager one and two stated that *“Raising children is expensive and right now the inflation is affecting us because we have the highest number of abandoned children in our orphanages in Hawassa city. We were hoping that the inflation would go down or the government might intervene but sadly it did not, which is really challenging for us. The medical expenses for the abandoned children with special needs are also very high at private hospitals”*.

Social worker one and two gave more emphasis on the lengthy bureaucracy at the police department to finish the right paperwork and police report for the children. *“There is a constant shift of the women, children, and youth police sergeants, in the courts where we finalize local adoptions. In the police department, most of the sergeants ask the orphanage for money or bribe to finish the legal police report for the abandoned children, and if the orphanage is not willing to give bribe, the sergeants will not be willing to prepare the paperwork by the right time. And the orphanage will have to go report a compliant to the Hawassa city women, children, and youth department. This attitude is very dangerous and affects the day to day activity of the orphanage, because we receive abandoned children in big numbers, but after we do our part, some of the other stakeholders fail to do their part. We are all thriving to save the lives of abandoned children and give them a bright future but this problem affects the process of doing that. And also in the courts where we finalize the local adoptions for the abandoned children in our orphanages, the officials and judges mostly tell us that they are busy with other important and valuable cases, but fail to give attention to these adoption cases.*

Also continued by saying *“The government always says that instead of institutionalizing abandoned children or instead of letting the children stay in orphanages for a long time, it is better to place them in suitable families through local adoptions and foster care, but it is also the same government officials who slow the orphanages process of doing that and sometimes even create an obstacle for the orphanages, and this really needs to be solved through meetings and discussions with concerned stakeholders. Another big challenge in*

our day to day activity in our orphanage is that the problem of child abandonment is increasing alarmingly and women, children, and youth officials are constantly sending children to us, which gradually creates an imbalance between the capacity of the orphanages and the magnitude of the problem of child abandonment and this needs a great attention”.

The social workers one and two also added on that stating, *“There are problems in beneficiary selection, and rushed decision. There is a challenging situation when sometimes the concerned stakeholders rush to place children to our orphanage before making sure that the child actually is abandoned, and before the proper paperwork is finalized. When a child is found unattended, the police and the women, children, and youth department together must give priority to look for the child’s parents or closest relative, and after that search is finished, then that child is officially declared abandoned. So many times, these stakeholders rush to declare the child abandoned and after that the parents will come looking for the child, and this creates a complication and even a legal consequence, this happens also intentionally when these stakeholders try to make biased selection trying to help out their relatives or people they know, to place their children in an orphanage to get the support provided by the orphanage. We have many cases like that, and children who have parents should live with their own families, it is better to support the family to build their capacity to raise their children, rather than faking a police report and going through all the trouble, because the orphanage also has other programs that can support such families. So this also needs a great deal of attention”.*

Head nurses one and two stated the challenges that the orphanages face rising from most hospitals. The challenge as they explained is that most hospitals when they find abandoned children, they consider it a burden for the institution and instead of taking the proper time to medically examine the children, they make a rushed decision to discharge the children out from the hospital. This is a big challenge because, the abandoned children have to be fully checked and medically examined before they leave the hospital to enter the orphanage, because there might be cases of transmitted diseases or medical cases that need immediate attention and the children might have special needs. And if they come without

a proper medical checkup, it is a risk for the other children already at the orphanage, in case of a transmitted disease such as scabies, tuberculosis, infections and other health risks. This gap needs to be worked on.

Project managers one and two focused on the challenge of staff turnovers. They explained that their orphanages consider the staff they have as assets and invest a great deal on building their capacities to deliver the best care and work for the abandoned children in the orphanages, through various capacity building programs and activities and trainings. Working with abandoned children requires an all-round skill and the orphanages put in the effort to empower these staffs. So when these staffs, either in search of better jobs, or in termination of their contract with the orphanages, leave the orphanage, the orphanage considers it a loss of asset.

The internal challenge of the orphanages stated by the supervising caregivers is disagreements of caregivers of the children rising from time to time.

4.6. Discussion

The selected orphanages are formed and engaged in the activity of helping, supporting and empowering abandoned and vulnerable children, according to the Standard Service Delivery Guidelines for orphan and vulnerable children developed by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs. Starting from the eligibility criteria for a child to enter to an institutional care, the process of admission, roles, and responsibilities of the institutions, the type, quality, and quantity of the services provided, the role of regional higher authority, strategies of intervention, the physical structure and location, and human resource of the institutions are included in a detailed manner under the guideline. There are seven core service areas proposed on the guideline. These include food and nutrition provision, shelter and care, economic strengthening of these children, social and legal protections, health care, educational supports and psychosocial supports. During the key informant interviews the interviewees indicated that their organizations are working on the service areas which include food and nutrition provision, provision of clothing, shelter and house facilities provision, health services, educational supports, counseling, and

psychosocial services. As per the observation of the researcher, the services that are very satisfactorily being provided by the institutions and have a great deal of impacts on addressing the problems of abandoned children, food and nutrition provision, provision of clothing, educational supports and health service are the main.

Food and nutrition provision aim to ensure that abandoned children have access to similar nutritional resources as other children in their communities. Based on the observation, in addition to the quality and quantity of the food, it was found that the children have five meals per day. The targeted institutions are highly involved in such food provision to avoid malnourishment problems of the abandoned children. This can be confirmed through this study as one of the achievements of the orphanages.

The second satisfactory service which has contribution in addressing among the needs of abandoned children is provision of clothing. Cloth, shoes, and underwear, school uniforms provisions can be manifested as one of the orphanages' achievements. All of the respondents reported that, their respective orphanage is providing adequate clothing provision at least thrice per year.

The third satisfactory service which has a major contribution in addressing of abandoned children found in this study is educational supports which include provisions of school uniforms, stationary materials, textbook, and school bags and as well as tutorials to empower the children.

The fourth service of the organizations contribution is health service expressed in its services like annually reviewed of the abandoned children's health status, assessment for the malnourished children, children with special needs, medical and pharmaceutical expenses coverage and referral system.

The core values of Delivery Guidelines Document (MoWCYA, 2009) are rooted in the principles of child protection - developing and implementing programs that place the best interests of the child and his/her family above all else. Thus, programs should include efforts to confront and minimize the reality of stigma and social neglect faced by vulnerable and abandoned children, as well as abuse and exploitation, including trafficking, the taking

of inherited property, and land tenure. The result of this study showed that these abandoned children are supposed to have 24/7 protection and monitoring by their home-based caregivers and security cameras.

The alternative childcare programs are also one of the major contributions provided by the selected orphanages to the best interest of the children. Facilitating all the necessary processes to place the children in suitable, willing and able families that can raise them as their own child, legally, despite the challenging path to do so and despite local adoption is still needs more awareness in the country and the working area of the orphanages.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presented summary of finding of the research, conclusion and finally the researcher provided recommendation for identified problems.

5.2. Conclusion

The general objective of the study is to assess the Practices, Roles, and Challenges of two purposively selected orphanages in Hawassa City Administration, Sidama National Regional State of Ethiopia.

To conduct this research, the researcher used qualitative approach which is supposed to be more appropriate for such kinds of research. The researcher had tried to be far from any biasness and personal opinions of her own and the respondents' as well. And had tried conduct sampling using purposive sampling method. In addition, appropriate data collection tools such as, in-depth interview, observation, and document review were used for this study to increase the reliability and validity of the data and its results.

During interviews, beyond the questioning and answering, the researcher observed and understood feelings, gestures, facial expressions and other personal situations of participants, and these were valuable inputs for this research.

In order to get reliable and valuable information, the researcher used in-depth interview, observation and document review as data collection instruments. These instruments have their own strength and limitations. In depth interview is flexible and can be used to collect large amounts of information through putting inclusive criteria for instance in this research case, all the key informants are supposed to have higher exposure to the services that are provided to the abandoned children, have abandoned children related experience and by considering their organizational position. The observation was employed to enrich the information gathered through other methods. Also, it assisted the researcher to understand and obtain information for the study.

During analysis of data, the researcher also challenged subjectivity through avoiding biasness and personal opinions of her own and the respondents as well. Besides, through triangulating data that has been acquired from interviews, and observation. The researcher collected the data through interviews, observations, and document review summarized as the four basic research questions.

Therefore, according to the first basic research question, the major causes of child abandonment are mainly stemming from poverty. The other major causes of child abandonment also are mental instability, unwanted and early age pregnancy, households having children with special needs, harmful traditional practices.

In respect to second basic research question, the overall admission and childcare practices of both selected orphanages, the results show the legal processes and eligibility criteria for admitting the abandoned children into their respective orphanages. And the essentiality of these criteria to differentiate and address the truly abandoned children as needed and avoid confusions and complications with stakeholders. And the orphanages admit abandoned children starting from a day old and there is no age limit to admit abandoned children. They also take care of abandoned children with special needs.

In respect to the third basic research question, the orphanages are providing various types of services for the abandoned children living under their care. In this respect, both of the orphanages investigated by the researcher were established with the objectives of providing different services more specifically providing integrated institutional care and support (shelter, food, medical, educational, tutorial, school fees, school materials, clothing, recreational, etc.) for abandoned children, and both orphanages exhaustively facilitate adoption and foster care procedures when required.

Last but not least, when we take a look at the fourth fundamental research question, the investigation result shows that orphanages were impacted by different difficulties, and the most well-known difficulties distinguished by the research through the key informants, were lengthy bureaucracy and maladministration from stakeholders, especially from the police department, rushed decisions made by hospitals without proper prior medical examinations for the abandoned children, internal disagreements between caregivers, and

continuous shifts in officials in the government offices working alongside the orphanages, the imbalance between the problem of child abandonment and the intervention capacity of the orphanages, quick addition of material expense and price inflation of stuff for children and to run the orphanages, absence of land to construct own office, lack of willingness by the government official and inadequate infrastructure such as schools for children with special needs in the city were also registered as the major challenges of the selected orphanages.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following major recommendations are forwarded to the organizations and their management.

- **Raising Awareness about child abandonment:** creating more awareness of the issue of alternative childcare options as local adoption and foster care in the community, for the best interest of the children. Community attitude, frequent change on public law and regulations, and shortage of finance were the major challenges of the organization working on orphan and vulnerable children. The negative attitude and the newness of local adoption procedures in the community may be changed by creating and raising awareness about the problem of child abandonment and the role of the orphanages working in this area, and the importance of these children having a suitable family to raise them. According to the research understanding, the community may not have sufficient information about the problem of abandoned children. Therefore, in addition to these orphanages, other organizations also should create awareness about the issue to the community to lift up their understanding and willingness to cooperate.
- **Creating mutual understanding between orphanages:** Other organizations and orphanages should work in collaboration and coordination with nearby nongovernmental organizations who are involved in the same service provisions for the same target beneficiaries, which are abandoned children. This is very important for experience and skill sharing through trainings and meetings, to enhance the orphanages, to learn best practices and find solutions for challenges and lessen mistakes and complications.

- **Staff and care giver's training:** prepare training opportunities to staff to empower them to best serve the needs of the abandoned children. Especially attention and capacity building to caregivers in different skills because they are the ones who are working closely with the children.
- **Collaboration with government institutions:** it is difficult to solve the problems existing on abandoned children only with orphanages. Rather the problem needs the tireless participation of the community, government, and other concerned bodies. It is an all-hands-on-deck situation to create an environment for the best interest of the children. The government offices and stakeholders found at each level, community-based organizations, and local nongovernmental organizations should incorporate the issue of abandoned children as part of their development program and giving the problem more attention.
- **Increasing the capacity of other orphanages:** building the capacity of other orphanages with similar objectives to narrow the wide gap between the increasing problem of child abandonment and the capacity of orphanages, and also to lessen the big burden on both the selected orphanages with highest number of abandoned children, share the responsibility.
- **Increasing the accessibility of social services:** access to basic necessities, education, health care, and other social services should be provided to vulnerable and abandoned children by different organizations and other concerned bodies in order to ensure a bright future for them and to help them become economically and socially active adults. Therefore, social service providers like schools, health centers should work in harmony with such orphanages to jointly address the problems of abandoned children.

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APPENDIX ONE

Hawassa University

College Of Law and Governance

School Of Governance and Development Studies

M.A in Development Management

Interview Questions for the Selected Orphanage Managers

The overall objective of this study is assessing the roles, overall childcare practices and challenges of the two purposively selected orphanages, Netsanet Ministries Inc and Ebenezer Supporting and Developing Association, in Hawassa city Administration, Sidama National Regional State of Ethiopia. The purpose of the study is purely academic that will not have any negative effect on you as an individual or your organization. Therefore, the responses you provide will have a constructive and premier significance and importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine responses. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Part I: General information and respondents' personal data

1. Date and Time: _____
2. Place of interview: _____
3. Status in the Orphanage: _____
4. Sex: _____
5. Age: _____
6. Place of Birth: _____
7. Educational Background: _____
8. Qualification: _____
9. Work experience: _____

Part II: Please answer the following questions briefly related to the current practice of the orphanage you lead now.

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

1. Objective: - To analyze the major causes of child abandonment in the study area.

Questions

- What are the major causes of child abandonment that you have encountered working in this area?
2. Objective: - To assess the overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children.

Questions

- What do you understand from the term childcare?
 - What are the eligibility criteria for the admission of abandoned children into your orphanage? And why are those criteria important?
 - Are there age limits for the intake or admission of abandoned children to your organization? Why?
 - What are the overall childcare practices of your orphanage?
3. To investigate the major roles of the orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing abandoned children.

Questions

- Please mention some of the major roles provided by your orphanage to abandoned children?
 - What are the socio-economic and cultural roles given by your orphanage to the local community?
 - Please mention some of the roles of your orphanage to the government and key stakeholders?
4. To identify the main challenges that constrains the orphanages in providing their social services.
- What are the most serious internal and external challenges that hinder your day-to-day activities in the orphanage?
 - What are the reasons for the challenges?

- Do the local community, government stakeholders and other workers of the orphanage have a role in the challenges?
- Do the concerned government stakeholders, the community and workers in the orphanage assist you in addressing the challenges you face as an orphanage? How?

Interview questions for the selected workers of the orphanages

First, I would like to thank you for your willingness to the interview. The overall objective of this study is assessing the roles, overall childcare practices and challenges of the two purposively selected orphanages, Netsanet Ministries Inc and Ebenezer Supporting and Developing Association, in Hawassa city Administration, Sidama National Regional State of Ethiopia. The purpose of the study is purely academic that will not have any negative effect on you as an individual or your organization. Therefore, the responses you provide will have a constructive and premier significance and importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine responses. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

Therefore, the response you provide will have constructive paramount and importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you requested to give your genuine response. Your response used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

Thanks you in advance for your cooperation!

Part I: General information and respondents' personal data

1. Date and Time: _____
2. Place of interview: _____
3. Status in the orphanage: _____
4. Sex: _____
5. Age: _____
6. Educational Background: _____
7. Qualification: _____
8. How long did you stay in this organization: _____

Part II: Please answer the following questions briefly related to the current practice of the orphanage you are working in now.

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

1. Objective: - To analyze the major causes of child abandonment in the study area.

Questions

- What are the major causes of child abandonment that you have encountered working in this area?
2. Objective: - To assess the overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children.

Questions

- What do you understand from the term childcare?
 - What are the overall childcare practices of your orphanage?
 - What are your roles in the admission practice of abandoned children into the orphanage?
 - What are your roles in the childcare practices of the orphanage?
3. To investigate the major roles of the orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing abandoned children.

Questions

- Please mention some of the major roles provided by your orphanage to abandoned children?
 - What are the socio-economic and cultural roles given by your orphanage to the local community?
 - Please mention some of the roles of your orphanage to the government and key stakeholders?
4. To identify the main challenges that constrains the orphanages in providing their social services.
 - What are the most serious internal and external challenges that hinder your day-to-day activities in the orphanage?
 - What are the reasons for the challenges?
 - Do the local community, government stakeholders and other workers of the orphanage have a role in the challenges?
 - Do the concerned government stakeholders, the community and workers in the orphanage people assist you in addressing the challenges you face as an orphanage? How?

Interview Questions for Selected Government Stakeholders

The overall objective of this study is assessing the roles, overall childcare practices and challenges of the two purposively selected orphanages, Netsanet Ministries Inc and Ebenezer Supporting and Developing Association, in Hawassa city Administration, Sidama National Regional State of Ethiopia. The purpose of the study is purely academic that will not have any negative effect on you as an individual or your organization. Therefore, the responses you provide will have a constructive and premier significance and importance for the successful accomplishment of this study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give your genuine responses. Your responses will be used only for academic purpose and the responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Part I: General information and respondents' personal data

1. Date and Time: _____
2. Place of interview: _____
3. Status in the Orphanage: _____
4. Sex: _____
5. Age: _____
6. Place of Birth: _____
7. Educational Background: _____
8. Qualification: _____
9. Work experience: _____

Part II: Please answer the following questions briefly related to the current practice of the orphanage you lead now.

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

1. Objective: - To analyze the major causes of child abandonment in the study area.

Questions

- What are the major causes of child abandonment that you have encountered working in this area?
 - What is the magnitude of the problem of child abandonment in the study area?
2. Objective: - To assess the overall admission and childcare practices of the orphanages in caring for abandoned children.

Questions

- What do you understand from the term childcare?
 - What are the eligibility criteria for the admission of abandoned children into the selected orphanages? And why are those criteria important?
 - Are there age limits for the intake or admission of abandoned children to the selected orphanages? Why?
 - What are the overall childcare practices of the selected orphanages?
3. To investigate the major roles of the orphanages in maintaining the wellbeing abandoned children.

Questions

- Please mention some of the major roles provided by the selected orphanages to abandoned children?
 - What are the socio-economic and cultural roles given by the selected orphanages to the local community?
 - Please mention some of the roles of the selected orphanages to the government and key stakeholders?
4. To identify the main challenges that constrains the orphanages in providing their social services.
- What are the most serious challenges faced by the selected orphanages?
 - What are the reasons for the challenges?

- Do the local community, government stakeholders and other workers of the orphanage have a role in the challenges?
- Do the concerned government stakeholders, the community assist the selected orphanages in addressing the challenges they face as an orphanage? How?
- What are the roles of stakeholders in helping the selected orphanages overcome the challenges they face?